Including Excluded Adolescent Boys: Discursive Constructions of Identity

Volume I
Thesis

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Abstract

The main aim of this thesis is to problematise discourse relating to adolescent boys in order to gain a better understanding of the persistent practice of exclusion and to seek to highlight examples of how discourse can position boys in ways that are more inclusive. In doing so this work is an attempt to theorise my practice as a researcher-practitioner educational psychologist, to be reflexive and to raise my consciousness of the means by which professionals, parents and I can both liberate and limit the ways in which the identity of excluded adolescent boys becomes discursively constructed. Taking a predominantly relativist and post structuralist position I propose a model based on Lacanian theory integrated with methods of analysing discourse, 'a critical discursive psychology' which frames and guides the research process throughout. As the thesis unfolds my initial intention to pursue the research topic from a linguistic-discursive perspective becomes influenced by a psychoanalytical dimension as the limitations of a purely discursive approach become apparent. My attempt to take a psychoanalytical reading of the discourse data draws attention to unconscious processes that may influence the signifying of some adolescent boys as either pathological or deviant and enables me to speculate as to why such discourses persist whilst others are repressed. However, and most importantly to this study, by exposing through the discourse analysis *how* discourse constructs the identity of some adolescent boys at both a societal and individual level, I am able to reveal that discursive constructions of the identity of adolescent boys are also open to resistance and change. This in turn provides rich possibilities for future research and practice.

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Introduction **Expectations**

This body of work represents both the pleasures and discursive struggle of six years of my practice as an educational psychologist, an emerging 'post structuralist' researcher and mother of an adolescent boy. I use these labels in simplistic terms as the reader of this thesis will come to realise that through the influence of psychoanalyst Lacan on my work with excluded adolescent boys, notions of the identity of these boys, of those who teach and parent the boys and of myself can never be adequately described or understood. So, if "there is no stable tangible human subject" (Brown, Atkinson and England, 2006, p.260) how can I justify the intention here to conduct research into the discursively constructed identity of excluded adolescent boys?

The reader should, therefore, from the outset be aware of the purpose of the research as I see it, of what to expect and to be aware of certain tensions and frustrations some of which cannot be resolved. My journey began many years ago with a fascination for language and how words can be manipulated to create different meanings and how people use language to create different effects. As an educational psychologist in the 1990s I quickly became dissatisfied with the way in which language is used to attach identifications to young people, especially boys often leading to devastating exclusionary consequences. It seems there is a need to explore and problematise ways in which every day talk and text are used in relation to these young people. This in turn implies social constructionist and relativist notions of my research 'position.' What I mean by this is that I am concerned with the ways in which social and psychological 'reality' are actively constructed within a context in relation to others as opposed to being pre-existing phenomena. Further to this the term 'reality' is misleading as an extreme relativist position would be one in which nothing is real, or to put it another way, there are multiple realities, relative to situations, individuals and circumstances. I do not subscribe completely to this very extreme position but would want to moderate where I 'sit' on the relativist and realist continuum through my experience of working with excluded adolescent boys. From this experience, where the practice of excluding is so prevalent, it seems hard to deny that a reality (or problem boy identity) 'appears to exist' and has become a belief or knowledge embedded within Western society (more of a realist position). However, my intent is not to seek the 'truth' but to expose *how* discourse has come to shape the identity of adolescent boys and has epistemologically influenced those in power in society leading to the practice of exclusion. The predominant relativist in me wants ultimately to engage in the research process in a way that optimistically considers the possibility of there being alternative constructions of adolescent boys whereas the realist in me is drawn to the possibility of being able to explain the motives surrounding identity constructions.

Where I use the term 'appears to exist' this also reflects Lacan's concept of the subject as a product of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic Orders (Lacan, 2002), concepts explained in chapter one of my thesis. In brief, and relating to my own interpretation of Lacan, the identity of excluded adolescent boys can be said to be 'imagined' as a result of a series of discursive terms and phrases that cluster together to create meaning, that is to say 'identifications' in the Imaginary Order. In turn these create 'real effects' (eg anxiety amongst teachers and parents around their predictions of what some adolescent boys might do). Within the Symbolic Order such boys are identified as particular kinds of pupils within discourses in which behaviour is already defined according to a series of norms. The 'real effects' result in removing the boys from the Symbolic, through the practice of segregating and excluding them, to in effect wipe out their existence in mainstream schools and society. The Real Order, however, represents what is lacking, what cannot be put into words, what I understand as the non-rational, unconscious motives and desires that perpetuate these practices, constructions and positioning of adolescent boys which at the same time may also disrupt these practices by inspiring acts of resistance.

In constructing my thesis, I write this introduction last and in doing so I come to a conscious point of realisation that my motivation and desire to understand better how the identity of adolescent boys comes to be constructed stems from the anger I feel. This relates to the social injustice I detect in working with these boys who are powerless and vulnerable to the decisions and practices of head teachers who in turn are influenced by ideological constructions within Local Authorities, central government and the media that appear to serve political, institutional and professional ends. I cannot claim to have approached this research in a logical fashion as the analysis and writing up happened over an intense period of a few weeks where I experienced an explosion of thinking and integration of ideas. This eruption metaphorically represents to me how my anger has been re-channelled and projected into a surge of energy that has enabled me to synthesise my research, the act of which I hope will change my practice and the outcomes for some of the young people with whom I work. Also, my struggle to understand and integrate the ideas of Lacan into my work has involved several attempts to read translations of his text and others' interpretations of his work. Hence, my satisfaction in writing this introductory chapter and in redrafting chapter one was arrived as the last step in the process.

Ultimately, the reflexive nature of my research represents the discourse I have with others and myself in the process, which has helped me to re-examine who I am and how I practice as a researcher-practioner:

> Lacan, we believe, assists us in examining our own language with a view to locating how our desires, our fears, our hidden motivations govern our professional practice. And how our social action might be seen as a function of the social discourses that guide our everyday practice. And how we become *passionately attached* to, or resist these discourses...
> (Brown, Atkinson and England, 2006, p.35)

The reader is now invited to enter into my journey which starts in chapter one as I explore various epistemological positions of the construct of identity that are paradigmatically and historically situated and explain how I come to adopt a predominantly post structuralist position. Chapter one also reflects the emphasis in the literature where identity is perceived to be both individualised and socialised and constructed through many experiences, for example, going to school as well as growing up in families. I found myself drawn continually to examples in the literature that demonstrate the way in which the discursive identifying of adolescent boys is subject to institutional, political and social influences in ways that appear to have ideological significance. This is an important point as critical discourse analysis (CDA) which formed part of my analytical approach is often criticised for failing to adequately account for explaining the social effects of the discourse. Phillips and Jorgenson (2002) acknowledge this and in defence of CDA, claim that it is difficult to address this empirically. Therefore, my emphasis in critically reviewing the literature and drawing attention to points of wider ideological and political significance is an attempt to counteract what might be a later criticism of the data analysis.

Finally, chapter one also marks the introduction of a proposed model, a hypothetical construction of the identity of excluded adolescent boys, based on Lacanian theory, integrated with methods of analysing discourse. This model is central to understanding the framework I used to explore, interpret and summarise constructions of the data and it is used and redefined throughout the thesis.

Chapter two sets out the research focus and provides a justification for the research methods used, namely a combination of discursive psychology (DP) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). At the early stages of reading around the thesis topic it became clear that I wanted to look at individualised identity constructions through case studies involving conversations with boys and their parents for which DP provides a useful approach as it lends itself to systematically investigating naturalised conversations in a local context. However, with concerns emerging in the literature about the strong societal and political influences around the constructions of boys I also wanted to set a context which involved looking at text available through the education media, for which CDA based on the work of Fairclough (2001) provides an ideal analytical framework.

However, it was more by accident than intention that I also came at a late stage in the analytical process to consider the need to extend my critical discursive analysis to include a psychoanalytical reading of the data. This came about as a result of a false start in the research that I encountered in trying to work with permanently excluded boys who became 'too hard to reach' as participants. This experience was also described by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) and in reading their work I began to question the more non-linguistic, unconscious process that may be influencing the discursive constructions within my own data. Also, a critique of discourse analytical methods is that they consider constructions to arise on the surface through discourse at the same time omitting to address questions of motivation (eg why do people persist in using discourse in non-rational ways?) with no mechanism within the analytical method of interpreting the *emotional* significance and effects of the discourse. This 'turn to psychoanalysis' is explored in detail in chapter four; however, leading up to this is the main body of the research encapsulated in chapter three where firstly the media articles and then the conversational data surrounding 'the case of Jay' are highlighted, analysed and interpreted in depth using the synthetic discourse analytical tool that I constructed based on combining techniques taken from DP and CDA.

In chapter four I also chose to include constructions of a further boy, the case of Spike, to explore how another boy with similar experiences of exclusion can be constructed differently. Also, the data around Spike both fascinated and disturbed me and it seemed to lend itself to a psychoanalytical interpretation. Much of the discourse around Spike was alluded to but not made explicit which drew me into Frosh's concept of the 'psychology of hinting' (Frosh, 2002) and a realisation of the importance of this to educational psychologists in working with young people who are subjected to abuse especially where words are left unspoken or where bragging and joking around may mask the 'Real' (to use a Lacanian term) identity of the young person.

The final chapter cannot in psycho-discursive research represent 'findings' or the end of the story, but represents an attempt to draw together the story so far. From this point the reader is able to establish the implications for me as the researcher-practitioner as I propose ways of reshaping my practice and the practice of others within an ideational, interpersonal, expressive and psychoanalytical framework (drawing on ideas from Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). In Lacanian terms I am driven to engage in more research, not because I see my work here as unfinished or inadequate in any way but because I am motivated to engage in an ongoing process of self realising.

Chapter One Warming Up

The central tenet of this thesis is bound by the concept of *identity* and its construction through discourse. In order to begin to make sense of the identities of adolescent boys at risk of exclusion it is necessary to first explore the topic from an epistemological position, how knowledge of identity formation has been espoused in theoretical and pragmatic terms. However, approaches to discourse research amount to far more than a method that can be presented in one section of a thesis. Discursive methods are inextricably linked to the theoretical bases for understanding identity formation and as such attention to methodology will be addressed throughout all chapters of the thesis.

The following pages of text draw from a wide range of paradigms within philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, sociology, and psychology but space does not permit a definitive exploration of all areas. To make sense of identity as a discursive construct as it can be applied to modern day thinking and practice, weight is given to both a psychoanalytical and a social constructionist perspective. From the outset I declare that I am drawn to a predominantly relativist position in which qualitative methods predominate. However, the notion of identity as being both something we *are* (either consciously or unconsciously) and something we *do* (through discourse and action) remains a possibility in my mind. As such, the reader will detect some relativist-realist tensions throughout the text that are not easily resolved.

These tensions are also evident elsewhere amongst those who advocate that discourse constructs identity, for example in the work of Parker:

> The beliefs that we have deep down about our own nature and about those lesser and greater than ourselves are forms of ideology...Psychoanalysis can help us interpret ideology and reveal its power.
> (Parker, 1997, p 135)

In a critique by Hepburn (2003) she notes that whilst Parker (1997) claims to reject individualistic and cognitivist explanations of 'the self' at the same time he appears to rely on them. However, Parker (1992) in an earlier text attempts to make sense of this by challenging systems of rational knowledge that presuppose a world independent of experience and claiming that we need:

> ...a form of relativism which respects the different and provisional culturally bounded explanations of the nature of things... which does not slide into the Nietszchean perspectivism of high post-structuralists for whom there are only ever competing stories...relativism, can also be grounded in the assumption that there is a real outside discourse which we are trying to understand.
> (Parker, 1992, p. 30)

As the thesis unfolds and the discursive data is analysed my tendency to adhere to a 'predominantly' post structuralist position, that is to say that meanings are not fixed or stable but are contestable and can change, will be exposed. However, I am also drawn to Parker's notion of relativism as explained above and would have to declare that there exist culturally bounded explanations of the nature of adolescent boys that 'appear' to have become fixed and resistant to change.

The following sections of chapter one reflect the concept of identity as it has come to be understood from a range of theoretical positions.

Identity through philosophy

This section is brief as time and space within this thesis does not allow for a detailed philosophical critique, but the following points are included to highlight the far reaching historical debates that document the espoused nature of our very existence. The Austrian born philosopher Martin Buber was influenced by existentialism, for example, the work of Kierkegaard who proposed that the human self is relational and constituted, "a relation which relates itself to its own self, and relating itself to its own self relates itself to another" (Kierkegaard, 1954, p. 146). Buber introduced the elements *I* and *Thou* as a way of expressing the relational aspect of the construction of humanity itself. He appears to reject the notion that words alone have meaning but that it is only through the experience of relating to others that we can acknowledge the existence of ourselves:

> Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations. Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence.
> (Buber, M. 1937, p.15)

The point to be made here is that from the writings of Buber (1937) it is evident that philosophers unsettled essentialist notions of identity by bringing the influence of language and relations in identity construction to the forefront.

Identity through psychology

The psychologist Alfred Adler (Adler, 1956; Adler and Deutsch 1959) influenced by post Freudian psychoanalysis and his work on personality believed that individuals have an idealised picture of themselves; that every idea is screened through a person's own personality and absorbed as much or as little as it 'fits' his or her own lifestyle and picture of himself or herself. Adler was less interested in considering *how* discourse might shape this process and his view of identity (or self) appears positivist and 'fixed' but he did acknowledge the significance of interactions, and saw these as ways of achieving inherent goals, values and interests and the means of a child acquiring character traits in order to find his or her place within a family. Dreikurs interprets the work of Adler to suggest that through Adler's belief in the 'Psychological Uncertainty Principle' such motivation to be who we are operates on a largely unconscious level:

> We do not know ourselves; we do not know the premises on which we act. We do not know our personal goals and, therefore, cannot be sure about our personal motivations or our stake in close personal relationships.
> (Dreikurs, 1959 p.79)

In a similar vein although at a more conscious level, Erikson's notion of identity relates to self awareness and personal identification; that identity is the means by which a person situates himself or herself in social relations. Erikson perceives this as a developmental process, describing adolescence as a period of 'identity crisis' (Erikson, 1968) in which young people growing up in Western Society develop a new sense of identity following their rejection of parental authority. This developmental/crisis perspective, however, has been refuted by anthropologists such as Mead in studying young people growing up in cultures such as Samoa (Mead, 1972).

Identity through structuralism

A less individualistic view comes from the structuralist paradigm in anthropology in which the structure of human thought processes is considered to be the same in all cultures and is expressed in cultural acts (Winthrope, 1991). As such through anthropology the essence of humanity arises from practices and activities within a given culture. Ideas stemming from this were developed in the early 20th century in the form of role theory (Biddle, 1979). The central concern in role theory is with patterns of human conduct; that people develop role identities as a result of expectations and social positions. In education, this tendency was described as the Pygmalion Effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968) to explain that when teachers believe pupils are likely to achieve they (unconsciously) treat them accordingly and as such the pupils tend to conform to this expectation. Sociologists and social psychologists have also been influenced by role theory and the work of psychodramatist Moreno (1951) maintaining the belief that 'role taking' is essential to socialisation and the development of 'self' where such roles belong to a social system. Even the playwright George Bernard Shaw is believed to have expressed on his 90th birthday that the way we behave is influenced not by our experience but by our expectations (Biddle, 1979).

So far the above theoretical positions mostly suggest a degree of truth and certainty in the development of identity, that because of expectations existing within the social system in which we live, we become who we are: researcher, teacher, parent or boy 'at risk of exclusion' and behave in characteristic ways. Biddle (1979) suggests that roles can be judged as deviant by society, leading to punishment and institutionalisation in the belief that this will lead to the learning of more appropriate roles. However, we could challenge this assumption on a number of levels. Firstly, a consideration of the national rise in exclusion statistics (DCSF, 2007) questions the practice of excluding boys from school as there is no evidence to suggest that this reduces anti-social behaviour, nor does it increase compliance if these boys are returned to the same social context. Secondly, a belief that through role expectations, behaviours are induced via socialisation implies passivity and assumes that the person is a recipient of their assigned identity rather than a co-participant in its construction. This critique will be explored by a closer examination of the role that language plays in the construction of identity where it emerges that the *experience of discourse* is considered to be very influential in shaping who we are.

Still within the structuralist domain we turn to the work of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1974). Whilst Saussure did not write about identity, he formulated one of the first theories of structural linguistics which in turn has influenced some forms of discourse analysis. The importance of Saussure is the prominence he gave to an understanding of how meaning is created although his theory (semiology) can be critiqued for being a purist view, concerning a study of language in and for itself rather than in context (Holland, 1998). He proposed that linguistic signs were composed of a signifier (the sound pattern of a word) and a signified (the concept or meaning of the word). Ideas such as these were adopted in anthropology and ethnography, for example by Claude Levi-Strauss (1963) and used to reinforce the idea that meaning is produced and reproduced within cultural practices where the structures that form the 'deep grammar' of society operate in us unconsciously. Drawing from the work of Jakobson who introduced the notion of presence or absence of features in language, Levi-Strauss also proposed that the structure of language in the mind is based on pairs of binary oppositions (eg male-female). Such ideas, whilst at an abstract and theoretical level, can be said to have practical application in relation to identity formation. For example, in texts relating to gendered subjectivity (eg Sunderland, 2004) dominant constructions of what it is to be male tend to be viewed in relation to what it is not to be male (eg female, homosexual).

The psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, building on the work of Freud was heavily influenced by the ideas of structural linguists such as Saussure and existentialist philosophers such as Heidegger (1962) who maintained the belief that language creates and forms our reality, the 'who we are'. Through my reading of Lacan (2002) it appears as if his ideas move away from his structuralist beginnings towards post structural thinking and practice, hence he is included in both this section and the next. However, others who interpret Lacan would say that to see him as a post structuralist is disputable (Parker, 2003) due to his adherence to there being underlying structures of language to explain human thought and subjectivity.

Identity through post structuralism

The advent of post-structuralism, in which language is the producer of "meanings that are not fixed or stable, but always changing and contestable" (Nightingale and Crombie, 1999, p.228) grew out of the post modern movement in which the existence of meaning can no longer be taken for granted. Post structuralists such as Lacan (2002) believed that the concept of 'self' could not be viewed as a singular and coherent entity, but one of conflicting tensions, misunderstandings and knowledge claims (eg continually shifting notions of gender, class, race etc). In developing Saussure's notion of signifiers and the signified he highlights the gap between language and reality and also proposes a link between the unconscious and the conscious. Lacan believed that the function of language is to seek a response from the other in order to confirm the speaker's own subjectivity:

> What constitutes me as subject is my question. In order to be recognised by the other, I proffer what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him, I call him by a name that he must assume or refuse in order to reply to me. I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object.
> (Lacan, 2002, p. 247 as translated by Fink)

My interpretation here is that Lacan uses the other with a small 'o' in which the meaning of the 'other' is another subject and what we see in Lacan's Imaginary Order (a conscious imaginary objectification of who we are, a self-identification or ideal self). However, Lacan also refers to the big 'Other' which is represented in the Symbolic Order, defined as the unconscious external world (language, culture, laws, expectations etc). in which we become objectified through discourse. Lacan explains how identity forms through the link between the Imaginary and the Symbolic:

> Thus, if man comes to think about the symbolic order, it is because he is first caught in its being. The illusion that he has formed this order through his consciousness stems from the fact that it is through the pathway of a specific gap in his imaginary relationship with his semblable that he has been able to enter into this order as a subject. But he has only been able to make this entrance by passing through the radical defile of speech...
> (Lacan, 2002, p. 40 as translated by Fink)

So, more specifically, Lacan proposes that the vision of himself or herself which a person takes to be the essence of identity is an illusion. The young child having pre-verbally identified with an ideal version (ideal ego) of themselves (in perceiving a mirror image of themselves) then through language in childhood and beyond *continually* struggles to recapture the ideal ego by developing fantasised identifications (with given objects) that reassure him or her imaginatively, reducing the difference between self (ego) and ideal self. These can be represented in language (in what Lacan refers to as the Symbolic Order) as symbolic or representative of 'self' but are never in effect 'real'. Lacan's Imaginary Order represents delusional attempts to be and to remain 'what one is' by identifying with instances of sameness and self-replication which can be observed through our actions. Ross (2002) provides an example of how commercial advertising reinforces people's compelling associations with objects with which they wish to desire:

> When the individual sees these associations made, he or she "recognises" some aspect of himself or herself in the imaginary field created around the object, identifies with it, and seeks to possess it as a concrete way of declaring his or her identity.
> (Ross, 2002, p.8)

The third aspect of Lacan's conception of the subject is that of the Real Order. My interpretation of the Real is that it represents the gap between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, the person we desire to be but can never reach because this can never be articulated. Brown, Atkinson and England (2006) explain this as a lack, the Imaginary fantasies that the Symbolic fails to capture. Lacan (2002) refers to *anxiety* in relation to the Real and the Imaginary as we struggle to become who we are which proves to be a useful construct later in chapter four of this thesis as I 'turn to psychoanalysis' in an attempt to explain why we hold onto some discourses and repress others.

One tension that cannot be ignored in critical social psychology is that in drawing on post structural developments in psychoanalysis, it could be assumed that *what* people say is evidence of underlying psychological structures (in attaching meaning to 'the self'), but where is the focus on *what people are doing with what they are saying* in specific contexts? (Hepburn, 2003). My response to this is to make explicit links between Lacanian theory, psychoanalysis, critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology. As methods of analysing data, these forms of discourse analysis will be critiqued more fully in Chapter

Two, but as a starting point a more detailed interpretation of Lacan is required to demonstrate how this theory can begin to be applied in discursive research and practice. Few educational psychologists have attempted to make this link, one exception being the work of psychologist Billington (1995).

Lacan, in adapting Saussure's notion of the signifier and signified added the notion of metonymy (movement) and metaphor, terms first proposed by Jakobson (1962). Unlike Saussure, Lacan proposed the notion of a chain of signifiers where one signifier (eg a word with its associated meanings) can be replaced by another, further reinforcing the belief that identity formation (through discourse) is a continual dynamic and somewhat unstable evolving process:

> There is no meaning in itself; the only meaning is a metaphorical one that only emerges from the substitution of one signifier for another.
> (Dor, 1998, p.195)

However, Lacan (2002) did propose that there are occasions in this process (anchoring points) where the unconscious symbolic stream of linguistic utterances (signifiers) becomes conscious by linking with signifieds, creating psychologically stable points (referred to analogously as buttons on a quilt). In other words there are points where these largely unconscious utterances become 'meaningful' concepts.

One means of integrating these ideas in a way that is of practical use to me in studying identity and its construction through discourse is to devise a visual model as depicted below. In this model the text in blue denotes Lacanian theory, the text in red represents my integration of techniques drawn from discourse analysis and the text in green relates to an interpretation of the above in showing the construction of identity:

Model 1 A hypothetical construction of the identity of excluded adolescent boys based on Lacanian Theory (in blue) integrated with methods of analysing discourse (in red)

Chain of SIGNIFIERS →→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→ METONYMIC AXIS

Lacan's Symbolic Order (language of the unconscious and language of ordinary speech) Equates to supremacy, society and law (the social order)

Acts of speaking and writing that expose issues of power and resistance are identified through: critical discourse analysis that examines intertextuality (the use of the same or similar words and phrases that can become transposed, substituted, displaced and combined across a range of texts) and linguistic analysis (how pronouns, verbs, adjectives, metaphors are used)

Hypothesis: The identity of adolescent boys at risk of exclusion is represented and reconstructed through linguistic acts and multiple streams of discourse

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↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
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↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

METAPHORIC AXIS

Linguistic terms become selected and condensed

The action orientation of talk is identified through: discursive psychology via interpretative repertoires (eg clusters of graphic descriptions and metaphors), rhetorical devices such as dilemmas of stake (eg disclaiming, blaming) and through critical discourse analysis that exposes interdiscursivity (the use of different discourses used in the same discursive event)

Hypothesis: Discursively constructed identities of adolescent boys at risk of exclusion attempt to become established as factual and stable representations of the world, while others are repressed

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SIGNIFIED

Lacan's Imaginary Order (conscious)

Associated with identification, objectification and signification (the illusion of a fixed meaning) and with frustration and motivation

As realised through action (eg the social practice of excluding adolescent boys)

Hypothesis: The illusory concept of excluded adolescent boys as an 'established' identity is produced. Adolescent boys become positioned in ways that justify exclusion

The above model presupposes a trend of phenomenological intentionality as conferring a subjective meaning on what is perceived (the signified) out of the objective stock of language (multiple signifiers). In other words, and in relation to this study, Lacan's theory implies that the 'perceived' conscious subjective identity of 'excluded adolescent boys' is realised through metaphor and arises out of a stream of mainly unconscious discourses.

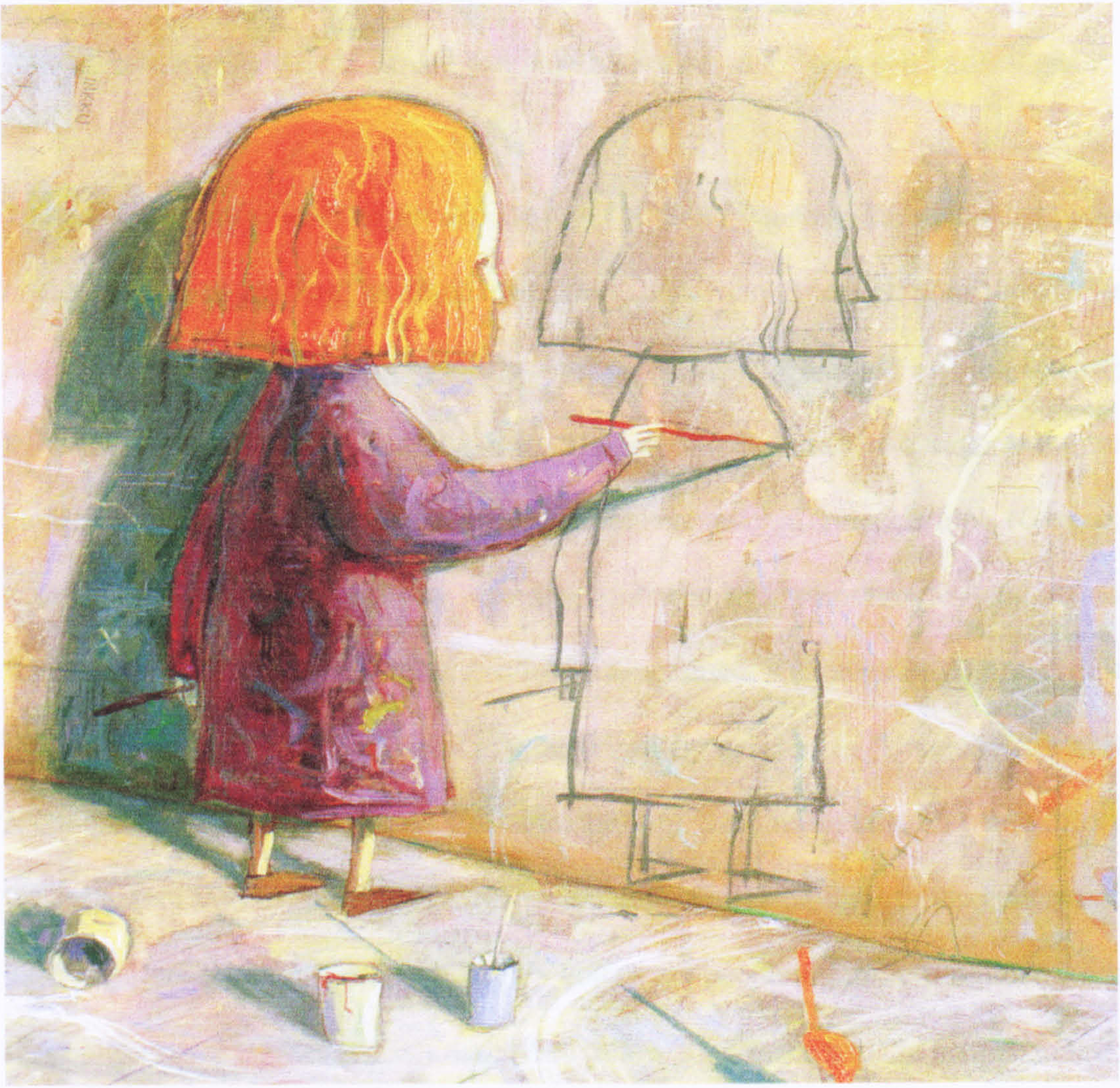
Rationale for adopting a post structuralist position

The work of Lacan is not without its critics and whilst the above model has possibilities as a framework for this research, its limitations should also be stated. Furth, (1994) considered Lacan's style to be obscure and difficult to comprehend. Wilden (1968) was quick to point out that whilst Freud declared that his work was based on hypothesis and speculation, Lacan boldly drew his ideas and generalised them from very limited empirical data. As a theory with any practical usage Wilden goes on to state that it 'remains a psychology for intellectuals, not for people' (Wilden, 1968, p.299). However, Lacan's system is also praised within the same text as remarkable in its capacity to combine original insights from phenomenology through to existentialism to structuralism. Through the work of Lacan it is possible to move away from a solipsistic psychology to one in which dialectic relationships can be rigorously analysed. Through a contemporary discourse study, I would argue that developing a framework derivative of Lacanian theory opens up possibilities that are potentially emancipatory for the topic under debate: *including* excluded adolescent boys by examining discursive constructions of their identity.

However, we are left with a further problem; if we adopt a Lacanian perspective then how can we, as Dor (1998) elaborates, ever really know who we are?

> The subject can perceive himself through his language only as a representation a mask, that alienates him by concealing him from himself.
> (Dor, 1998, p.136)

…or even 'who we are meant to be' as depicted in the children's book *The Red Tree* (Tan, 2001) below:



The notion of 'mask' in connection to identity is a theme that is developed in contemporary literature as portrayed in *The Monkey's Mask* (Kearney, 2003). Kearney proposes that the stories we tell each other about ourselves do not necessarily coincide with the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, and that it is difficult to maintain a coherent, yet ever changing sense of self when we are influenced by diverse social and linguistic practices. Perhaps this simply reflects Lacan's interplay between the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. Ultimately, we can never know who we are or who we are meant to be, as the Real always remains hidden, but we are continually motivated towards self realisation.

The epistemological story so far depicts a shift in thinking from the rationalist notion of an objective reality leading to fixed identities to a more socially constructed notion of relational, discursive and cultural influences on identity influenced by anthropologists and the work of Freud, Saussure and Lacan. The post modern and post structural movements have led to the idea that identity is an 'achievement of relationship' (Gergen, 1994) constructed within *diverse and changing* cultures and communities and as such the 'meaning' of identity can no longer be taken for granted. Kearney (2003) however, exposes that post modernism in particular (characterised by a belief in "diversity, instability and fragmentation," Nightingale and Crombie, 1999, p. 228) rejects the idea that there may be 'grand narratives', existing within the mass media. She also points to the new era of social-psychological research, where children's voices are becoming more prominent, suggesting that biographical studies (eg self narratives) allow for a more holistic understanding of how 'the self' is constructed. Bakhtin (1981) proposes a three part framework for a researcher in exploring such narratives:

- to determine how young people are influenced by other people or by dominant narratives;
- how they present themselves to the world; and
- how they view themselves from the inside.

Such approaches also bring into view the affective individualised aspects of identity formation that are underestimated in post modern thinking. With these points in mind, I would claim at this stage to take a predominantly post structuralist approach but not one in which I adhere to the more extreme position, influenced by post modern thinking of there being constantly changing and fragmented identities. Taking a more conservative post structural view (such as that espoused earlier by Parker, 1992) I would want to consider the possible existence of dominant narratives that in turn influence the practice of excluding adolescent boys and repress alternative inclusive identifications.

Returning to the wider societal constructs of identity I would suggest that any political analysis of the role of the mass media in the construction of identity might, for example, reveal a deliberate (?) regression towards essentialist notions of identity. I would speculate that adolescent boys such as those of interest to this study, may be intentionally constructed as a homogenous group associated with underachievement and criminality, the motivation being that politicians attract votes by inventing new laws to increase the surveillance and exclusion of this identified group, so that law abiding, hard working adults in schools and in society in general can feel safe. What is beginning to emerge is the need to investigate both national discourses and local narratives in the construction of identity which provides a rationale for my intent to draw techniques from both critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology in considering the identity of adolescent boys at risk of exclusion. Firstly, there is a need to take a closer look at identity within the context of what it means to grow up 'boy' in Britain today.

Identity in education

Power and object relations

Returning to psychoanalytical constructs it is relevant to mention the notion of object relations theory (Klein, 1932) as a preamble to considerations of 'identity in education.' Through her work Klein conceived the internal world as one in which we identify with objects that create an important basis for our relationship with our 'self'. Objects become transferred to this inner world from the outside (introjection) and transferred to the outside (projection) and the various anxieties we experience as children through to adulthood are seen through projective identification. The defence mechanism referred to as 'splitting' allows us to see objects (things or people) in an either/or kind of way. This helps us understand the tendency in talk (realised through social, political and institutional practices) to construct identities as either simplistically good or bad.

This can be said to be a global phenomenon as seen in George W. Bush's use of the term 'axis of evil' first mentioned in his State of the Union Address, 29th January, 2002 (The White House, 2002) linked to a preoccupation of politicians in the Western world to identify and seek out terrorists/terrorist regimes (the concept of which is given meaning not just by the individual and collective acts of terrorists but by profiling the 'type' of person who associates with this subculture). Interestingly, the phrase 'axis of evil' is seen to reappear intertexually in the media both immediately after the State of Union Address but several years later (eg McCurry and Borger, 2002; Goldenberg, 2007; Milne, 2007). This occurs despite attempts to discredit Bush's emphasis in relating the 'axis of evil' specifically to the regimes of Iraq, Iran and North Korea which Tisdall, (2002) declare are imaginary links, disconnected from reality. A parallel can be drawn here with my earlier Lacanian interpretation of how phrases come to create meaning, that is to say 'identifications' in the Imaginary Order that in turn create 'real effects' (eg anxiety around predictions of what some people might do).

This bipolar act of 'splitting' is highly evident in education in Britain with the vast debates and practices that surround the inclusion - exclusion agenda. In relation to the topic of adolescent boys at risk of exclusion, their construction as separating from conformist and achieving behaviours can be explored through a number of seminal studies. Willis (1977) in his study of the school experiences and relationships of working class boys reveals the dichotomy of how some boys become constructed as 'the lads', whose discourses play out anti-school/authority themes whilst other boys adopt the identity of 'ear'oles' or 'lobes' in other words school conformists. Interestingly, Willis notes that many of the ways in which the interactions of 'the lads' perform this identity is in subtle and metaphoric ways: in the form of "having a laff" and "piss taking" (Willis, 1977, pp. 28 and 32). Willis further relates the consequences of these less favourable identities in terms of the positions and choices available to these young men as they leave school and attempt to enter the job market. The way in which such divisions become institutionalised and oppressive is reflected in the writings of Foucault:

> We gain an understanding of how the 'normal' person and the 'deviant' each reproduce power relations in their everyday interaction. It is in this sense that the modern construction of deviance works to hierarchize individuals in relation to one another.
> Foucault (1977, p.233)

School experiences and identifications

Running parallel to and influencing the way in which young people construct ther identities in schools is the nature of school experience itself. Searle (2001) in describing his revolutionary attempts to create an inclusive school experience felt hampered by the introduction of a centralised National Curriculum and competitive market forces pushing attainments rather than inclusion as the main pedagogical goal. What Searle notes is lacking in schools are opportunities for children to learn about themselves, their own lives and their own histories:

> They [children] are excluded by what they are commanded to learn and by much of the prescribed body of knowledge, which often relates to them only in as much as it humiliates and ignores them. They are frequently excluded by prevailing attitudes towards race, class, gender, language, history, religion, culture and the essential features of the communities to which they belong.
> Searle (2001, p.10)

Rosenthal (2001) takes this point further stating that dominant and powerful people often choose to include or exclude 'weaker' individuals on the basis of similarities or differences. As applied to school settings he feels there need to be more meaningful dialogues between pupils and teachers, "regular conversations about diversity" (Rosenthal, 2001 p. 390) so they can acknowledge points of similarity to and difference from one another, to know each other better, for inclusion to be realised. A small Scottish research project conducted by

Turner and Waterhouse (2003) is used to illustrate this point. Tuner and Waterhouse found examples of discursive practice in two secondary schools where former deviant pupil identities had been replaced by normalising discourses. This "discourse of inclusivism" had the effect of improving relationships, attainments and "in-school careers" (Turner and Waterhouse, 2003 p. 30). However, we must be cautious about over generalising from studies aimed at investigating the identifying experiences of young people through discursive practices in just two school systems.

The reality in education is far removed from the above ideal. The practice of categorising children as having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) as encouraged by the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) coupled with the myriad of labels emanating out of clinical practice such as Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity (ADHD) are what Mancuso, Yelich and Sarbin refer to as "social constructions of unwanted conduct" (Mancuso et al 2002, p. 252). By representing children using such terms, not just through ascribing labels but through institutionalised conversations (eg school review meetings) and texts (eg statements of special educational needs) such identities acquire meaning allowing the practice of separating and excluding many such children to become validated. Watson (2005) notes that such conceptualisations are child focussed and:

> ...ignore the way in which institutions constitute subjects and determine the position of individuals- the repertoires they can perform and the way in which they can be- within the social structure.
> (Watson, 2005, p. 59)

Also, the process of a young person being identified with the label Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) is extremely haphazard due to the varying practices and standards applied in different schools and Local Authorities (Kelly and Gray 2000). Even the government acknowledges that perceptions of whether a child's behaviour constitutes an emotional and behavioural difficulty will differ depending on the context and are subject to individual teachers' expectations (DFE, 1994). Confirming the British experience, Kauffman (2001) notes that subjective notions of the identification of EBD extend to the American school system. They exist as a projection of the anxiety of a perceived threat to the stability, security or values of that system.

However, even when individual children are pathologised; when opportunities do arise for such children to relate to adults and explore biographically a sense of self (as in the experience of Mary below talking to her school educational psychologist) the possibilities of alternative subjectivities begin to emerge:

> ...on the first occasion I met Mary she just chattered away non-stop, and this continued to be the pattern of our meetings. It was almost as if the words Mary used were totally disassociated from their usual representations; but it was also the case that Mary seemed not to talk to me but to an 'other' who was present for her.
> (Billington, 2000, p.48)

Gendered Subjectivities

The identities of boys at risk of being excluded from schools cannot be divorced from a consideration of constructions of masculinity, especially during adolescence (the most significant period during the educational life of a child when the exclusion of boys is practised, DCSF, 2007). Modood (2005) in fact declares that within disadvantaged groups there are always intersecting identities, for example, combining elements of gender, culture, ethnicity and social class. Mills (2001) argues that schools are a major social site for the formation and contestation of masculinities. A number of key studies, some biographical in nature illustrate this point. As a starting point, the study by Willis (1977) mentioned earlier depicts a vivid picture of school as the place where a typology of working class masculinities are collectively produced, some being considered more powerful and dominant in the hierarchy than others.

More recent ethnographic studies carried out in British secondary schools (such as Connell, 1989; Mac an Ghaill, 1994) provide further examples of how schools are sites where masculinities are constantly reproduced, reinforced and contested through pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher interactions. Over time, however, consistent with Lacan's signifiers and signified and the notion of intertextuality in critical discourse analysis (along Lacan's metonymic axis), these studies show a shift in the way vocabulary becomes assigned to these identities; from 'lads' and 'ear'oles' to 'cool guys' 'macho lads', 'wimps' and 'swots'. Further to this new identities of 'doing' adolescent are emerging today as seen in terms such as 'emos' and 'goths'. Studies of classroom discourse in British secondary schools (eg Davies, 2003; Edwards, 2007) provide stark accounts as to how persistent masculine discourses are played out in lessons at the expense of talk related to learning. Another study, (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002) involved group and individual interviews with 11-14 year old boys in British schools encouraging narrative style accounts of the boys' lives in order that they could conceptualise and experience themselves and others in relation to the world around them. A small number of girls were included in some of the interviews. The research revealed that boys are largely defined in terms of their difference to girls, they have a sophisticated understanding of the contradictions associated with negotiating masculine identities and the methodological approach seemed to open out new avenues for the boys to think about redressing the distortions produced by the constraining hegemonic masculinity. Girls it would appear, assist in the construction of hegemonic masculine identities. Thompson et al (1998) found that girls perceive boys as vulnerable because they can't express their emotions, whilst they paradoxically despise boys who appear 'emotionally leaky' ascribing to them the identity of 'wimps'.

Adopting the word 'hegemony' meaning dominant ideology (Gramsci, 1978) studies such as the above appear to suggest that through institutional experience many boys identify or seek to identify with a hegemonic masculinity symbolised by "brutalisation, physical and emotional abuse, hardness and strength, contempt for sensitivity, delicacy and emotional intimacy" (McLean, 1996, p.16). Images such as these convey a sense of personal struggle as articulated by Bakhtin (1981) in his theory of dialogic relations through which a person undergoes a lifetime of struggle to 'become' somebody. In psychoanalytical terms this process is also associated with pain and vulnerability in the sense that boys separate from their mothers' nurturing world as perceived to be something that is both desirable but also repulsive. Again the concept of masculinity is seen in opposition to femininity which is played out in school environments in various discursive forms such as the denigration of girls into merely sexual objects, a preoccupation in talking about male dominated sports such as football and less explicitly through the practice of homophobic bullying (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Davies, 2003 and Edwards, 2007). Paradoxically, however, can we really accept the premise that schools as institutions are responsible in providing a context for the creation these hegemonic masculinities if the practice of exclusion by those in authority signifies the *disapproval* of brutal, abusive and bullying practices?

Identity in society

The commonly used phrase 'boys will be boys' (along with other recurring discourses, such as 'poor boys' and 'failing schools, failing boys' Epstein et al, 1988) has led to an expectation that many boys will identify with anti-social practices, both in school and in society. However, it can be said that assumptions such as these have largely gone unchallenged until the rise of feminism which can be seen as problematising these constructions. Other factors have also contributed to a deconstruction of masculinity, one being the demise of industrialism in Britain and changes in the work force leading to times of mass unemployment and vocational uncertainties, resulting in what some refer to as 'redundant masculinities' (McDowell, 2003). This also draws attention to the paradoxical nature of being a boy, that whilst boys might be perceived as powerful and privileged over girls there is also a sense of them being power*less* and vulnerable.

A wider look at identity in society demonstrates the extent to which boys are commonly constructed as problematic and shows that the consequences of this construction, the practices of both school exclusion and social exclusion are inextricably linked. The individuality (personal identity) of 'problematic' boys can be said to be closely linked to their social identity (as understood by the belief that identity is constructed at both an individual and social level, Harre and Moghaddam, 2003). Durkheim (1968) proposed that school experience reflects the wider society through which our social being is constituted "this being in each of us is the end of education" (Durkheim, 1968, p.124) and that the individual is sacrificed for the better good of society. This might sound like an out of date and ultimately essentialist and developmental perspective where social practices, such as exclusion through a 'collective conscious' can be justified. However, I doubt that it is far removed from the motivation to monitor, restrict and exclude problem boys (and men) that persists today. Also, this 'social identity', which has been largely neglected in research (Bennett, 2004) is important to explore through critical research as it is clearly a problem for marginalised young people, with significant consequences for their education, health and economic well-being.

Constructions of youth

Young people (especially, but not exclusively young boys) growing up in society today appear to have become collectively associated with antisocial behaviour, irresponsibility and criminal acts, which separate them from most adults who are diametrically positioned as sociable, responsible and law abiding. This identification of the young has been realised through multiple academic and political discourses:

> ...the packaging and repackaging of 'youth' in popular, policy, political and academic discourses operates to silence and subjugate the young as 'other', to demonize, differentiate and disenfranchise, to exploit and to displace anxiety. (Brown, 2005, p. 2)

However, the meaning of the term 'youth' is questionable as we see the media demonizing ever younger children in response to their crimes, as was seen in reference to the 10 year old perpetrators in the James Bulger murder case. Brown, (2005) offers a fascinating historical account of the construction of youths (especially boys) as criminals from the Victorian era to the present day. Notable points are that as a result of changes to the welfare state, the development of the youth justice system and developments in the police force (including vastly increased means of surveillance in modern times and increasing laws relating to offences) young people are not necessarily more problematic than before but are increasingly more *visibly* problematic. Brown, (2005) notes that media representations are dominated by a 'problem youth' paradigm and along with the growth of the media there has been a growth in troublesome populations. Further to this Robb (2007) notes that young people are now bombarded by visual images depicting how thin, healthy and attractive they should aspire to be and through commercialism there exists a multitude of choices enticing young people to associate with material objects through which their identities can be validated:

> Our very identities our sense of ourselves and who we are, even who we might or should become, are constantly refracted through media images.
> (Brown, 2005, p.2)

These media representations in turn are closely allied to policy development which further perpetuates the social practice of exclusion.

Contemporary sociological texts that look at the social identity of young people tend to use the term 'youth' in preference to 'adolescent' as the latter tends to be seen as a psychological concept associated with early notions of adolescence being a period of storm and stress as a result of physiological changes (Hall, 1904). The term youth (whilst relating chronologically to the same period as adolescence) has more social constructionist connotations with an interest in ways in which young people are positioned and defined within society. However, whilst I do not see myself as a traditional positivist psychologist I still favour the term 'adolescent' due to the influence of the psychoanalytical perspective in my work. The term 'adolescent' should be able to be compatible with the view that whilst a sense of self may be constructed, changed and influenced by socially constructed identities there may also be critical points in the individual construction of self (both unconscious and conscious) that occur at certain points in a young person's development, especially those arising from early mother/carer and child interactions.

Family experiences and identifications

This brings us to an important but neglected area in the literature (as noted by Robb, 2007) indicating the influence of family (and in particular parent-child) discourse that may also be highly influential in the construction of identities. Through a revival of Bowlby's theory of attachment and maternal deprivation (Bowlby, 1988) in recent years there has been much speculation of the significance of the very early bond created with the mother (usually) and baby through non-verbal reciprocal interaction and emotional attunement, leading to an internal working model of the child 'seeing themselves' as a person worthy to be loved and to be able to show love to others. Despite the perceived influence of context and social constructions of identity the ability of a child who has been deprived of developing this positive internal working model has far reaching affects on the way in which they can be and are perceived to be in educational settings (Geddes, 2006).

Those who have studied the school exclusion of adolescents have recognised the *continuing* importance of the emotional relationships young people need with adults, both in school and at home, through which they can make dialogic sense of their experience in the world (Cullingford, 1999). Whilst this may seem obvious, what is less clear is the nature of discourse in the home through which these identities might be realised:

> The importance of mothers in the process of identity formation should be acknowledged rather than dismissed as anti-models who have performed their initial nurturing function. A theory about the construction of a masculine identity in relations with fathers and mothers, identifying and rejecting features of both within a historical and social context is needed.
> (Heward, C. 1996)

A number of studies reveal that boys tend to turn to females (girls or their mothers) to talk about issues such as health, and sexuality (Brannen et al 1994). Boys also indicate that they feel emotionally closer to their mothers than their fathers (Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman, 2003a) although they express a desire to be closer to their 'often absent' fathers.

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) also suggest that it is the *way* that young men relate to their parents that is crucial in enabling them to explore the various identity positions available to them. In line with Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) I would, therefore, advocate that there is potential for understanding masculinities as being constructed through discourses that are influenced by both psychodynamic as well as social processes. Hofer, Youniss and Noack (1998) report on individualistic studies of parent-adolescent interactions in Germany and the Netherlands, showing how through discourse adolescents and parents differentiate themselves whilst maintaining good relationships with each other. Using a conversation analysis approach Hofer and Sassenberg (1998) categorised discourse by identifying the following speech acts: 'an initiative', 'a response to an initiative', 'an argument' or 'a reaction to an argument', showing that these facilitated adolescent individualisation. This study was conducted in Europe and involved 11-17 year old mother-daughter dyads, so the findings are rather removed from the constructed identities of British adolescent boys. However, the study revealed that the mothers used more initiatives: requests, proposals, questions and modifying arguments, whilst the adolescents used more reactions to initiatives: counter arguments, arguments and rejecting of requests in order to gain independence. They also noted that this parental style of interacting remained constant even when the content of the discourse changed and that the parents remained active in communicating with their daughters.

Kreppner and Ullrich (1998) report that different parental communication styles can be found in families and that these also remain fairly constant within families and across situations:

(i) habitual- characterised by low ambivalence, low discussion intensity
(ii) ambivalent- higher degree of ambivalence, low discussion intensity
(iii) secure- low ambivalence, high discussion intensity with the mother

However, they highlight that the communication style of adolescents tends to change depending on the age of the young person. At around 13 years adolescents tend to increase *their* use of statements and negotiations with the mother when they strive for autonomy and affirmation, whereas communication patterns with fathers appear less complex. By 15 years of age some studies note an increase in 'relational symmetry' where the mother re-adjusts

[illegible]

her communication style to include more negotiations and fewer statements, which affirm one's position whilst considering the other's view, McLellan and Yates (1998). What is unclear from these studies is the range of identities, available to young people through these different styles of family discourse although it is thought that the secure parental communicating style allows the adolescent to 'try out' a wider range of identities than in families where this is lacking (Kreppner and Ullrich, 1998). This view is consistent with research into secure attachments and attachment difficulties that are believed to result from the very earliest mother-baby interactions (Ainsworth et al, 1978) and suggests that parent-child interactions are also highly influential in creating *adolescent* identities, hence suggesting that identity construction is a relational, evolving and discursive process.

Finally it is thought that to achieve healthy pro-social functioning as an adult, adolescents need to develop autonomy during this period of their lives which requires a good deal of negotiated discourse within family settings. For some young people, however, opportunities to have many or *any* interactions with their parents during this critical period are lacking. The *absence* of parent-adolescent discourse is thought to have more far reaching consequences than parent-adolescent discourses that are discordant (Cullingford, 1999).

Identity of the researcher

The notion of reflexivity is essential to social constructionist, discursive research along with the belief that researchers bring their own histories to their work. As such this study would lack credibility if I did not declare my own position and motives within the social world under investigation (Wellington, 2000). Firstly, the reader so far may have noticed the bias in investigating the identity of adolescent boys. But...

Why boys?
Why adolescents?
Why discourse?
What justifies me as a female researcher to be able to *begin* to make sense of masculine identities?
Why identity?

Why boys? Why adolescents?

The very fact that boys are significantly over represented in school exclusion figures for both fixed term and permanent school exclusions (DCSF, 2007) and that this is more likely to occur during adolescence, determines a need to try to address this problem due to the significant educational and social consequences for boys. However, first and foremost I am the mother of an adolescent boy (who is affectionately known in the family as Mr C) who has struggled most of his life to acquire a positive identity as ascribed by others (teachers, relatives, peers) myself included. At the age of 13 Mr C's problem identity changed to that of a calm, rationale, considerate young man. All this at a time when the literature talks about challenging adolescent-parental discourses whilst one's son works through his 'identity crisis'. I want to make sense of that. I also spend 50% of my professional life working exclusively with children and young people who have become permanently excluded. I want to acknowledge my own prejudices and projections of difference (Lenney, 2006) and those of others, in order to inform reflective professional practice.

Why discourse?

As a young child I came to associate with a discursive, literate identity within a social context where my mother was a writer and poet. I was able to read before I went to school and developed a fascination for words, word play and how words can have many associations and meanings. I also had an identity as a 'comper', someone capable of (sometimes) winning competitions through the skill of writing catch phrases. As a teacher I studied for a Diploma in Language and Communication Impairments in Children through which I developed close associations with speech and language therapists. As an advisory teacher for the 'gifted and talented' I quickly discovered the power of manipulating question forms in discourse with children that enabled them to conceptualise their thinking at the highest levels. Through my constructed identity as an educational psychologist I perceive myself as a humanist, forever searching for ways of constructing 'thick descriptions' of children and young people as opposed to 'thin descriptions' constructing pupil identities that lead to negative consequences (Freedman and Combs, 1996). A personal and professional fascination with the potential link between language and behaviour began to emerge along with the belief that we should not take the performative power of discourse for granted (Gale and Densmore, 2000).

What justifies me as a female researcher to be able to *begin* to make sense of masculine identities?

The literature suggests that in the last century the rise of feminism has served to expose the process whereby masculine identity becomes formed. There are different definitions and styles of feminism (eg Marxist, liberal and radical, Hepburn, 2003) and a traditional emphasis (eg that of Millett 1971, a radical feminist) is one of patriarchy where men are seen as 'being' more powerful and superior to women. Consequently feminism has been perceived as needing to work to assert female rights. Feminists such as Cixous (1986) and Irigarary (1985) who were influenced by psychoanalysis and Lacan provide a more post structuralist perspective advocating that identifications of masculinity and femininity are constructed. As such, women can signify through their own writing alternative positive feminine identities which are variously constructed and not always positioned as secondary to men. Further to this, feminist Nancy Chodorow (1978) proposes that rather than accepting the unproblematic traditional notion of there being 'specific personality characteristics in men,' men can also be seen as the product of contemporary society and as such can also have variable identities. From this more post structuralist feminist position I feel we can acknowledge and intervene in areas of identified male powerlessness and vulnerability, to *improve* the quality of life for boys and men, and women indirectly of course!

This being the case, I might be well positioned as a woman researcher working with a group of adolescent boys in being sensitive to the ways in which the boys position themselves and are positioned by others. Further to this, in the previously quoted study by

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) the researchers felt that the presence of girls in some of the group interviews with boys enhanced opportunities for the boys to construct themselves differently. Therefore, I feel I can defend my position as:

> ...women's experiences represent a site outside the dominant discourse which can be used as a starting point for the problematisation of naturalised understandings.
> (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002)

Why identity?

During my emergent identity as a social constructionist I conducted an earlier study investigating classroom discourses between teachers and an adolescent boy displaying challenging behaviour (Pomerantz, 2005). In a chance meeting with a teaching assistant after the data had been gathered the assistant commented to me that the boy's behaviour could best be understood as an attempt to represent his identity. This unexpected conversation has fuelled my curiosity to investigate the discursive construct of identity in relation to adolescent boys at risk of exclusion from school.

Finally, Kearney declares that:

> We are the most important part of the research and it is much more useful if we do not cover our tracks. Those tracks are central to the story.
> (Kearney, 2003, p. 60)

Taking Kearney's advice and emulating the practice of Edwards and Potter (1992) I will post reflexive comments at points throughout the text in order to continually reflect on my own identity, not just as a researcher, but as a mother and practising educational psychologist.

Chapter Two Rehearsing and Setting the Stage

Drawing from a review of the literature relating to identity and the positionality of the myself in relation to it, the following 'position statements' can now be summarised:

- Identity can be conceptualised as both individualised and socialised.
- Discourse in talk and text is performative in constructing identities.
- Identity studies can be informed by psychoanalytical theory and discourse theories and methods.
- Biographical studies provide fertile ground for establishing how identities are constructed.
- Feminist studies have enabled the social construction of boys to be realised and expose areas of powerlessness and vulnerability in boys' lives.
- The construct 'identity' can be seen as a combination of intersecting gendered, cultural and social class subjectivities.
- Key sites for the construction of adolescent identities are families and schools.
- Identities evolve and change over time and are influenced by critical *relational* periods in the life of a child.
- The social practice of excluding adolescent boys cannot be divorced from the way masculinity is discursively constructed in school settings and from politicised rhetoric surrounding problem youth that is played out in the media.
- Institutional exclusion represents the projection of anxiety by those in power in response to the 'splitting' of bad boys from good boys and from most girls.

Research focus

From these position statements the following key research questions were then extrapolated:

How is the identity of excluded adolescent boys discursively constructed nationally (in the education media) and locally (in family and peer group conversations)?

What counter discourses exist creating new identities that facilitate the inclusion of adolescent boys?

The following is a subsidiary research question, and although not central to the study, is one which is difficult in *relational* research to ignore:

How is the identity of the parents, teachers and researchers of excluded adolescent boys constructed in relation to them?

Taking a social constructivist and predominantly relativist position I do not set out to search for the truth about the exclusion (or the potential inclusion) of adolescent boys. Instead I seek to identify ways in which excluded adolescent boys become positioned through talk and alternative constructions that may have the potential to bring about change for those who need it. Burr (1995) provides a relevant example:

> ...a study in which the researcher claimed that children in education are caught up in oppressive power relations would be evaluated not in terms of whether this was an accurate or truthful account of reality, but in terms of how useful and liberating such an analysis might be to children themselves.
> (Burr, 1995 p. 162)

If we accept the premise that identity is discursively situated, then by definition the research methods must be discourse related. This leads us to a consideration of the wide variety of discourse methods available to researchers. However, as previously stated 'discourse analysis' is more than a methodology (Willig, 2001) and is a whole theoretical paradigm in itself. Put more accurately it is a collection of paradigms stemming from many disciplines which offer a confusing labyrinth of possibilities. Beginning with an early text on the topic, (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) the reader is confronted with the daunting realisation that "it is a field in which it is perfectly possible to have two books on discourse analysis with no overlap in content at all" (p.6). Also, the term 'discourse analysis' a construction in itself with a number of different meanings depending on which theoretical basis you approach it from, tends to be used in the literature as an umbrella term which can encompass any one or combination of the following: conversation analysis, ethnography of communication, discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis, poststructural discourse analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis.

Space does not permit a thorough critique of all these methods which has already been undertaken in my earlier work (Pomerantz, 2004). As discourse techniques require considerable practice, I had already trialled the use of conversation analysis (Pomerantz, 2005) and Foucauldian discourse analysis (Pomerantz, 2004). I had found conversation analysis more suited to analysing controlled classroom interactions and looking at the patterns of sequence in talk rather than a method suited to the systemic analysis of biographical accounts. Foucauldian discourse analysis at the other extreme was felt to be limited in proposing the continual construction and reconstruction of identity as defined by discourse with little attention as to how linguistically this is achieved. Also, some would argue that Foucauldian discourse analysis whilst useful in exposing issues of power and resistance fails to take into account the emotional aspects of identity formation and is in most respects opposed to a psychoanalytical approach (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2003b). In view of the research questions, the theoretical basis and analytical methods that are best suited to the areas of enquiry are those from discursive psychology and critical discourse analysis (linked to psychoanalytical interpretations) that are explored in detail below.

Identity research and discursive psychology

Discursive psychology is well documented as an alternative approach to the study of memory, emotion and identity in particular (Willig, 2001), moving away from traditional realist studies that view discourse as an informative tool (eg through questionnaires and interviews) to establish facts about some underlying reality. Rather than seeing talk as a means to an end, discursive psychology is interested in treating all versions of the world as constructions; establishing how talk itself helps us create meanings relating to constructs such as identity. As such, the emphasis is on identifying *discursive resources* rather than cognitive processes and *discursive practices* rather than features of individuals (Hepburn, 2003). The aim of the analysis in discursive studies is not to categorise people but to identify the discursive practices through which the categories are constructed.

Potter and Wetherell (1987; 1995) were among the earliest proponents of discourse analysis from the perspective of discursive psychology and were interested in the action orientation of talk, that is to say how people use discursive resources to achieve interpersonal objectives in social interaction. In order for a person to establish that what they are saying is a factual and stable representation of the world they are faced with *dilemmas of stake* which can take a number of forms such as 'disclaiming.' For example, a disclaimer is a verbal device that anticipates and rejects potentially negative attributions; "I don't agree with the permanent exclusion of pupils but..." Adding to this plethora of terms, discursive psychologists tend to use the term *interpretative repertoire* (clusters of terms, figures of speech etc) instead of 'discourse' to emphasise that language use in everyday life is flexible and dynamic:

> One of the advantages of considering constructions like culture-as-heritage as interpretative repertoires is that it suggests that there is an available choreography of interpretative moves – like the moves of an ice dancer, say – from which particular ones can be selected in a way that fits most effectively in the context. (Wetherell and Potter, 1992, p.92)

In the late 1990's a series of debates surrounding different forms of discourse analysis took place especially in relation to the perceived (and contested) similarities and differences between conversation analysis and discursive psychology out of which has come the suggestion that discursive studies in social psychology require a more synthetic approach (Wetherell, 1998). For example, the close analysis of situated talk-in-interaction in conversation analysis where analysis of turn taking and sequential organisation identify the orientations, meanings and interpretations of participants within a specific discourse event could be seen to *complement* the approach in discursive psychology where interpretative repertoires and variability in situated accounts can expose how speakers take up various subject positions in talk. Developments in discursive psychology have been fore fronted in particular by Edley and Wetherell (1997) who have drawn on the concept of ideological dilemmas (Billig 1987; Billig et al, 1988) linking this with interpretative repertoires and the notion of subject positions to create a more *critical* discourse analysis, or as stated by Wetherell (1998) a "critical discursive social psychology" (p.405).

The notion of positioning (Davies and Harre, 1990) refers to the dynamic construction of identities relative to others and represents an essential feature of social interaction. Relating this to discursive psychology, positioning is considered to be the process of negotiation as people actively take up positions within different and sometimes competing discourses. As such, people can become both the subjects of discourse and agents in social and cultural reproduction and change. This suggests an air of optimism for our excluded adolescent boys, although Hall (1996) would argue that in the modern world identities have become fragmented and unstable as they are constructed across a number of contradictory and often antagonistic discourses.

Harre's notion of positioning is useful as it allows discursive psychology to begin to take account of how individuals might be constructed in relation to wider socially constructed identities and social practices; an aspect of discursive psychology that is generally lacking as it assumes meaning is produced through or in text which negates the need to look at the wider, social and material context for further information.

The work of Billig (1987) drew attention to the concept of ideology; that is to say the ways of thinking and behaving in a particular society which make the ways of society seem natural and unquestionable. In relation to discursive psychology, rather than creating language, people can be said to use terms that are "culturally, historically and ideologically available" (Billig, 2001 p. 217) and through the rhetorical analysis of patterns of discussion and argument, ideology (what is taken for granted as common sense) can be revealed. An example of the influence of Billig's work would be the study by Wetherell and Potter (1992) who provide one of the most extensive accounts of how they used discursive psychology to study the discourses of *Pakeha* (white new Zealanders) about Maori cultures in which they show the social consequences of these discursive constructions. Further to this Billig et al (1988) have highlighted that the utterances of ideology are rarely straightforward but are often 'dilemmatic'. Analysis by some discursive psychologists has then developed to include tracking the ideological tensions between the use of competing interpretative repertoires as participants in talk try out, manage, or resist different versions of culturally available repertoires.

Discursive psychology, despite its bold attempts to synthesise with other discourse analytic approaches such as conversation analysis and draw on post structuralist concepts such as subject positions and ideological dilemmas, has some limitations. Notably, more recent forms of critical discursive psychology cannot explain why people are motivated to identify with some discourses and not others (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002) and its concern is with public discourse, which prohibits an understanding of how we may study internal manifestations of discourse such as thought or self awareness (Willig, 2001). Further to this discursive psychology denies the possibility of identity construction as being anything other than a conscious process. Attempts to redress these points come from the work of Hollway (1989) who was influenced by Lacanian theory and who draws on object relations theory to propose that aspects of our subjectivity are formed very early in life when the child shifts from being at one with the mother to being separate. As a result we are universally predisposed to desire security which Hollway sees as an explanation for why some people invest in certain discourses. Billig (1997) although influenced more by Freud than Lacan considered it possible to link psychoanalysis and discourse analysis through the concept of the 'dialogic unconscious' meaning that through dialogue people repress thoughts, and at a more general level, acquire the ability to repress. For example, some ways of talking make certain themes possible and others taboo, so that statements not only repress thoughts but also take part in that repression which would explain why we might invest in one particular discourse over another.

More recently Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003b) have used Lacanian psychoanalytical theory to explore the way subjects are positioned in discourse and consider that such an approach obviates the need to see individual and social identities as separately constructed. This is significant in reference to my thesis as Frosh et al draw from their own research with adolescent boys in which they demonstrate that some boys take up positions in opposition to the dominant ideology of hegemonic masculinity. Frosh et al make reference to Lacan's Symbolic order as a site where subjectivity is formed, where the conditions for communication are created and out of which develops a deeper recognition of 'subjecthood.' Adopting aspects of culture are seen as a necessary condition of 'selfhood.'

> In this theory, the subject is structured in and by discursive relations which are institutionalised in culture and manifested in linguistic practice, and through this are productive of human consciousness.
> (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2003b, p.41)

This interpretation of the processes of identity formation is consistent with my proposed 'hypothetical construction of identity' presented in model 1, chapter one.

Wetherell (2003) drawing from her discursive research on men and masculinity (Edley and Wetherell, 1997) demonstrates that taking a psychoanalytical reading of the transcribed text helps explore how men who have grown up in similar contexts can represent these experiences and position themselves differently. Particular anxieties and forms of defence and object relatedness (eg splitting and projecting) seek to explain these positional differences. However, Wetherell (2003) raises questions about the justification of the knowledge claims that a psychoanalytical reading entails and provides a critique of such methods.

A further discursive study by Gough (2004) which included focus group discussions with adolescent boys also draws on psychoanalytical theory to account for the emotional dimension within the construction of masculine identity through which anxieties around homophobia are rife. Gough claims that psychoanalytical concepts such as 'anxiety', 'desire' and 'defence' can inform and enrich the discourse analysis of texts and make up for what discourse analysis lacks:

> In talk where the language used is evidently infused with anxiety and/or desire, where speakers passionately construct 'others' as threatening and/or weak, and where these others are vehemently decried and discursively expelled from 'normal' society (and self), then an exclusive focus on language and construction falls short. (Gough, 2004, p. 247)

Reflexive box

Reflections as an educational psychologist:

Working in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) where incidents of homophophic bulling often occur amongst the boys, I can now recognise that these young people are projecting their anxieties around masculinity that are likely to be more visible amongst this group, many of whom have experienced difficult parental relationships characterised by domestic violence and aggressive and controlling father figures.

Approaches such as those by Hollway (1989) and more recently, Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003b), Wetherell, (2003) and Gough (2004) are persuasive to me as a researcher; they provide a social-psychological theory in which I can combine the struggles of individual subjects and their subjectivities in coming to terms with themselves as social subjects. In doing so I am helped to explore how these individuals acquire subject positions and can begin to understand why it is that an adolescent boy acquires the position of 'excluded adolescent boy' as opposed to 'included adolescent boy,' or even the potential different ways excluded adolescent boys can position themselves:

> While culture makes available the subject positions we can inhabit, the 'investment' that people can have in these subject positions is not necessarily captured by the articulation of the discourses themselves; rather, it may hinge on unspoken and at times unspeakable events, experiences and processes, all of them 'cultural', but also deeply embedded in subjectivity.
> (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2003b, p.42)

The above critique of discursive psychology methods highlights that more recent developments have enabled researchers to demonstrate links between the combined individual and social identities of individuals. However, one further criticism is that some approaches in discursive psychology do not shed light on the specific way discourse functions linguistically, or adequately address the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of a particular social order that is characterised by power relations (Phillips and Jorgenson, 2002). To address this we need to investigate ways of synthesising the more recently developed critical discursive social psychology with the practice of critical discourse analysis that has arisen from critical linguistics.

Identity research and critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach to research that has grown out of critical linguistics. Historically critical linguistics has been influenced by social philosophers such as Habermas, 1977, (who recognised that language serves to legitimise power relations in society) research into pragmatics (eg the work of Levinson, 1983) and sociolinguistics. These multi-paradigmatic influences serve to remind us of the complexity of discourse studies:

> Relationships between language and society are so complex and multifaceted that interdisciplinary research is required.
>
> (Wodak, 2001, p.8)

Pragmatic and sociolinguistic research has been largely preoccupied with investigating the linguistic competence of speakers but in the early 1990s the advent of CDA marked a shift in research practice towards investigating the production and interpretation of texts in relation to societal structures, creating a "distinct theory of language, a radically different kind of linguistics" (Kress, 1990, p94). A number of proponents of CDA from the field of critical linguistics began to emerge but the works of van Dijk (1985) and Fairclough (1989) have been particularly influential. For example, the journal *Discourse in Society* founded by van Dijk in 1990 has provided a network of academics the ability to synthesise and debate various approaches to discourse study, especially research that utilises CDA.

As with all discourse approaches, variations of CDA can be found, but to summarise, five common features can be identified:

- The character of social and cultural processes and structures is partly linguistic-discursive;
- Discourse is both constitutive and constituted;
- Language use should be empirically analysed within its social context;
- Discourse functions ideologically; and
- CDA is a critical, emancipatory approach that takes the side of oppressed groups. (from Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002, pp61-64)

CDA is 'critical' in the sense in that it seeks to expose connections between language, power and ideology that might be hidden from people. The main concern is to look for the ideological significance of the choices speakers and writers make and for significant patterns in the distribution of these choices. Whichever variation of CDA is adopted, most studies draw from the work of Halliday's systemic functional grammar (Halliday, 1978) in applying a linguistic analysis of the text at a micro level. Further to this, Halliday's influence in the development of CDA as an approach to analysing discourse is reflected not just at the level of linguistic analysis but through his proposed interconnectedness of what he terms the three meta-functions of language (Halliday, 1970). By this he means the ideational function (language lends structure to experience), the interpersonal function (language constitutes relationships between participants) and the textual function (language creates coherence and cohesion in texts). Benwell and Stokoe (2006) have related these meta-functions to their work on discourse and identity, a point to which I shall return in the concluding chapter. This leads us to acknowledging that CDA is an analytical tool which is specifically useful to investigating institutional, political, gender and media discourses in order to expose relations between language and power and the connection between politics and the social conventions in society.

The analytical process favoured by Fairclough (2001a) a key proponent of CDA involves: the linguistic analysis of text (description); a discursive analysis of how texts are produced and consumed (interpretation); and an analysis of social practice (explanation). Fairclough (2001b) claims that the starting point for CDA is one of social issues and problems, especially ones that preoccupy sociologists or educationalists. As the focus of my research study relates to the growing problem of the exclusion of adolescent boys (mirrored by the growing problem in Britain of the increasing male prison population) I would see CDA as having potential use. CDA could not only help to identify how it is within Britain that groups of adolescent boys have been identified as needing to be excluded, but in relation to the second research question such an analysis might identify counter discourses that could be used to reverse this social practice. During the 'description stage' of CDA (linguistic analysis of text) referred to above, it is important for a researcher to identify the *intertextuality* of texts (the way texts are in dialogue with earlier texts and draw from them) and to look for *interdiscursivity* (different discourses articulated together in the same communicative event). The former is likely to show how discourses become dominant and 'ideologically fixed' over time and the latter could expose discursive and emancipatory resistance. However, CDA researchers tend to work with 'institutional' rather than 'ordinary' talk (Cameron, 2001) and may be less suited in this study to the local narratives produced with adolescent boys and their families, but would be suited to a consideration of media texts of relevance to those in education.

Also at the 'description stage' van Dijk (1996) notes how useful it is to interrogate the text linguistically, for example by looking for the use of vocabulary and pronouns. In his studies of discourse relating to ethnic minority groups, the discourse of race was found to be framed in a language of 'them' and 'us' and minority groups were often marked as outsiders through the use of terms such as 'immigrants' or 'foreigners.' I would draw an analogy here with my earlier references to the splitting of bad boys from good boys/good people linked to the inclusion-exclusion agenda of relevance to this thesis. Optimistically, in my practice as an educational psychologist I note that politicised/institutionalised terms can also change in emancipatory ways over time, for example, I recently became aware that a new centre for 'immigrant families' in the North West of England has been named 'The Centre for International New Arrivals.'

Cameron (2001) highlights that at the 'interpretation stage' of CDA the approach has been critiqued for representing the particular meanings imposed on the data by the analyst because of his or her ideological commitments. Clearly any researcher using discourse analytical techniques (CDA and others) would have to declare that another reader of the discourse data could place on it his or her own and different interpretations. However, in CDA it can be argued if close systematic attention is paid to the whole text and internal contradictions are identified, then dominant discourses should emerge and there would be a limit to how many interpretations could be given to that text (Cameron, 2001). However, as a researcher I need to consider carefully issues of reflexivity in an attempt to be conscious of my own ideological position. What can also help address this concern is the practice of enriching the analysis by going beyond a single text to examine other related texts.

Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) claim that Fairclough offers the most sophisticated framework for the analysis of the relationship between societal practices and language use, but feel that the distinction between the discursive and non-discursive remains unclear as social practices are often just seen as the background of the discursive practices, the distinction being at best analytical rather than empirical. Van Dijk (2001) although a proponent of CDA himself, considers that while CDA attempts to bridge the gap between micro and macro approaches, we should look to strengthen CDA by integrating various approaches to arrive at a multidisciplinary framework of discourse analysis.

Phillips and Jorgensen (2001) take up this challenge and present a combined discursive psychology and CDA framework in which the rhetorical analysis of discursive psychology is maintained and practiced alongside CDA's more linguistic analysis of text in addition to the consideration of wider social practices. Fairclough (2001) agrees that CDA can be used in combination with other methods and that not all aspects of the approach have to be included in the analysis. This integrated approach would seem to embody the reasons for pursuing discourse analytical methodologies as reflected by Willig (1999a) in that discourse analysis can provide: space for alternative constructions, therapeutic interventions (through autobiographical narratives), education (raising consciousness), campaigning (media reports) and lobbying (policymakers).

Metaphor and Lacan's metonymic axis and metaphoric axis in discourse studies

The concept of Lacan's metaphoric axis and metonymic axis was described earlier in chapter one and is presented in model 1 as being integrated with aspects of CDA and discursive psychology. A thorough evaluation of both discourse analytical approaches in this chapter serves to reinforce this model which I use as a framework in chapter's three to five for the analysis and presentation of the discourse data. What is of particular significance and interest to me is the notion of metaphor which seems to be a key part in the construction of meaning and the promotion of a version of 'adolescent boy' that leads to the social practice of exclusion.

Metaphor represents to me an essential component in the repair of 'damaged identities' through my favoured practice of using therapeutic stories with permanently excluded children (Pomerantz, 2007a). It is, therefore, no surprise that metaphor is referred to in psychoanalytical theory and in discourse analysis:

> A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events...surrounding any one object, event and person etc there may be a variety of different discourses, each with a different story to tell about the object in question, a different way of representing it to the world.
> (Burr, 1995, p.48)

The interpretative repertoires of discursive psychology relate to clusters of terms, *metaphors* and vivid images (Potter and Wetherell, 1995) and examples from CDA studies show powerful uses of *metaphor* in media articles, for example, "an invading army" or "a tide" in reference to immigrants (van Dijk, 1996 p. 98). A further example taken from a 'prestigious' academic source, the Scottish Educational Journal, refers to 'the rising tide of indiscipline' (Wilson, 2005, p.56). The same metaphors can, therefore, be intertexually observed, both carrying the same meaning here of being overwhelmed.

In talking of narrative experience, Murray (1989) relates metaphor to identity and positions it against Lacan's metonymic axis:

> In terms of identity, metaphor deals with the similarities and differences between one's own situation and what one knows of others'. Its partner, metonymy, is an experiential domain of meaning which relates events according to their contiguity in time and space rather than their relationship to similarly placed events in different contexts. It is the metonymic axis of meaning that most strongly contrasts the narrative mode of understanding with the paradigmatic. And it is the concern of narrative with a specific time and space that qualifies it as a medium for finding a unique identity in the social order.
> (Murray, 1989, p. 181)

This helped to further conceptualise my proposed model 1 and the decision to place importance on metaphor in my analysis of the data.

Methodological considerations

Previous studies investigating the constructed identity of adolescent boys raised a number of methodological possibilities for inclusion in my study:

Sources: media texts, conversations

Participants: adolescent boys (and girls?), parents, teachers, journalists (indirectly)

Location: schools, classrooms, homes

Data gathering tools: individual and group interviews to establish narratives, naturalistic data that is 'captured,' collating newspaper articles

Analysis: Discursive psychology, CDA, psychoanalytical readings

A pilot study and a false start in conducting the main research helped me to design the eventual research study to ensure that it could be ethical, rigorous, valid and practically possible. Initially, it was decided to incorporate all the above possibilities with the exception of group interviews and the inclusion of girls. These possibilities were rejected on the grounds that there are very few accessible girls amongst excluded pupils and it was envisaged that it might be difficult to recruit excluded pupils (as found by Lown, 2005 in her research) and as such group interviews might be difficult to set up. The research was to be located in homes and PRUs using detailed semi-structured interviews adapted for use with the teachers and parents of a small number of adolescent boys who had been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. The boys would also be interviewed and it was intended that some classroom discourse would be captured to expose the constructions of identity of the participants in a more naturalistic and social context. A semi-structured interview schedule was devised that intended to capture both a biographical account of each boy's individual identity and aspects of his social identity. The interview schedules were piloted with a boy who was about to begin a reintegration package to a new mainstream school and with his mother and the headteacher of the PRU he attended. The questionnaires contained questions relating to four themes: family experiences growing up, school experiences, peer relationships and adult relationships as these contexts and relationships were found in the literature to be influential in the construction of identities. There were many prompt questions under each heading which were re-written and re-sequenced following the pilot phase.

For the main study two permanently excluded adolescent boys were identified in two different PRUs where I practised as the educational psychologist. Several boys were considered for inclusion in the study but the pool from which to select gradually diminished as parents and pupils expressed reluctance and anxiety at the thought of being interviewed. On reflection, how could I on ethical and realistic grounds expect permanently excluded pupils to be willing participants in disclosing biographical accounts? They had been denied their right to participate in constructing aspects of their identity by being ascribed labels such as permanent excludee, ADHD, conduct disordered, and EBD. How could they trust me as a researcher who represents a gendered, social class and professional self in direct opposition to their individualised and socialised selves?

The main study encountered further problems. With my new shiny researcher identity I set out to interview the first pupil (Boz) and his mother in the home environment. Reflecting on a transcript of my conversation with Boz I soon noticed that the discourse was dominated by questions and comments on my part that provided no 'interactional space' for Boz to tell me about himself. The semi-scripted interview felt clumsy, unnatural and silencing. Consequently, Boz's responses were often short and focused on telling me more about his peers than himself. Added to this I felt under pressure to complete the interview in one attempt in case it was difficult to access Boz a second time. Also, I felt uncomfortable as my professional (educational psychologist) identity would normally cause me to work with Boz in a very different way, for example, getting to know him over a period of time by engaging in non- threatening activities and general conversation (for example by playing pool or engaging in computer games) before attempting any direct work or questioning. Further to this, teachers in the PRU were projecting anxieties about my request to record classroom discourse which in turn would compromise my attempts to gain naturalistic data. The study was finally abandoned when Boz' mother threatened to have him placed in care; he set light to the PRU and went missing for several days.

Difficulties for researchers in working with 'hard to reach' participants are documented in several studies. Wellington and Cole (2004) in their evaluation of disaffected students' experiences of being involved in a DfEE project were methodologically hampered due to the complex life experiences of the participants. They also noted that the government's word 'disaffected' could not signify a homogonous identity on this group of young people who presented in a wide variety of ways. However, on a positive note the researchers felt that over time their interviews with the young people had a therapeutic quality in enabling the participants to reflect on how they had changed.

The charity Young Minds provide useful suggestions for enabling young people to engage in research and discussions about their life experiences (Young Minds, 2005) and indicate that focus groups offer a less threatening alternative to direct interviews. Curtis et al (2004) also conclude that the traditional discursive nature of interview-based research is less accessible to teenagers and also advocate group methods. However, 'hard to reach' children, whom they define as those in need of support services, such as disabled children and children excluded from school engage best with researchers if they are seen in very small discussion groups of about three and a non-judgemental approach is maintained by the researcher. However, they note that this is a challenge for the researcher if the discourse becomes racist or homophobic.

Interestingly Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, (2002) found that the responses of young men in their studies often differed markedly depending on whether they were taking part in individual or group interviews. A key feature of constructions of young masculinity identity as being a disavowal of feelings that might be construed as feminine were evident in private interviews the boys held with male interviewers but were absent in group research contexts (some of which contained girls). Therefore, as a woman researcher I remain critically aware that in my research with excluded boys some aspects of their identity may not become actively constructed through the research discourse. Regarding the selection of participants, Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) limited their study to conversations with adolescents in school settings, in which the participants were able to comment on constructions of themselves in which they indirectly made reference to parents as influencing their sense of self. Parents' own constructions of the identity of their adolescent sons is lacking in this and other studies and, therefore, became included in my own study as the literature suggests that families are also key sites for the construction of adolescent identities.

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) experienced difficulty in piloting draft interview schedules which included specific questions in an attempt to tap into the history of individuals' experience of crime, victimisation, anxiety/worry and risk/safety. A false start in their own research led them to conclude that participants will invest in particular positions in discourse to protect vulnerable aspects of self and may unconsciously disguise the meaning of their feelings and actions. This led to their concept of the 'defended subject' (an extrapolation of Klein's object relations theory) to signify that people protect themselves from their anxieties in interview situations. This is consistent with the view from Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003b) that identities can be repressed. From their position as researchers, Hollway and Jefferson developed the free association narrative interview method with the belief that this would accommodate the psychoanalytical principles of the 'defended subject.' As a psychoanalytical perspective became a theme in my research relating to excluded adolescent boys and as my pilot phase also led to a false start, I decided to place some emphasis on free association narrative methods in 'producing' my data.

Methodological decisions

On the basis of investigating and critiquing the methodological choices available, I determined the following methodological decisions which included:

- the need to engage in conversations with the parents of excluded adolescent boys as well as the boys themselves;
- the need to provide a safe, comfortable space for a small group of boys to engage in conversations with me to establish local narratives;

- the need to plan for sufficient time to have unhurried conversations characterised by spontaneity;
- the need for me to keep a close reflexive eye on my involvement in the data construction by making entries in my research diary in which I process my thoughts and feelings during the data 'production' phase;
- the need to investigate sites such as the education media to explore the construction of 'grand' narratives that powerfully maintain the social practice of excluding some adolescent boys;
- the need to use a hybrid of methods taken from discursive psychology and critical discourse analysis;
- the need to consider a psychoanalytical reading of the discourse data; and
- the need to place prominence on identifying how the use of metaphor helps explain how identities become established as meaningful and consciously recognised.

The process of writing this section, in relation to discourse methods and their prior use in studies of masculinity and adolescent boys has inspired me to reflect on the following:

Reflexive box

Reflections as a researcher:

I need to be very consciously aware that the boys with whom I participate in research are likely to repress aspects of their identity, because I am female and because other boys in the group are likely to police their identity if it deviates from the hegemonic masculine identification. In carrying out CDA, I need to consider what my own values and ideologies are surrounding the exclusion of boys.

Chapter 3 Performing

The main study involved working with boys from two secondary schools geographically close to each other in a small urban community in the East Midlands. As the earlier false start had resulted in 'hard to reach' data, I decided to work with adolescent boys (and their families) who were at risk of permanent exclusion, but still on roll in mainstream schools. At the time, I was involved in working with the Local Authority (LA) to investigate ways of reducing permanent exclusions, so the opportunity of working on an inclusion project with adolescent boys arose. It is not the intention of this study to report on the workings of the inclusion project as the project had a different focus and underlying methodology and is reported elsewhere (Pomerantz, 2007b). However, aspects of the inclusion project provided fertile ground for the production of discursive data relating to the identity of the boys. This data was acquired through family meetings at the beginning and end of the project and group sessions with the boys in their schools which proceeded over a 12 month period. In the six months leading up to the start of the project I gathered a corpus of media articles relating to the disruptive behaviour of pupils and school exclusions. These were selected from weekly copies of the *Times Educational Supplement* and the *Education Guardian.*

Ethical and practical considerations

The British Psychological Society (BPS, 2005) and the University of Sheffield ethical guidelines were carefully considered in approaching the participants who included eight boys (alias Raggy, Tazzer, Spike, Spud, Scotty, CJ, Buster and Jay) ranging in age from 12-14 years across two schools, and their family members. All the boys were selected by senior staff in these schools as potentially benefiting from an inclusion project; they had all experienced periods of fixed term exclusion from school and all presented with persistent disruptive behaviour, the category most highly recorded in the LA as the reason leading to permanent exclusion from school (Pomerantz and Graham, 2005). The parents of these pupils were initially contacted by the senior staff and had given verbal agreement to their son's involvement in the project. This was followed up by me carrying out a home visit where the parent(s), young person and other family members were invited to join the meeting. Care was taken to explain the purpose of the project, gain informed consent and reassure family members and the boys that they could withdraw from the project at any time (see Appendices 1-3). Consent was gained in all cases and I proceeded with the family meeting 'loosely' using a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix 4).

Work in the schools then proceeded with fortnightly one hour group sessions with the boys. The work took place in small rooms away from teaching areas and the boys were greeted with a hot drink and snack on arrival. Sessions were structured around the following themes: introductions and first impressions of each other, first impressions of school; experiences of school exclusion; behaviour in school, families, being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, economic well-being and last impressions (these last five themes being taken from the Five Outcomes, DfES, 2003). At first I made use of planned activities and games but these were quickly abandoned as the boys relaxed into the sessions which became characterised by spontaneous conversations.

Reflexive box

Reflections as a researcher:

I was contemplating a comment from Kearney (2003) in which she reflects on her own research and felt that as she became less sure and articulate her interviewees became more sure and fluent. I feel now that this may account for why the group conversations with the boys in my own study were characterised by a series of spontaneous conversations. Normally, I feel more secure going into a situation well organised and as a result had planned a series of activities and games to structure the group sessions, so that the participants were more likely to engage with each topic and work cooperatively. At the time I was really surprised that soon into the sessions the boys showed less and less interest in these activities and just wanted to talk. As a researcher I was travelling a long distance from home to the schools where the research was taking place and trying to combine time for my research as part of a demanding professional job. Consequently, I would often arrive at the sessions feeling tired and ill prepared. This appears to have been a contributory factor that has worked in my favour allowing the discourse to be naturalistic and free flowing.

Half way through the project one boy experienced a managed move to the other school in the project (to prevent a permanent exclusion), during the project one boy rarely attended and three boys became permanently excluded and were no longer able to attend the group sessions. Therefore, due to the varying availability of some of the participants, data relating to only two boys were used for detailed analysis although some transcripts relate to these pupils within the wider group.

Parents were contacted at several points during the project and a closure family meeting took place with the parent(s), the young person and in some cases other family members (see Appendix 5). At this meeting the young person was presented with a summary description of how I and the other boys perceived aspects of the young person's present and future self as a means of checking out whether or not the young person was in agreement with the ascribed descriptions relating to his identity (see Appendix 6). It was later possible, therefore, to consider over time how the constructed identity of the boys represents their past selves, present selves and 'futured selves', a term derived from Adler to signify a guiding fiction we create for ourselves in anticipation of the future (Head, 1997).

After each family meeting and group session a transcript was made for later analysis. However, as noted by ten Have (1999, p.78) "transcription works as a major noticing device." As such, I was quickly drawn to interesting features within the text and this initial reading supported the later detailed analysis.

From the corpus of media articles collated across the six months preceding the start of the project it became difficult to decide which articles to select for analysis. As I was interested in identifying intertextuality and how signifying words and phrases may develop into 'grand narratives' or 'hegemonic discourses' over time (on Lacan's metonymic axis) I considered it important to have a spread of articles that reflected the media discourse at the onset of the project. The second research question seeks to establish any counter 'minority' discourses that might exist and as such, from an initial reading of all the articles gathered, a decision was made to include as many articles as possible where interdiscursivity was present (alternative discourses occurring alongside each other). Also, the subsidiary research question acknowledges that the identity of others (teachers being one example) cannot be separated from those of the boys themselves as identity construction is perceived as relational. As such an attempt was made across the corpus to select as many articles as possible portraying concern about pupils' disruptive behaviour, that were deemed by those who wrote them to be representative of many different voices in the education system. Interestingly, in selecting the data across six months only one article could be found to include representations of an adolescent boy who had experienced fixed term exclusion from school. There were no articles in the corpus which represented the voices of teaching assistants, behaviour mentors or family liaison workers all of whom play a significant role in supporting young people who display persistent disruptive behaviour.

Discursive psychology and critical discourse analysis require a very careful systemic and 'interrogative' analysis of the discourse data (once a transcript is made and/or a written text is selected) and the need for me as the researcher to engage reflexively at all stages of the process. To assist in this process I present the methods used in the following table (table 1 below) which is a synthetic hybrid of both the above approaches, a *critical discursive psychology* influenced in part by the synthesised approach advocated by Phillips and Jorgensen (2002).

Table 1 A synthetic discourse analytical tool: a critical discursive psychology

Stage 1 Description- How is the discourse constructed?

What are the various interpretative repertoires?
Can clusters of terms: graphic descriptions, figures of speech and *metaphors* be identified?

What can be gained from a linguistic analysis of the text?
How are verbs, tenses and pronouns used?
How is modality (how speakers affiliate with their statements) demonstrated?
How is mood (declarative, interrogative and imperative) indicated?
How is transitivity (the way events are connected or not connected to subjects and objects) presented?

What is the variability of these constructions?
Are there examples of (intertextuality) words and phrases being used across texts?
Are there examples of (interdiscursivity) different discourses being used in the same discourse event?

Stage 2 Interpretation- What is the function of the discourse?

What rhetorical devices/discursive strategies are used?
Can dilemmas of stake: disclaiming, blaming, 'extreme case formulations' (Pomerantz, 1986) be identified?
Is it possible to determine patterns leading to 'established' dominant discourses and contradictions leading to minority (and possibly emancipatory) discourses?
Are negative or positive feelings evoked through the use of contrasts?

What does a psychoanalytical reading of the text add to these interpretations?
(This will be mainly addressed in chapter four)

Stage 3 Explanation- What are the social effects of the discourse?

What is the ideological significance of the choices speakers and writers make in the construction of excluded adolescent boys?

How are excluded adolescent boys positioned in education, in families and within society and what are the consequences of this positioning?

Methods of analysis set out in table 1 were used to determine how the discourse constructs "the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p.49) that is to say 'excluded adolescent boys.' Also, depending on the nature of the discourse data being analysed (either transcripts of conversations or media texts) some aspects of the analysis were applied more than others, for example a linguistic analysis of the conversational data was kept to a minimum.

Willig (2001) recommends that in discourse studies the analysis and discussion sections of the written report should be merged, therefore, the following sections of chapter three address the discourse data in this way.

Analysis and discussion of media texts

An analysis of media texts was embarked on first, with the intention of framing the wider societal context against which to look at the locally constructed identities of the two boys. Six texts were selected to represent a range of constructions of pupils exhibiting disruptive behaviour and exclusion practice from those invested in the education system which included a mixture of direct narratives from, and representations of: politicians, OFSTED inspectors, head teachers, classroom teachers, a former Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and an excluded boy. Boys were not specifically singled out in all the texts as being solely ascribed the identity of disruptive, but they were in most. Also, not all texts selected talk directly about excluded pupils, although all relate to the type of persistent disruptive behaviour that leads to the majority of exclusions in British schools. Particular attention was given to the use of metaphor in the analysis.

Media article 1: Politicians fight over behaviour (Shaw, 2005a, Appendix 7)

This article was written in the few months preceding the British general election May 2005, and immediately stands out due to the use of graphic descriptions and metaphors. Three interpretative repertoires were extracted from the text which are used as subheadings for the more detailed analysis below:

'Behaviour-as-war' repertoire

The *war repertoire* is evident through the following clusters of terms:

"fight"

"battleground"

"tackle disruptive pupils"

"mob rule"

"gangs running riot"

"marched him off"

"struggling against the odds"

Applying a closer linguistic analysis of the text presents a number of observations. Firstly the mood of the article is imperative, with an authoritative tone coming from the education minister (Ruth Kelly) who has "ordered local authorities" and "instructed OFSTED." The mood is further played out by a headteacher who "criticised me [a class teacher] for disturbing her" for asking her to deal with a violent incident.

To further endorse this position of power and opposition there is an overuse of the pronouns "she," "it," and "they" and an absence of pronouns that would promote inclusion and cooperation. In some instances, the verb tense used is in the simple present tense "politicians fight over behaviour" and "there's mob rule in the corridors and gangs running riot" which creates the impression that these are factual statements and everyday occurrences.

The war repertoire is all encompassing as it is used to position Labour politicians in opposition to Conservative politicians, where their own battle is being fought in the battleground of the classroom which in turn supports the positioning of pupils in continual opposition to teachers.

'Behaviour-as-punishment' repertoire

The *punishment repertoire* is evident through the terms:

"crackdown"
"tougher stance"
"stick to beat schools"
"extra scrutiny"
"expelled"
"zero-tolerance policy"

The punishment repertoire here is mainly applied to schools where politicians are positioned in opposition to failing schools. An interesting contradiction emerges in relation to 'exclusion' which is perceived as a positive solution rather than a punishment by the education secretary and the general secretary of The National Association of Head Teachers, whereas class teachers (who are generally positioned as vulnerable and powerless in the article) perceive 'exclusion' as punishment but feel head teachers and appeals panels are working against a class teacher's ability to see this sanction actualised. There is also a sense that powerful bodies such as the 'Conservatives,' 'The National Association of School Masters and Women Teachers' and 'appeals panels' are the agencies that have the power to make decisions that affect others rather than decisions made by named people which has a distancing effect between events and subjects absolving individuals of responsibility.

There is a sense of urgency in the text and an imperative, commanding tone created by the use of the exclusive pronoun she: "by 2007 she expects all schools to be working together to improve behaviour." However, to counter this we hear the figure of speech "she was giving schools an additional breathing space" (which evokes feelings of being able to live and breath) although the soon to follow comment "stick to beat schools" serves as a vivid reminder of the consequences for schools some of whom may not 'live' in the future if OFSTED close them down. Ruth Kelly is represented in close affiliation with her statements as intentions that *will happen* in the future.

'Behaviour-as-fear' repertoire

A series of surveillance measures: "metal detectors," "CCTV cameras," "drug tests" precedes a collection of terms depicting a *fear repertoire*:

"daily behaviour nightmares"

"next time my brakes would be cut"

"called every name under the sun"

"tried to strangle a small girl"

"perverse decisions by appeal panels"

"reinstated violent and disruptive pupils"

Through this discourse it is class teachers who are positioned as vulnerable and the Conservatives are positioned as rescuing teachers through protective measures whereas the Labour government have given too many rights to disruptive pupils and head teachers are depicted as unsympathetic. The clusters of terms are threatening and evoke strong feelings of fearfulness not just for teachers during their daily jobs but appearing away from school in their dreams. The language is emphatic, for example, in the phrase "called every name under the sun," where the use of "every" represents an extreme case formulation.

Central to the argument used by the education secretary to address this 'war zone' is that education ministers should drive the practice of improving provision for disruptive pupils *out of schools*, which metaphorically is deemed "the Cinderella of the education world," hence validating the practice of exclusion. The only sense of cooperation from a political perspective is that schools should work together to develop such practice. The use of the metaphor "Cinderella" further reminds us that the consequences for excluded pupils today is that they are pitched into an impoverished system of educational provision.

Interestingly, the article talks more about behaviour as an object with its own subjectivity that is dominating and controlling everything in its path and direct references to excluded pupils or pupils on the verge of exclusion do not appear in the opening paragraphs. On the first few readings of this text the war repertoire appears to dominate but as the article progresses, the fear repertoire takes over as seen in the intensifying graphic descriptions, figures of speech and metaphors. There are also many references to the punishment repertoire and as such it is difficult to establish which discourse is dominant over another. However, all three discourses exist alongside each other in the text to position disruptive pupils, mainly in groups as a violent, threatening, powerful force against teachers, leading to the need for greater surveillance and exclusion. Also, the identity of disruptive pupils is also linked to other vulnerable groups, deemed "hard to reach" such as "asylum seekers and children in care." Classroom teachers are noticeably positioned as victims in this text, as being bullied by the government (through OFSTED) and individual, unsympathetic head teachers. This construction evokes feelings of concern and sympathy from the reader.

Running parallel to this, the government are positioned as holding unequal power relations by which they can bring schools down. So, the ideological significance of the text is one in which politicians in power can continue to position schools and individual pupils as needing to be eliminated. Paradoxically, however, the way in which the article positions politicians at war *with each other* weakens this powerful position, suggesting that the political situation is unstable and leaving open possibilities for change.

To begin to effect change, there is little counter discourse evident in this text although a 'Behaviour-as-partnership' repertoire is hinted at through the phrase "schools were making progress in tackling bad behaviour by working in partnerships" and a comment that "schools need support not punishment." However, no vivid descriptions, figures of speech or metaphors are used to elaborate on these statements and as such the counter discourse remains largely hidden.

Media article 2: Behaviour: are you winning? (Slater, 2005, Appendix 8)

This article written by a different *TES* journalist maintains some of the earlier repertoires and shows evidence of intertextuality. However, the vivid fear repertoires are absent and the text gains its impact by being written in a both an imperative and declarative tone using verbs that are factive, that emanate from a 'disembodied' report commissioned by the government through its regulatory body OFSTED. For example, "OFSTED report shows," "it said," "the report said," the report stressed" etc. The authority, therefore, is not directly from the mouths of politicians but seems to carry more weight (than article one) due to the 'inspection' evidence presented. This article, then leads on cleverly from the one before showing that the "stick to beat you with" is out to identify failing schools. In this sense the article positions schools and teachers as vulnerable. Two of the same repertoires are evident:

'Behaviour-as-war' repertoire

The verb "tackle" occurs four times in this short extract and at first the reader is drawn into the football field as opposed to the battlefield with the use of the "political football" metaphor, reminding us of the political pre-election games. However, the reader is quickly reminded of the *war repertoire* with vivid images of the now familiar "gang culture" and that schools need to "win the battle against bad behaviour." The faintly heard 'behaviour-as-partnership' repertoire is mentioned in terms of schools needing the support of parents and services to "win the battle" although schools are further berated for not showing sufficient evidence of these partnerships.

'Behaviour-as-punishment' repertoire

The punishment again is directed mainly at schools, with the terms such as "forced every school to take disruptive pupils," although schools will be more able to punish pupils with the "new powers for heads." The ultimate punishment, the permanent exclusion of pupils, is condoned and supported.

As mentioned earlier, one of the rhetorical devices used by this journalist is to repeat terms to establish his account as a stable representation. This is demonstrated again in the emergence of the following new repertoire:

'Behaviour-as-concern' repertoire

A *concern repertoire* is introduced near the beginning of the text, not just by the use of statistics to 'prove' that secondary schools are still failing to deal with behaviour but by the references to children in early years education as seen in the following phrases:

"children as young as five are being educated in special units"

"the report is based on...early years settings" "particular problems with children aged four to six who are "ill prepared socially and emotionally" for school"

However, the extract also counters this concern by using a moderating (hedging) device in reference to much older children where "drug abuse is a daily challenge...but less of a problem in schools," "unsatisfactory behaviour by a minority" and "acts of extreme violence remain extremely rare." But just as the reader is feeling safe readers are reminded of pupils making "malicious abuse claims" and the verb "worrying" is repeated as we are reminded that the situation is not improving. Other clear concerns relate to "many disruptive pupils have special needs, poor language skills or come from disadvantaged or dysfunctional families."

As this text is written using indisputable language the unsuspecting reader may miss some contraction to this certainty towards the end of the text where some less stable phrases are introduced, such as "tackling perceptions even where there is little evidence," "[schools reported] gang culture was widespread but could offer little evidence to support their claims" and "heads to search pupils suspected of carrying knives." Also, it would be hard to see how OFSTED inspectors are in a position to judge families as "dysfunctional."

In this text 'behaviour' is again objectified as an entity in its own right and pupils themselves are barely mentioned except when boys are contrasted with girls and positioned as "raucous and unruly" and "unruly and disaffected" in opposition to girls who are positioned as "troubled". The term "disaffected" suggests that boys are without feelings and they are also (in being identified in contrast to girls) denied the right to be troubled, but are presented more as immoral. Other than this, the article is mainly concerned with the positioning of schools as vulnerable in the war, punishment and concern interdiscursive mix of discourses which perpetuate the powerful positioning of the government through its regulatory watchdog OFSTED.

Media article 3: Gone for good (The Teacher, 2005, Appendix 9)

This rather long extract appeared in a special section on "exclusion" in the TES magazine *The Teacher.* It is very useful to include in view of its direct relevance to the study as it represents an anonymous head teacher's narrative expressing his painful dilemma in considering the permanent exclusion of a boy and justifying his decision. Unlike the previous extracts, 'behaviour' in this text is subjective and personalised. The newspaper editor chooses to add his or her own metaphor of the 'bad apple' which he uses pictorially to introduce the piece as "Sammy...who is ripe for exclusion." Interpretative repertoires are clearly evident throughout the text and appear closely connected in an interdiscursive mix to position the boy with his terrifying identity as *having to be* permanently excluded:

'Behaviour-as-fear' repertoire

The most striking interpretative repertoire that greets the reader is a *fear repertoire* and this pervades the whole article. The following clusters of terms are extensive:

"the pupil from hell"

"bullying younger students"

"He is a thug, well on the way to being a full-blown sociopath" "beaten them up"

"damaging people"

"damage to the students"

"assaulting staff"

"an open insecure school site"

"the black eyes"

"the distressed students and parents"

"rampaging through their lessons hurling abuse at them...wreaking havoc"

"how many students has he terrorised...looked to staff for protection"

"he'll be on the premises, in corridors and classrooms terrorising the students I'm trying to protect"

"He'll be your intruder in the middle of the night, the person who snatches your mobile phone, threatens you with a knife in the street"

The force of these descriptions evokes feelings of terror in the reader especially as the use of the pronoun "your" in the last quote makes the situation very personal by bringing Sammy into every reader's home and following every reader out in the street. This chilling development is further developed right at the end of the narrative where the author cleverly links the individual story of Sammy to the problems of a multitude of Sammy's in society. This generalisation of Sammy occurs whilst maintaining him as personified and the individual reader (who *represents* society) as having now to take responsible action: "I sign the letter, liberating this school from its responsibility for Sammy and placing it firmly on society's shoulders, your shoulders. I hope you are more successful in curbing his behaviour than we have been."

In taking the action of permanently excluding Sammy the headteacher softens the fear repertoire (although only slightly) by stating, "many staff and students will sleep a little better." A tentative intertextual link can be made here with media article one which refers to the "daily behaviour nightmares" of teachers. The graphic images, figures of speech and metaphors in the fear repertoire are more than descriptions as they signal intentionality and consequences. Repeated verbs such as "damage" and "terrorising" indicate the inflicted cost and pain of Sammy's actions. It appears that Sammy is capable of inflicting pain simply through discourse, "always seems to hit a nerve with his criticism." Also, the verbs used are frequently those of simple present tense ("bullying, "damaging," "assaulting," "rampaging" and "terrorising") presenting the account as real and factual and the mood declarative. The introduction of the word 'terror' links to the war repertoire, already established in previous texts:

'Behaviour-as-war' repertoire

Although the practice of identifying terrorists and the act of terrorism as warfare is very topical in media discourse generally, the war repertoire is more subtly developed in this article, through terms such as:

"exhausted every strategy"

"new damage that it will trigger"

"he's escaped exclusion before"

"he'll try to settle old scores"
"liberating this school"
"Maybe I could get an Asbo [Anti-social behaviour order] against him, although I secretly think a crossbow would be more effective"

This last quote is of note as the word "secretly" infers an unconscious undercurrent. A link can be made with an earlier phrase in the text, "I have stayed my hand so many times" in which the author of the narrative is referring to his pen in writing (or holding back from writing) the exclusion letter. I was left wondering whether at an unconscious level the head teacher would like to use his hand to attack Sammy. The writing of the letter links to the emergence of a new interpretative repertoire:

'Behaviour-as-life-or-death' repertoire

Links between life and death are made metaphorically at several points during the text using the following clusters of terms:
"he didn't ask to be born"
"the headteacher who must sign his life away"
"well past his sell-by date"
"life's unfair"
"the head of year moved heaven and earth to get him a place"
"Is there anything that can save Sammy?"

The above metaphors reflect a parallel with the consequent damage to other pupils and teachers inferred through the fear repertoire. In this case the damage is to Sammy himself and the reader is reminded of the dire outcomes surrounding young people who do become permanently excluded from school (also evident in media article one when we are reminded that provision for excluded pupils is "the Cinderella of the education world.")

Reflexive box

Reflections as an educational psychologist:

I am reminded of an 11 year old permanently excluded boy I attempted to work with recently (the youngest excludee in the PRU) who would not talk to me directly but drew me a piece of graphic art which said "Life's Hard Die Young." Whereas those of us with our professional and middle class identities can dream about our futured lives, children such as these represent the frailty of human existence. For some boys such as my client who had been identified since the age of nine as a criminal and drug addict they have no other possible 'selves' to consider in a world where they are discursively reminded by the police and the youth offending team workers of 'who they are', an identity that is likely to be literally short lived.

Having positioned Sammy with a degree of certainty as a powerful terrorist in his school, capable of inflicting fear and vast damage to staff and pupils alike, the head teacher then introduces a more fictional account of who Sammy is or might become. The word "probably" (as a moderate hedging device) and the use of the future verb tense contradict the head teacher's earlier factual accounts: "he'll probably sit at home and smoke cannabis:

his current hobby. When he needs more cash he'll embark on a petty crime spree." However, the voice of certainty returns with, "if he doesn't overdose first, he will go to prison." Either way a consequence of incarceration or death is indicated.

The head teacher also uses a developmental perspective to reinforce his imagined vision of Sammy's futured self. He declares factual information about Sammy as a youngster, "he bit other children, kicked them, punched them, took their toys away and broke them." This extends to Sammy's present self as a "thug" which is guaranteed to lead to him "being a fully blown sociopath." Another convincing use of discourse is the dehumanising way in which the headteacher denies Sammy the capacity of thinking, "He has no thought for others." Can we imagine a human being without any thoughts for others? I notice that the author doesn't use the term 'feelings,' but are Sammy's actions random impulsive acts of behaviour? This is highly unlikely as the head teacher contradicts himself by stating that Sammy is making others pay for the way life has been unkind to him which implies he has feelings and shows a degree of premeditation and awareness.

In the meantime the headteacher uses a range of rhetorical devices to position himself as caring professional. Whilst he does use the strategy of 'blaming' in his comment that Sammy's mother has "been incapable of caring for him" and "the only person who hasn't [tried] is Sammy" the rhetorical devices used are more commonly those of 'disclaiming.' The head teacher softens his earlier demonising of Sammy by introducing an oxymoron, "I used to have some romantic notion that he was a lovable rogue," although he claims that his position on this has changed. Instead, his disclaiming strategies (that is to say attempts at positioning himself so that he avoids attracting negative attributions from readers) are achieved by the way in which he spins out the narrative expressing his pain and reluctance in arriving at the decision to permanently exclude Sammy. The interdiscursive mix of fear, war and life-or-death repertoires serve to position the head teacher as a powerless victim, a failed protector of his staff and pupils and as someone who has "personally devoted time and effort to getting him to behave, gratefully accepting any crumbs of compliance he has thrown my way."

This notion of the head teacher personally trying to help Sammy optimistically suggests the emergence of the 'behaviour-as-partnership' repertoire. There are other fleeting references to partnership in relation to some members of staff who "have gone the extra mile," and Sammy's grandparents who "have attended every meeting set up to discuss Sammy's problems." However, I wonder if this is a true partnership as the phrases "stern conversations," "getting him to behave," and "grandparents have been called in" depicts a discourse of asymmetrical relations.

Media article 4: Out of control (*Education Guardian*, 2005, Appendix 10)

Media article 4 continues the biographical theme and represents a series of short narratives from teachers themselves who wrote to education@guardian.co.uk which were reproduced verbatim in the one article. Although each narrative could be analysed separately, the newspaper editor has already identified these extracts and presented them to the outside world as *collectively* representing the *daily* problem of disruptive behaviour in schools and as such they will be analysed as a whole. The opening headline, "Out of control" at first suggests that the article will be talking about pupils out of control, but this verb phrase has no subject or object, so the reader might speculate 'who is out of control? The opening lines then proceed to talk of "disruptive pupils taking over the learning environment" suggesting that it is the teachers who have lost control to the pupils. One might think the adverb "out" could relate indirectly to the practice of pupil exclusion, although some teachers report their desire to or practice in 'getting out' of the profession. Unlike article 1, this text talks directly from the start about disruptive pupils although on reading through the extracts 'behaviour' again becomes objectified. Interpretative repertoires (especially figures of speech and metaphors) were more difficult to identify, perhaps because the text has multiple authors, or perhaps because the text has a declarative tone, where the authors are presenting their realities in a direct and factual manner, 'from the heart' so to speak (indicating a modality of 'truth.') Two main themes appear to emerge as dominating the text:

'Behaviour-as-deviant' repertoire

A number of descriptions are used to imply deviance, such as:

"highly unreasonable individuals"
"deviants"
"unruly and rude"
"violent and abusive behaviour"
"a boy spat in my eye"

Some of these deviant behaviours are ascribed to individuals deemed to be "foul mouthed monsters," evoking subhuman images. Extreme case formulations such as "constant," "always" or "daily/every day" seek to establish these accounts as factual and stable. This leads to the positioning of teachers as being oppressed:

'Behaviour-as-oppressive' repertoire

One teacher's narrative has an overly oppressive and anxious feel with phrases such as:

"the incredible tension"

"worries for the future of society and worries about the good kids"

"I gave up the job"

"burst into tears"

Whilst there are few metaphors to elaborate on an oppressive repertoire there are a number of rhetorical devices evident. The above writer makes use of contrasts to establish her account as credible, placing disruptive pupils in contrast with "the good kids" and also the teacher's own daughter it seems. However, other teachers use disclaiming devices, for example whilst acknowledging behaviour is a serious problem they are just "fortunate" in being in a "calm school" or they "have learnt to detach" themselves or they "have no problems personally" whereas problems are directed towards new and young members of staff. Blaming devices are also prevalent in respect to "the children," "society" and "parents" who are not seen as supportive of school staff. At no time do these teachers consider their own skills in managing classes and in working to support disruptive young people; the teachers are personally blameless as demonstrated by the example of one teacher returning to a new post and regaining her confidence.

'Behaviour-as-war' repertoire

Although not strongly demonstrated, and one example comes from the journalist who introduces the extract rather than the teachers, the war repertoire is faintly evident in terms such as "joined forces." Also "the atmosphere volatile" suggests as if it is ready to explode.

'Behaviour-as-partnership' repertoire

As seen in the previous extract a hopeful counter discourse, a partnership repertoire, begins to emerge in the final narrative where the pupils are depicted as working together with the headteacher to create a new discipline policy. However, this democratic stance is somewhat eroded as the reader notes the use of passive clauses "there was no enforced discipline policy" and "parents have responded well to the structured approach" which distances the head teacher from her alleged collaborative stance (in a similar way to that of Sammy's headteacher in media article 3). Also, she admits as an acting primary headteacher (and exclusions are far less common in primary than secondary schools) to permanently excluding two pupils in this article which is intended to offer "tips" for teachers.

To sum up, in this article the effect of the deviant and oppressive repertoires position some pupils as a violent force in conflict with some teachers who are in turn positioned as emotionally vulnerable and oppressed. Teachers are seen to be powerless and mainly advocate to 'get out of teaching' as well as advocating the 'getting out of pupils.' Where teachers position themselves as confident and assertive they go to great lengths to do so in the form of what James, (2007) would refer to as "impression management" (p.52), but they also recognise teachers who are in the 'victim' position. Dilemmas of stake are significant in this article as a means of establishing the teachers' accounts as valid and typical. Coming after the previous article about "Sammy," this text infers that there are many Sammy's in the education system and could be said to evoke further negative feelings of fear and anxiety on behalf of readers.

Reflexive box

Reflections as a researcher:

It occurred to me at a point when I became completely immersed in my analysis of the above texts that on the first few readings I had missed a great deal of the way the discourse was constructed and the action orientation of the text. What has helped to draw out this meta-analysis is the practice of multiple readings of the text and analysing the text as one of a sequence of texts. Also I am reminded of my own biography as an A level English literature student when I analysed the poems of Keats until I could no longer gain a further ounce of meaning, not a painful process but one I found exhilarating. As article 3 also makes use of visual images of good and bad apples, yet there is no direct mention of this in the text, it made me wonder how many other subliminal messages we encounter in our daily lives. As a future researcher I would want to invest in the analysis of gesture and other paralinguistic features in addition to the words themselves.

Media article 5: Don't pick on the bad apples (Savage, 2005, Appendix 11)

This article shares many of the attributes of the previous text in that it is a direct first person narrative written by a class teacher in a very matter of fact declarative style and contains only a few metaphors or figures of speech. The author describes herself as a former Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and now a Head of Department in a comprehensive. An immediate link is perceived in the title "Don't pick on the bad apples" with media article 3 'Gone for good' and this article is presented as a "sounding off" a retort to the previous author. This author (Savage, 2005) takes exception with the identifying of pupils to be excluded as 'bad apples' and uses the metaphor "before the barrel is spoiled" to signify schools' priorities in raising pupil achievement and the inferred subversive practice of 'EBD cleansing' as the raising standards and inclusion agendas of the government are perceived in direct opposition to each other. This practice is also exposed as very underhand, "the legally excluded have only ever been the tip of the iceberg." The article therefore focuses on blaming 'schools' and the 'government' for the rise in exclusions and the author stresses the ideological significance of this in her text which is declarative and questioning. The following interpretative repertoire predominates:

'Behaviour-as-concern' repertoire

This repertoire is expressed mainly through direct speech which might be typically expected of a former SENCO:

"Raising Standards At Any Costs agenda"

"I am concerned about the number of children with special needs who have been excluded from their secondary schools"

"Where will all these excluded pupils with reading difficulties and attention-deficit problems go?"

To stress the government's "Raising Standards" agenda Savage uses the approach of capitalising the above phrase. She also uses the contrasting personal pronoun "I" with the depersonalising reference to "the Government" (again capitalised) and "schools" creating the effect of absolving any individuals from taking responsibility. This positions her as powerless in halting these ideological practices. The rhetorical device of contrasting is also seen in her comparison between the "high achieving technology college" and the "struggling comprehensive" and later through her powerful metaphor "the remaining bog standards." This image of schools carries a number of connotations as the mind thinks of a number of related figures of speech such as 'down the plug hole' or 'in the sewer.' Excluded pupils it seems are identified with the lowest common denominator. Once again we are reminded of the impoverished education provision available to excluded pupils.

Whilst this article is less vivid, anxiety provoking and memorable than media article 3 which it critiques, it does introduce the beginnings of a new interpretative repertoire:

'Behaviour-as-learning' repertoire

A *learning repertoire* is central to the author's argument with her emphasis on the "Raising Standards agenda" and is also played out in the following phrases:

"removing low-achieving children is one way that schools can improve their results"

"One vocational class I set up lost about half its original number in three years"

The direct first person style of this text shows that the author affiliates closely with her comments which are presented as factual and evidence based, "Some went before SATs, the rest before GCSEs."

In contrast with other articles, this text positions the "Government" and "schools" as practising bad behaviour including immoral and illegal acts. Also, the concern repertoire is directly related to the positioning of excluded pupils as vulnerable and displaced as opposed to teachers and schools previously positioned as vulnerable and the title "Don't pick on the bad apples" further positions these pupils as being bullied and in a powerless position. However, the effect of the discourse is oppressive rather than emancipatory as excluded pupils are seen as dependent, illiterate and unable to concentrate. Another interesting observation is the comment after the end of the text in which the editor is encouraging other readers to "Write us a 400-word Sounding Off." This left me wondering how it is the *head teacher* author of media article 3 was commissioned to write his long narrative when others have word limits placed around their capacity to create meaning by engaging in the identity construction and positioning of others.

Media article 6: Boys box way out of trouble (Shaw, 2005b, Appendix 12)

This article appeared soon after a series of articles in the education media reporting on the four year long 'Raising Boys' Achievement Project,' (Younger et al, 2005). This may have some bearing on the continuation and development of the behaviour-as-learning repertoire introduced in article 5 which is now more evident in media article 6:

'Behaviour-as-learning' repertoire

A learning repertoire is evident from the outset and continues throughout the text as seen in the following phrases and clusters of terms:

"Teaching a teenage boy to improve his punching skills"

"his school bought him a pair of boxing gloves and paid for him to attend lessons"

"boys are achieving high levels of success in academic, community, sporting and artistic contexts"

"giving boys the confidence to speak up in lessons"

"mentoring programmes allow[s] boys to work without fear of losing face"

"close monitoring can give boys an excuse to succeed"

"Other initiatives... could boost boys' results included drama projects"

"older boys are teamed with younger ones to read books together"

"approaches can play a crucial role in improving boys' achievement"

"boys and girls have repeatedly described the advantages to be gained from being taught in single sex classes"

Shaw, (the journalist behind extract 6 and also interestingly author of media article 1) makes clever use of the stereotypical, macho, hegemonic identity of boys already widespread in academic and media discourses and draws the reader immediately into the article with the title and the picture of Danny sporting his boxing gloves. However, whilst the initial 'learning to box' example is used to introduce the learning repertoire, Shaw expands this theme to include multiple examples of ways that boys can be and are seen as achievers and these examples of success are closely connected to boys as subjects by the use of active clauses such as, "close monitoring can give boys an excuse to succeed." The report has a declarative mood as reference is made to research reports including the 'Raising Boy's Achievement' project although the validity of the research report is called into question at one point during the extract. However, this use of evidence (including that from OFTSED) and the rhetorical device of contrasting are used to position boys in a positive light, "close monitoring can give boys an excuse to achieve," and a reminder that some "boys are achieving high levels of success in academic, community, sporting and artistic contexts." The extent to which the learning repertoire is validated is also achieved by including a personal testimony from Danny himself, "If a teacher is stressing me it doesn't bother me so much," he said. "I think it's calmed the other kids down as well." This quote is also the first example we see of boys being positioned as 'stressed.'

In addition to familiar terms such as "macho culture" other intertextual examples are evident, such as "laddish" and "class clowns." However, the author closes the gap between the positioning of boys and girls by declaring that "some girls are taking on the laddish attributes of their male peers." But once again boys remain contrasted to girls who are identified as "withdrawn, quiet and less visible." Also rather than boys competing with each other as seen in other texts revealing boys' discursive struggle to maintain a hegemonic masculine identity (eg Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002) there is now a sense of boys working cooperatively with other boys "teamed with younger ones," showing further evidence of a participation repertoire. However, the powerful metaphor "fear of losing face" serves to remind us of the anxiety that continues to be experienced by boys in feeling they have to live up to the hegemonic masculine identity and acknowledges the dilemma facing boys in the discursive game of 'doing boy.'

Although few metaphors, graphic descriptions and figures of speech are apparent, the metaphorical effect of this text is subtle and emancipatory. In article 5 we are left with the sense that boys are stuck in their "bog standards" but this new title, "Boys box way out of trouble" suggests movement for the boys, that they are no longer stuck or 'boxed in' but can find a way out, leaving their identity as "trouble" behind them. The emancipatory feel of the text is further achieved by the introduction of a new interpretative repertoire which includes the playful and inclusive use of verbs and nouns such as "teamed up", "ladettes", "ring leader" and "their followers":

'Behaviour-as-a-game' repertoire

The game repertoire can be said to link to earlier repertoires (such as 'behaviour-as-war') with the use of descriptions such as "rebels," and "targeting "key leader" pupils", but rather than a war of attrition where teachers and pupils are in a continual state of opposition we now see a game of strategy emerging and the first two quotes bridge both the learning and game repertoires:

"approaches can play a crucial role in improving boys' achievement"

"older boys are teamed with younger ones to read books together"

"many of the strategies are equally as effective at tackling the ladettes as the lads"

"improving the behaviour of their followers"

"targeting "key leader" pupils, often but not always, the rebels or class clowns whose behaviour influences the rest of their year group"
"ring leader pupils"
"Freed from the concerns about image, appearance and the need to 'perform to role', boys and girls have repeatedly described the advantages to be gained from being taught in single sex classes"

The effect of this discourse is to position some boys (including Danny) as potentially very influential in the peer group, creating a "ripple effect" which can have either positive or negative consequences depending on the strategy 'behind the game.' The proposed strategies in the text allow boys to remain as "leaders" with their "followers," but this is no longer a "cat and mouse game" (Pomerantz and Pomerantz, 2002, p. 123) leading to the social consequences of underachievement. What is happening in the discourse is a construction of liberation as seen in the verb "freed" and is made possible because boys (in particular) can now play a different game where they can perform new roles and be ascribed different identities. The consequence for boys is that they can, "discuss emotions and explore feelings, a readiness to participate without fear of scorn or discomfort." Again, this article begins to position boys as not only capable of having emotions other than anger (such as stress and discomfort) but of being able to discuss and explore these feelings. Teacher's too can play a different game and adopt new identities, "assigning a teacher to act as a "key befriender" for each of its ring leader pupils." This new positioning culminates in the article in strong 'truth' messages for the future about the overriding need for 'partnership,' "What there has to be is respect between teachers and pupils."

The discursive effect of this article is to position boys, girls and teachers in relational harmony with each other. There is no battleground but we are reminded that the ideological significance of a peaceful and achieving educational experience rests on "a clearly defined ethos and discipline, strong leadership support and a culture where all staff and pupils feel valued." Such a discourse is far removed from the constructions in previous media texts which are indicative of asymmetrical relationships between teachers and pupils and between the government and schools built on fear and distrust.

Summative presentation of the analysis of media discourse data

A summative presentation of key constructions so far is provided below using the original framework for the construction of the identity of excluded adolescent boys from model 1, chapter one. Model 2 does not include space to provide all constructions, so an emphasis has been given to the use of metaphor and figures of speech which I have proposed earlier are most powerful in creating meaning and evoking an emotional response, strongly influencing the social practice of exclusion. For clarification, the term 'excluded adolescent boys' is used here in relation to the media text analysis as an umbrella term to refer to boys 'at risk' of exclusion as well as those who have experience of fixed term exclusion and permanent exclusion from schools. Words underlined in the model show the most dominant terms, interpretative repertoires and social practices.

Model 2 A construction of the identity of excluded adolescent boys based on Lacanian Theory integrated with a critical discursive analysis of media texts

Chain of SIGNIFIERS→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→METONYMIC AXIS

Lacan's Symbolic Order

Discursive Practice: Tracing the order of discourse, identifying the words and phrases used across media texts showing intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Article 1	Article 2	Article 3	Article 4	Article 5	Article 6
fight, battleground, tackle, mob rule, gangs, marched crackdown, stick to beat schools, daily, behaviour nightmares, called every name under the sun, struggling against the odds	tackle, gang culture, battle, malicious abuse claims, special needs, dysfunctional families, disaffected	pupil from hell, thug, full blown sociopath, rampaging, wreaking havoc, terrorising, intruder in the middle of the night, damaging, assaulting, settle old scores, sign his life away, past his sell-by date, gone for good	daily, out of control, deviants, unruly and rude, violent and abusive, foul-mouthed monsters, incredible tension, joined forces, atmosphere volatile	bad apples, before the barrel is spoiled, legally excluded, tip of the iceberg, Raising Standards At Any Costs, reading difficulties, attention deficit problems, struggling comprehensive, remaining bog-standards	improve his punching skills, confidence to speak up, fear of losing face, excuse to succeed, older boys teamed with younger ones, boost boys' results, achieving, macho culture, laddish, class clowns, box way out of trouble, key leader pupils
↓ ↓ ↓		↓	↓		↓

METAPHORIC AXIS

Linguistic terms become selected and condensed

Interpretative Repertoires: Behaviour as…

War	War	Fear	Deviant	Concern	Learning
Punishment	Punishment	War	Oppressive	Learning	A Game
Fear	Concern	Life or Death	War		Partnership
Partnership	Partnership	Partnership	Partnership		
↓		↓	↓		↓

SIGNIFIED Lacan's Imaginary Order

Excluded adolescent boys become positioned as:

A violent, threatening, terrorising, powerful force against teachers

Vulnerable, displaced, dependent and powerless

Anxious but helpful, influential achievers

Teachers are, in relation to the boys, positioned as:

Vulnerable, oppressed, anxious and powerless victims

Practising immorally and illegally

Key befrienders

This leads to the social practice of:

Closer OFSTED monitoring of failing schools
Increase in surveillance (CCTV etc)
Separating some pupils into special units
Permanent exclusion
New powers for head teachers
Teachers leaving the profession

A culture of respect between teachers and pupils

Integrating the constructions in this way shows the movement of the order of discourse along Lacan's metonymic axis which mirrors the sequence in which the articles were published and how each article draws on earlier discourses. Few individual words are repeated across the texts but much of the vocabulary can be seen as synonymous, especially in relation to the emerging interpretative repertoires. There is a definite shift across the texts from an over emphasis on the 'behaviour-as-war' and 'behaviour-as-fear' repertoires to the emergent 'behaviour-as-concern' and 'behaviour-as-learning' repertoires by the time the project with the boys commenced. A 'behaviour-as-partnership' repertoire is evident across virtually all the texts but does not become emancipatory until the last article. What is clear is that the *same repertoire* (eg the partnership repertoire) can be used to position boys and others *differently* depending on the interdiscursive mix and rhetorical devices used by the author. Also the same journalist can be seen to use both oppressive and emancipatory discourses in relation to the same subject which suggests that national media discourse is perhaps less stable than I first thought and whilst there are common intertextual themes these may not be grand narratives, but may exist to serve those in power when it suits them and are, therefore, subject to change.

However, whilst the results suggest a change in discourse over time, the social practice of excluding boys remains extremely dominant and is linked to a series of other social practices: closer OSFTED monitoring of failing schools, increase in surveillance, separating some pupils into special units, new powers for head teachers and teachers leaving the profession. These practices are all directly related to the national identity of excluded adolescent boys who are positioned as a violent, threatening, terrorising, powerful force against teachers. Teachers on the other hand are positioned as vulnerable, oppressed, anxious and powerless victims. As such the practice of exclusion is not questioned by those in power, but condoned.

However, counter discourses do exist through which new identities facilitating the inclusion of adolescent boys *can* be realised. These are discourses relating to 'behaviour-as-concern,' 'behaviour-as-learning,' and 'behaviour-as-partnership' repertoires. Firstly the social practices of head teachers acting immorally and illegally in respect to the permanent exclusion and unofficial exclusion of pupils is exposed and the 'poor boy,' 'boys will be boys,' (Epstein et al, 1988) and 'boys as underachievers' discourses evident in the literature are also challenged. Through the minority counter discourses excluded adolescent boys are positioned as vulnerable, displaced, dependent and powerless, but with the right strategic interventions also capable of being influential achievers and positively supporting their peers. Teachers are discursively re-positioned as key befrienders of formally disruptive pupils changing the relational balance from one of fear and distrust to one of co-operation and respect.

Analysis and discussion of conversational data

In view of the difficulty I experienced in accessing 'hard to reach data' due to the life experiences of individual participants, of the original eight boys involved in the project a decision was made to use data relating to two of them (the cases of Jay and Spike) as these boys were among the best attenders and interactions over time could be established. Also, in view of the research topic which is central to the identity of excluded adolescent boys, whilst both boys had experience of fixed term exclusion from school when the project commenced, half way through the project Jay became permanently excluded and Spike experienced a managed move from one project school to the other as an alternative to permanent exclusion. Across the sample, therefore, the social practice of exclusion began as the same experience for both boys but the final outcome was a different exclusion experience.

Once the discourse data was produced and transcribed, *all* sections relevant to the constructed identity of Jay (including those vaguely related) were highlighted for analysis. This inclusive approach is felt to be essential as constructions can be both explicit and implicit (Willig, 2001). As the linguistic analysis of the conversational data was to be minimal a simple adapted version of transcription based on Jefferson (1984) was deemed adequate to allow the analysis of the conversational data to proceed, see table 2 below. Analysis then proceeded following the stages outlined in table 1.

Table 2 System of transcription based on Jefferson, (1984)

Notation	**Interpretation**
(.)	pause of less than a second
(1+)	pause of approximately one second or longer
-	utterance that is abruptly cut off
=	continuing speech separated by an interrupting speaker
?	rising intonation
!	animated tone
.	a stop or fall in tone
[	the onset point of overlapping speech
]	the point at which overlapping speech terminates
word	underscoring to indicate stress in pitch or amplitude
(( ))	Non verbal communication or editorial comment indicated

The case of Jay

The story of Jay begins with a family meeting that took place at home with Jay, his mother and myself. Jay lives with his mother and two male siblings (one older and considered gifted by his mother and teachers, the other younger). Jay has occasional contact with his father who lives nearby. The conversation was loosely structured around the five questions outlined in Appendix 4 and included constructions of Jay's past and present self. A full transcript of the conversation, transcript 1, appears in (Appendix 13).

Initial family constructions of Jay

A prevailing *pathological interpretative repertoire* emerges within the first few utterances of the family meeting and throughout the conversation as reflected in the following extracts from transcript 1:

'Behaviour-as-pathological' repertoire

Extract 1 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
12	Mum	Errm (). the health visitor said that Jay hadn't got any concentration and
13		things like that and he might need speech therapy but he didn't (.) errm
14		Jay would like I say get into things you know if I didn't hear him get up
15		in the morning (.) when he was a toddler (.) I would come down and there
16		would be food throwed about and oil spilt everywhere and he would run
17		off errm if he was in town run into the road (.) errm (.) he would just
18		disappear I err got one of those things for him to put round his wrist but
19		he learnt to take it off (.) so I wouldn't know and he'd just be gone (.) I'd
20		just constantly be having to look for him and worry about him.

Jay's mother uses a number of rhetorical devices from the outset to assert her account of Jay's identity which includes extreme case formulations and repetitions. These can be seen for example in line 12 “Jay hadn’t got any concentration” (repeated later in extract 2, lines 45-46 and again in line 55 and in extract 6 lines 232-233) although interestingly these constructions of Jay are denied in the school reports (extract 4 lines 137-138). Jay’s mother declares her concern, “constantly be having to look out for him and worry about him” (line 20). In doing so she positions herself as a caring and concerned parent, which she reinforces later by using other caring discourses as seen in her expressed love for her son, (extract 3 line 92). Of note in extract 1 are the repeated references to Jay running away from his mother. As the discourse unfolds in these extracts and later repertoires I note that Jay mainly denies and rejects his mother’s formulations of him (and her formulations of his dad) as if using the discourse to retreat from her.

Extract 2 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
41	Mum	Well no (.) we just took him to the health visitor (.) you know just regular
42		visit to the health visitor you just know to see errm (.) on his assessment
43		at certain ages you know she would say can you kick the ball to me (.) he
44		would just blast it round the room (.) he wouldn’t be listening to what she
45		said and she got quite frustrated (.) and said that basically he hasn’t got
46		any concentration (.) and it wasn’t until Jay was actually in school (.) how
47		old were you Jay when we first went to see Dr A?
48	Jay	7 (.) year 2(.) I would have been bit older than that I think year 2.
49	Kathryn	Is this your GP?
50	Mum	No this is a child psychiatrist.
51	Kathryn	Is this A (.) Dr A?
52	Mum	[Yes]
53	Jay	[Because] I was getting into more trouble.
54	Mum	Errm (.) Jay’s behaviour in school’s never been fantastic errm (2) it’s like
55		he couldn’t sit still and concentrate (.) and while he couldn’t do that he
56		wasn’t taking in any information (.) errm (.) Jay finds it very difficult to
57		make friends but finds it very difficult to keep them (.) he tends to go
58		from friend to friend to friend don’t you (.) gets very frustrated about
59		people and that’s when the anger starts coming out (.) and that’s when the
60		head teacher at primary school contacted me to say I need to make an
61		appointment at the doctors (.) we made an appointment at the doctors and
62		we got a referral to Dr A and he’s seen Dr A since then haven’t you?

Extract 3 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
86	Mum	Other people just said to me he's naughty (.) people still now say he's
87		naughty (.) my mum gets it hard to get her head round the way Jay acts
88		the way he is (.) and I've said all along I don't I don't believe he's a
89		naughty child I don't believe he wants to get up every morning and be the
90		way he is deliberately (.) you know he struggles (.) he finds he finds life
91		hard (.) and I've known there's been something not (.) I don't like to say
92		there's something wrong with him he's my son and I love him to bits (.)
93		but he finds life difficult (.) errm and that's where his frustrations come
94		from (.) and that's why his behaviour gets worse and as far I'm concerned
95		that the way I see it.

Jay's mother makes reference to professionals such as the health visitor and the child psychiatrist (who she includes in the discourse nine times) in an attempt to verify her accounts as objective and factual. Whilst Jay's mother blames his Aspergers Syndrome and ADHD for his difficulties (as we begin to see later in extract 4), here she uses the strategy of disclaiming, which again reinforces and authenticates that others identify these labels with Jay rather than herself as she wants to be seen in a good light. This is clearly evident in extract 3 lines 91-92 "I've known there's been something not (.) I don't like to say there's something wrong with him he's my son and I love him to bits."

The use of the term "naughty" in the past and present introduces the idea that other family members have a very different 'deviant' construction of Jay and one that has been stable over time. She reveals the way other's position her (her ex husband and her mother) as not dealing with Jay's naughtiness and so has much at stake in defending her identity of Jay as pathological, as to present him differently may expose her as a bad mother. Her use of the metaphor "gets it hard to get her head round the way Jay acts", (line 87) is used to emphasise her mother's inability to see that Jay is disordered. The metaphor paradoxically suggests there is something very disordered in her own mother.

Extract 4 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128	Mum	This has occurred from day one when he started the teachers are (.) a little bit sarcastic (.) the teacher I don't know whether it's his Aspergers or not Jay doesn't cope with sarcasm at all he takes it personally (.) errm and it's just grew from that (.) and it was like I'm saying there's only certain people Jay will get on with and there's only certain people Jay will trust (.) and if he doesn't that's it (.) and you do try with some teachers don't you (.) but there are some teachers he can't stand you know it's torture for him to actually be in the lesson.
129	Kathryn	Yeah?
130 131	Mum	Because they don't understand Jay's condition or the way Jay thinks (.) they just see he's a bad lad.
132	Kathryn	Okay you mentioned Aspergers that's come from Dr A?
133	Mum	Dr A.
134	Kathryn	How long ago was that?
135 136 137 138 139 140 141	Mum	That was when he first went to see him (.) errm (1+) because initially on the first visit he thought it might be ADHD (.) then when he gathered the information from school and school reports because it didn't say on the school reports that Jay needs to concentrate more (.) or Jay can't concentrate (.) then he said Aspergers (.) but when I got the information that I downloaded (.) some information from the internet (.) when I read it there was a lot of things there that remind me of Jay a lot.
142	Kathryn	Yeah?
143 144	Mum	But because his behaviour (.) it's spiralling really to the point where he's getting out of control (.) Dr A's put him on medication.

Extract 5 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
153	Kathryn	=Does it help you sleep (.) [have a better sleep?]
154	Jay	[No when I wake up] I'm hyperactive.

The figure of speech "it's torture for him to actually be in the lesson" (extract 4, line 127) is reminiscent of the 'behaviour-as-war' repertoire identified in the media texts, although here it is Jay who is experiencing the pain and oppression. I began to wonder whether there are other forms of oppression at work against Jay.

A movement downward is indicated in the figure of speech "his behaviour is spiralling really to the point where he's getting out of control" (extract 4 lines 143-144). Jay's mother implies here that Jay is unable to help himself and places him in a position of dependency which is further authenticated, "Dr A's put him on medication," (extract 4, line 144). However, in extract 5 (line 154) "when I wake up I'm hyperactive" we find Jay's response to being on medication indicating that this act of his mother's and the psychiatrist's has not succeeded in putting him 'in control' whilst paradoxically at the same time Jay's mother and the psychiatrist are the ones seeking control of *him*.

Extract 6 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
226	Kathryn	Didn't you see the school psychologist?
227	Mum	Yes just once.
228	Kathryn	Do you know who that was?
229	Mum	She was a Scottish lady weren't she?
230	Kathryn	Mrs Phipps?
232 233	Mum	Yes she came into school (.) her report said that Jay couldn't concentrate Jay found it very difficult to concentrate.

By introducing the educational psychologist into the discourse and quoting from her report Jay's mother further authenticates his pathological identity. Despite this being a brief encounter, the professional voice seems enough to provide validation to her account.

Extract 7 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
524	Kathryn	So do you see dad then?
525	Jay	Yeah I see him (.) I didn't see him for while
526 527 528 529 530 531 532	Mum	It's a bit difficult at the moment because his dad doesn't believe in these things Jay has got (.) he doesn't believe in Asperger's and ADHD and medication he just sees him as naughty don't he (.) errm and then that causes problems because his dads not prepared to even try and see things the way Jay sees them so then that causes a lot of friction you know (.) I won't let him punish the kids (.) errm so then he just stops really seeing you and Simon doesn't he.

Extract 8 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
689 690	Jay	Cos he found out I was having problems so he came in to try and sort it out.
691	Kathryn	Do you see your dad as someone who can help you then do you think?
692	Jay	Probably.
693	Kathryn	Do you talk to your dad about your problems at all?
694	Mum	He don't tell his dad anything.
695 696	Kathryn	So your dad doesn't know you're having problems at schools then so is that how you like it (.) you prefer your dad not to know yeah?
697 698 699	Mum	Dad would be very very strict and to be quite honest I was talking to my friend about this the other day (.) I went down and I said you know I feel really it he does need to be made aware of it you know.
700	Kathryn	What worries you is it that you think dad just thinks he's being naughty?
701 702 703 704 705	Mum	Yes he's quite strict with them really strict with them and he blames me he says it's the way I brought then up (.) but I've got three children and they're all really different and there's only Jay that we're having the problems that he's having so I can't see how him having Asperger's Syndrome or having ADHD can be my fault.
706	Kathryn	You mentioned both together is that because you think he's got both?
707	Mum	But that's what Dr A says.
708	Kathryn	That's what Dr A says (.) now I just want to be clear about that.
709	Mum	He said that would suit you best.

Extreme case formulations are again seen in extracts 7 and 8. Terms such as "very very strict" and "really strict" in extract 8 and "naughty" (also seen in extract 3) are used repeatedly to contrast Jay's mother's positioning of herself in opposition to Jay's father and to construct Jay's identity as pathological versus deviant. If you are naughty then you should be punished, but with Jay he is disordered (not a "bad lad," extract 4 line 131) and, therefore, he should be loved and looked after. This link is evident in the historical literature in the proposed constructs 'bad versus mad' (Bridgeland, 1971) in which problems are seen as located within the individual child and interventions would need to be differentiated as medical, psychiatric or punishment. Pomerantz (1986) who coined the term 'extreme case formulation' considered that this means of legitimising claims is often used in adversarial conditions when someone anticipates their co-interactant might undermine their claims. It is possible that Jay's mother was anxious on meeting me for the first time and unsure of my own position as regards the labelling of children. Therefore, she goes to great lengths to establish her account of Jay as credible. Once the final diagnosis is established (extract 8) Jay's mother uses the figure of speech "that would suit you best" (line 709) as if the diagnosis is metaphorically clothing that fits well, something his mother has been actively seeking to give him as if a gift.

Reflexive box

Reflections as a mother

I am reminded through this metaphor of a recent trip to the shops with my son to buy his very first suit, which he earned the money for, chose and paid for himself. Despite my advice and that of the shop keeper over a particular tie in keeping with the shirt, Mr C strongly rejected these recommendations and the whole package was of his choosing to 'suit' himself. I am proud of his ability to assert himself and of my ability to stand down.

Jay attempts in extract 8 to position his dad as supportive and potentially helpful to his situation, but this is squashed by his mother who positions his dad as unhelpful and punitive. The threat to her position as a caring mother is again at stake. This time she uses a contrasting device setting Jay's identity as different to her other children who are no problem. Much of the discourse in these first few extracts reads as a first person narrative, almost a declarative monologue from Jay's mother in which the pathological repertoire is continually revisited. Jay is barely able to gain a place in the discourse even when he is directly questioned by myself. He is treated on occasions by his mother as what Goffman (1959) called a "nonperson," (in Aronsson, 1998, p.86).

Extract 9 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
731 732 733 734 735	Kathryn	...just to kind of sum up Jay how you would describe yourself as a person yeah (.) and what do you think could be done to help you make progress so you tell me first and then perhaps Mum can tell me in one sentence how would you describe yourself?
736	Jay	I don't know anything about myself.
737	Mum	You do !
738 739 740	Kathryn	If I was from Mars and I came down and I needed to know about you life forms and here's a life form and he's called Jay what would you be about to tell me about Jay?
741 742	Jay	I would be able to tell you nothing about myself they tell me what I'm like to my Mum.
743 744 745	Kathryn	Yeah but how do you see yourself not how other people see you how do you see yourself (.) you might be thinking I'm a really great lad I'm a really good footballer these kind of things any ideas?
746	Jay	No.
747	Kathryn	Okay well how about mum then just to sum up for me?
748 749	Mum	I think Jay is lovely good looking very good at sports can be very helpful can be caring but finds life difficult.
750	Kathryn	And how can he be helped do you think because you (.) you know?
751 752 753	Mum	I think it's down to organisation if he could learn how to organise things in his head then I think that would improve what he does and what he's got because he can't organise himself (.) he gets frustrated.

A very poignant moment in the text appears in extract 9 when Jay is invited by me to describe himself. On reflection, this direct questioning on my part was risky as it could have incurred a 'defended subject response' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000) however the response from Jay reveals that he is denied an identity of his own construction and can only inhabit the subject positions ascribed to him by more powerful others, "I don't know anything about myself" (line 736) and "I would be able to tell you nothing about myself they tell me what I'm like to my mum, " (lines 741-742). The use of the pronoun "they" also suggests that he is positioned not by one but by several more powerful 'others.' Overall, Jay is positioned through his mother's pathological repertoire as having multiple deficits including no concentration or organisational skills, which she stresses by the use of the repeated term "couldn't" (in extract 2, line 55) and "can't" (in extract 9 line 753) incapable of learning or being friends with others in any sustainable positive way. Alongside this pathological repertoire, positioning Jay as a helpless, dependent victim of disability who has to be protected and defended is a '*game repertoire*' introduced into the discourse mainly by Jay as indicated through the following extracts. This counter discourse optimistically suggests to me that Jay *is* able to construct an identity through talk of his own choosing:

'Behaviour-as-a-game' repertoire

Extract 10 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
274 275	Kathryn	Okay (.) so difficult lessons have been science and French there must be really good lessons as well (.) tell me about the good lessons and teachers.
276 277 278	Jay	Art PE (.) but art I used to have some problems now now I'm doing PE I want to get into the football team but I haven't been able to be (.) I'd like to be able to.

Extract 11 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
301	Jay	PE I've always got on in PE.
302 303 304	Kathryn	Does that mean that you're good at sport you enjoy sport tell me more about that then and what do you play (.) I can see the football net in the garden (.) is it football that you like?
305	Jay	Yeah.

Early in the introduction of the game repertoire the discourse suggests movement as Jay talks about his 'futured self' in wanting to join the school football team although no explanation is given as to why he is excluded from this opportunity. The use of the past tense also suggests a movement upwards, extract 10, line 276 " art I used to have some problems" which contrasts with Jay's mothers reference to him as "spiralling downwards," (extract 4 line 143). Jay also makes use of extreme case formulations to establish his account as factual and stable "I've always got on in PE" (line 301).

Extract 12 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
373	Jay	I've got my own teams.
374	Kathryn	Your own teams (.) tell me a bit more about your own teams.
375 376	Jay	I can't remember err one of them is one of them but we're getting new kit.
377	Kathryn	What do you mean your own teams?
378	Jay	I play for them.
379	Kathryn	So these are local teams then around this area?
380 381	Jay	Some of them are (.) it's like all the way from here all the way through Middleshire.
382 383	Mum	He means it's actually based in Oldborrow but when they play away they go to different clubs.
384	Kathryn	Oh right (.) okay so is this something local or is this to do with school?
385	Mum	No it's your own local team.
386	Kathryn	So this is like evenings (.) weekends.
387	Jay	I used to train.
388	Mum	Trains on Thursday don't you and they do (.) err matches on the weekend.
389	Jay	I used to train with three different teams.

Although a sense of belonging to the school football team appears to be denied to Jay, discourse around his belonging to teams out of school positions him as a serious football player. However, the use of past tense verbs indicates a change of state, an erosion of this subject position which is made factual through repetition, "I used to train" (line 387) and "I used to train with three teams" (line 389).

Extract 13 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
411	Jay	It was the end of year six mum (.) I've only been playing a year
412	Mum	You haven't.
413	Jay	I have (.) I'll put you 10 million grand on it!
414	All	((laughter))
415	Jay	But I used to do skateboarding didn't I.
416	Mum	Yes.

Extract 14 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
429 430	Mum	He's always been more (.) outdoor (.) wanting to play outdoors kick a ball round (.) err running and things like that rather than being in the house.
431	Kathryn	Yeah do you do cross country running at school?
432	Jay	((nods))
433	Kathryn	How do you get on with that?
434	Jay	Quite well
435	Kathryn	Do you enjoy that?
436	Jay	Well I used to anyway (.) I've lost a bit of my pace now.
437	Kathryn	Have you?
438 439	Jay	I've not been doing so well in football either I haven't been going training.
440	Kathryn	Have you ever come in the top five in cross country at school?
441	Jay	I've been in the first three.
442	Kathryn	Wow (1+) so that's really brilliant (.) so you are a fast runner.
443	Jay	Well I was at the beginning of the year (.) I've lost my pace.

In extract 13, Jay's discourse refutes his mothers claim of how long he has been playing. He uses an 'extreme' extreme case formulation to achieve this, "I'll put you 10 million grand on it!" (line 413). In doing so Jay calls into question his mother's discourse which she has been trying throughout the conversation to make factual and credible. As extract 14 reveals, Jay's mother colludes with this positioning of Jay as playful and athletic, hence enhancing the game repertoire, however, the past tense change of state verbs continue to see this positioning eroded, "I've not been doing so well" (line 438) and "I was at the beginning of the year (.) I've lost my pace" (line 443).

Extract 15 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
553 554	Kathryn	...how would you describe your relationship and dad's relationship with Jay are you able to tell me?
555	Jay	Right (1+) play golf and punch dummy (.) boxing
556	Kathryn	Jay how do you get on with your Mum?
557 558	Jay	Sometimes she just don't listen (.) she thinks that she knows because she knows me a bit better (.) but sometimes.
559 560	Mum	Jay (.) I love him to bits my kids are my world (.) I love him to bits and what I've got he can have you know I'll give them anything if I've got it.

As seen in the previous repertoire, Jay again tries to position himself as having a positive relationship with his dad and does this by connecting the game repertoire to shared activities, "play golf and punch dummy (.) boxing" (line 555). In contrast he positions himself as having difficulties communicating with his mum and of her not really knowing him, "she thinks that she knows because she knows me a bit better," (lines 557-558) inferring that it is dad who really knows Jay, although the word "thinks" suggest uncertainty, perhaps a low affinity with his claim as if he is unsure of himself.

I am reminded here of the macho culture and game repertoire in media article 6 and research by Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) in which there exists strong pressure on boys to be constructed within the hegemonic masculinity. Through discourse Jay has been able to establish an identity position for himself as energetic, athletic and also talented and one which sits comfortably within the masculine ideal. However, there is an undercurrent of concern that this subject position is weakening. An additional depressing and *oppressive repertoire* also emerges:

'Behaviour-as-oppressive' repertoire

Extract 16 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
103	Jay	Teachers get on my nerves.
104	Kathryn	Okay.
105	Jay	Some of them (.) some of them I get on with.
106 107 108	Kathryn	Well (.) I need to know a bit about (.) how would I know there's one teacher or two teachers that you get on really with (.) how would I know that?
109 110	Jay	There's (1+) one teacher (.) that I didn't get on with at the beginning of the year (.) I've only just not been allowed to go into his lessons.
111	Kathryn	Right (.) which lesson's that?
112	Jay	Science.
113	Kathryn	Science (.) and what's the teacher's name?
114	Jay	Mr Coupe.
115	Kathryn	Mr?
116	Jay	Coupe (.) I'm not allowed in his lesson.
117	Kathryn	Okay what did you do that got you out of the lesson can you remember?
118 119 120	Jay	Yeah (.) as soon he he walked in he just says get out (.) told me to work outside and (.) then he came outside and says you'd better get on with your work because you're not coming inside to do any of the experiments.

Jay begins by over generalising in his use of the word "Teachers" but then softens his claim by using a hedging (moderating device,) "some of them" (line 105) and we find that it is mainly one teacher he finds oppressive. The word "out" is repetitive in lines 118-119 emphasising the social practice of exclusion.

Extract 17 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
279 280	Mum	Yeah okay and you like the painting they're doing in art and you like the teacher.
281	Kathryn	She's alright?
282	Jay	She gets on my nerves.
283 284	Kathryn	Tell me what does your teacher do that gets on your nerves (.) tell me what the teacher does.
285	Jay	Shouts a lot.
286	Kathryn	Yeah?
287 288 289	Jay	And she's got a dead long voice because she shouts and shouts for ages and when she tells you (.) come over to see you if you've been naughty she'll go look at me look at me but nobody can look at her.
290	Kathryn	Why?
291	Jay	Because she-
292	Mum	=You may as well just say it (.) because you told Mrs Brown didn't you.
293	Jay	She's got smelly breath
294 295	Kathryn	Okay that's okay (.) I want to know what you think (.) so but the other kids have the same problem do they?
296	Jay	Yeah.
297	Kathryn	Okay so does she think you're being rude then if you don't look at her?

The figure of speech "get(s) on my nerves" (extract 16 line 103 and extract 17 line 283) suggests a link to a medical/biological discourse where the reader imagines that teachers are inflicting pain. This would fit with Jay's mother's metaphor about it being "torture for him" to be in a lesson, (extract 4 line 127). The repetition and emphasis given to the word "shouts," also gives the impression of pain, this time to the ears, enough to have extreme consequences as a result of the teacher's "dead long voice" (line 287). Jay also makes use of the phrase "naughty" (line 288) familiar in his mother's discourse but suggesting here that Jay along with other pupils can be naughty (that is to say deviant as opposed to disorded).

Extract 18 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
339 340	Kathryn	When you say literacy's more difficult does he have any problems with literacy with reading or spellings anything like that (.) been a bit tough?
341	Mum	He used to get literacy-
342	Jay	=I don't struggle with it people just think I do.
343	Mum	You do because a lot of times we can't read what you've wrote can we.
344	Jay	But I can now.
345	Mum	His spellings not very good is it at the minute?
346	Jay	I can now mum.
347	Mum	They're going to help you when you go back.
348	Jay	My spelling's good now.
349	Kathryn	And he's good [now?]
350	Jay	[It's because] nobody looks at my work.
351 352	Kathryn	It sounds Jay as if you think your literacy has improved which is great which is what I expect to hear.
353	Mum	You are (.) you are getting help.
354	Jay	I don't need help.

Prior to this extract, the conversation had veered into another deficit area for Jay introduced by his mother, that of literacy difficulties. The switching between the past and present tense here creates uncertainty as to the significance of this construction. Jay works hard in this discourse to position himself as having good literacy skills at the present time, repeating and stressing the word "now" (lines 346 and 348) but his mother insists (also with emphasis on the word "are" line 353) about his present dependency on help in this respect. This is one of several examples in the whole transcript in which Jay tries to convey a sense of himself as improving in some respect which his mother fails to acknowledge. I wonder if anyone acknowledges any progess Jay makes as the phrase "It's because nobody looks at my work" (line 350) suggests that Jay's positioning of himself as achieving is almost lost as there is no relational partner with whom he can validate this aspect of himself. The comment by Jay is almost lost as it overlaps with my next turn in the conversation (lines 349-350) however, the overlap itself perhaps suggests he was desperate to include this. My own repetition of Jay's description "good" in line 349 seems to have enabled this interchange. Jay, throughout this extract is struggling discursively to place himself in the opposite position to the one his mother identifies him with. The consequences for Jay are that he is oppressed in a learning context, not just by some of his teachers, but also by his mother whose identifications he cannot escape.

Reflexive box

Reflections as a researcher and an educational psychologist

Perhaps my own interjection in the discourse in lines 351-352 has far more significance for Jay than I realised at the time. Am I the first professional to make this positioning of Jay as an achiever a possibility? Perhaps I need to be *more* conscious in my own communications with young people as a researcher-practitioner in reflecting back the actual words and phrases used by young people themselves. Whilst I probably already do this in my attempts to adopt a Rogerian style of discourse in my day to day work, I have not until this point been quite so aware of the significance of this in talking to young people whose minority discourses are so often silenced or marginalised.

Extract 19 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
629	Jay	I've got one to pick with Mrs Brown.
630	Kathryn	Have you?
631 632	Jay	She says she's (.) I'm not going to be on report next year but she still puts me on it.
633 634	Kathryn	Okay well I don't know much about that (.) you'll have to talk to her about that.
635	Jay	I am on it next year.

Extract 20 (transcript 1)

Line	Speaker	Text
642	Kathryn	Okay (.) so I get the impression you don't like being on report
643	Mum	He hates it.
644	Kathryn	Why do you hate it (.) what's horrible about being on report you tell me.
645	Jay	Teachers have got an advantage over you.
646	Kathryn	How's that?
647	Jay	If you do one thing wrong they tell (.) give you a very very bad report.
648	Kathryn	Right give me an example.
649 650	Jay	Like if they annoy me and I'll have been cheeky or used words against them they'll give me a bad report and I don't like that.
651 652	Kathryn	Why do you think Mrs Brown puts kids on report on the first place do you think?
653 654	Jay	So she can see what they're doing wrong and how they're doing it wrong (.) they were going to put me on report to help me but its not helping me.
655 656 657	Kathryn	Okay (.) so if the school were doing something different to help you what should they do if being on report doesn't work (.) doesn't work for you (.) what could they do instead (.) what could be better than report?
658	Jay	Having a helper in the lesson.

In these extracts Jay attempts to demonstrate a sense of injustice and presents his account as truthful by relaying an earlier discourse he has had with Mrs Brown claiming that she has gone back on her word. He declares his case with certainty, "I'm not going to be on report" (line 631) and "I am on it" (line 635). It is Jay's mother who indicates the feelings of hate this evokes, but the awfulising discourse comes from Jay with the repeated word and emphasis on "very very bad report" (line 647) although he is more moderate in his use of emotional vocabulary "I don't like that" (line 650). Jay positions himself as deliberately deviant, "I'll have been cheeky or used words against them" (line 649) reminding us that challenging behaviour can be seen as a social constructionist phenomenon that exists through pupil-teacher discourse, as opposed to a within child deficit, (Pomerantz, 2005). Jay's construction is far removed from his mother's earlier positioning of him as disordered. Finally, Jay completely contradicts his earlier positioning of himself in extract

18 as not needing help and as if defeated colludes with his mother's positioning of him as dependent, "Having a helper in the lesson," (line 658).

What these extracts from transcript 1 reveal altogether is that there are very different constructions and discourses at play which appear to "collide in an antagonistic relationship to one another when they try to define the same terrain in conflicting ways" (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002, p.190). However, perhaps this is just to be expected in entering a discussion between an adolescent boy and his mother where there is much at stake for both parties. Hofer and Sassenberg (1998) have already drawn our attention to the need for adolescents to strive for separateness, independency and individuation from their parents. However, it seems to be the case that the pathological repertoire seeks to acquire dominance over all other discourses in the text including those that are liberating. Mancuso, Yelich and Sarbin (2002) are clear that an ADHD narrative does not qualify for a good story:

> ...because the ADHD narrative influences the target persons (and their families teachers, and others in their social ecology) to assign to their selves the self crippling anticipatory self role construction, "drug-ingesting sick person," "deficient person," and so on...
> (Mancuso, Yelich and Sarbin, 2002, p.253)

This positioning of Jay as disordered deflects attention away from the institutional injustices he alludes to in the oppressive repertoire (Swadener and Lubeck, 1995) and separates him as different from boys who behave in socially acceptable and high achieving ways. Therefore, his own attempts at positioning himself as progressing, achieving and independent are hard to maintain:

> "The language of pathology, therefore, constructs another world of otherness
> of risk factor remediation."
> (Swadener and Lubeck, 1995, p.268)

Peer group constructions of Jay

The next chapter in the story of Jay is derived from a series of transcripts taken mainly from group sessions held with the boys in Jay's school on the topics of: introductions, first impressions, exclusion and behaviour in school. The full transcripts are listed in Appendices 14-18.

The make up of the groups depended on the availability of pupils involved in the project and at no time were all four boys present due to the regular practice of fixed term exclusion and truancy. Jay became permanently excluded after the first five (of 10 sessions) and as such only data involving Jay is included for analysis. Although each session was planned according to a theme (in line with the overall inclusion project of which the group sessions were a part) the conversation often deviated from the theme and was free flowing.

Analysis of the transcripts is initially centred on existing repertoires: 'behaviour-as-pathological,' 'behaviour-as-oppressive,' and 'behaviour-as-a-game' as these again emerged as dominant themes within the texts.

'Behaviour-as-pathological' repertoire

Extract 1 (transcript 2a)

Line	Speaker	Text
22	Spike	You work hard (.) when you get your mind to it.
23	Kathryn	Does that mean that Jay concentrates hard when he's-
24 25	Spike	=When he concentrates he actually (.) teachers say that I can't concentrate (.) I get like it's hard.
26	Kathryn	Okay.
27	Jay	I get like it's just hard.
28	Kathryn	It's hard for you to (.) to concentrate in the classroom?
29	Jay	Someone talks to me and I just start talking.
30 31 32	Kathryn	Okay Jay (.) what do you think about Spike's last comment that you really work hard when you put your mind to it (.) what do you think about that?
33	Jay	I don't know.

Similarly to extract 1, transcript 1, the group sessions begin almost immediately with Jay being positioned as having a 'concentration' deficit, although I note that it is me (maybe unconsciously at the time) who introduces the verb "to concentrate" into the discourse. Jay picks up on Spike's phrase "I get like it's hard" and repeats it verbatim (line 27). Despite Spike paying him a complement, "you work hard" (line 24) when I try to check out with Jay the validity of this claim he replies with "I don't know," (line 35). Wooffitt (2005) alerts us to the importance of 'I dunno' statements which on first reading seem unpromising for detailed attention. He claims that such formulations can be used by speakers to distance themselves from "claims, opinions or descriptions which are in some way sensitive," (Wooffitt, 2005, p.121). It is possible that Jay feels wary of validating an identity for himself that contrasts with one that positions him as having a deficit. Also, this was the first session with the boys and they were unsure of their relationship with me and with each other in this context, and the request was probably too direct resulting in a 'defended subject' response (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

Extract 2 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
1 2	Kathryn	I don't know about you Jay but I find it quite difficult to get up in the morning it was about half past twelve when I went to bed last night.
3	Jay	Well during the day I'm knackered because I have my tablets.
4	Kathryn	Does that make you tired then?
5	Jay	Mmm.
6 7	Kathryn	In the day time yeah (.) that's a bit of a nuisance isn't it (.) do you still have enough energy to go football training?
8	Jay	Yeah (.) because it wears off.
9	Kathryn	Right (.) okay do you just have one tablet then first thing?
10	Jay	Yes but it is a large dose in' it (.) 40 milligrams.
11 12	Kathryn	This is over the day (.) it works over the day (.) right shall we get onto the warm up?
13	Jay	It works until period six or the end of school.
14	Kathryn	Is that when you do your football (.) after school then?
15	Jay	Yeah.
16	Kathryn	So you've got energy then?
17	Jay	Yeah.
18 19	Kathryn	When it's worn off (.) cos you're more active (.) you want to get up and about.
20	Spike	I'm going on medication soon (.) as well.

Within the first exchange of group session 2 (transcript 2b), I find that Jay introduces the topic of his medication, which became a regular feature in conversations with Jay. Although a colloquial term in common usage, the word "knackered," (line 3) to describe the effects of Jay's medication has a metaphorical effect in suggesting that in school he is of no use to anyone, merely 'a piece of scrap.' In lines 11-12 I attempt to end the sequence of moves and introduce a new topic, but Jay resists to the point where Spike interjects and places *himself* within the disordered subject position, declaring "I'm going on medication soon (.) as well," (line 20) as if this social identity might be something he needs to allude to within this discursive context and suggesting that the pathological construction has caused a ripple effect. My questioning also introduces the topic of football into this sequence of discourse and as the 'behaviour-as-a-game' repertoire appeared to exist uncomfortably next to the pathological repertoire in transcript 1, this could have been problematic. However, it appears that Jay is able to maintain his position as both medicated and exhausted *and* athletic and energetic within the same conversation. One possible explanation is that Jay's dilemma of stake is that he needs to establish his social identity, his place as doing 'hegemonic masculine boy' by firmly asserting his allegiance to football (as recognised in studies such as Haywood and Mc an Ghaill, 1996 and Edwards, 2007).

Extract 3 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
212 213	Jay	At school I do everything (.) football basketball (.) you name it (.) I'd like to have more time doing football.
214	Kathryn	Okay.
215 216	Jay	Because I used to do training about four times a week with a football team.
217 218	Kathryn	Right but that's kind of tailed off a bit (.) you were telling me (.) so do you want to circle ((the word)) football then?
219	Jay	I aint been feeling a bit like I used to be.
220	Kathryn	So you are not as fit as you were?
221	Jay	Yeah (.) because I aint hyperactive very much now.
222 223 224	Kathryn	So that would be a good time to get back into training again isn't it (.) now that your body has calmed down a bit (.) and you are in a much better state to do really well (.) concentrate really well on the ball.

Jay in this extract is imagining his futured self and whilst this exchange begins within the game repertoire we see a change of state "I used to train" and "I aint been feeling a bit like I used to be" and "I aint hyperactive very much now," (lines 215, 219 and 221) which relegates his position as an athletic and energetic footballer to the past. However, there is a confusion of discourses and positioning in the conversation as Jay is emphatic about his present sporting prowess at school and over generalises to make the point, "I do everything" (line 212). This contradicts Jay's previous description of himself as "knackered" (line 3, extract 2b) during the school day. Although he uses the term "hyperactive" (commonly associated with the label ADHD) he uses it to position his disordered self as *favourable* as it also positions him as energetic and athletic. The exchange evokes a sense of loss and a desire to regain his lost 'footballer' identity in the future which is clearly important to him.

Also of note is that I bring the word "concentrate" (line 224) into the discourse, but instead of this being used within the disordered, pathological repertoire as it has been previously, it is now used to position Jay as a skilled footballer. This reminds us of Saussure's original distinction in his model of language, that the signifier (the word itself) is separated from what it represents (the signified). The meaning of language is, therefore, dependent on how it is constructed through discourse. The term "concentrate" is a signifier that cannot itself *do* the pathologising as its meaning is discursively and only 'temporarily' fixed, "any signifier is always open to challenge and redefinition with shifts in its discursive context" (Weedon, 1987, pp 24-25).

In the following extracts we continue to see Jay *struggling* to establish his identity in opposition to his mother's pathologising of him which he tries to shake off as his past self (extract 5, line 221 below). The construct of him being "knackered" during the day is further validated, this time more directly as he describes the effect of his medication.

Extract 4 (transcript 2c)

Line	Speaker	Text
173	Jay	I fell asleep in German this year (.) though.
174	Kathryn	Why was that?
175	Jay	Tablet.
176	Kathryn	Oh your tablet (.) not because the lesson was boring.
177	Jay	And the lesson was boring.
178	Kathryn	You mentioned about your medication before.
179	Jay	Don't like it (.) and I don't have it no more.
180	Kathryn	Have you gone off it now?
181	Jay	I don't need it (.) cos I can be good without it.
182 183	Kathryn	That's fantastic (.) so before (.) do you think you needed your medication then to stop you being-
184	Jay	=No I've never wanted medication.
185 186	Kathryn	You don't think you've ever needed it (.) why did you go on it in the first place then?
187	Jay	Because they thought that I needed it.
188	Kathryn	Who's they?
189	Jay	Psychiatrist.
190	Kathryn	Psychiatrist (.) yeah and who else
191	Jay	My Mum.
192	Kathryn	And your Mum as well and what-
193	Jay	=My Dad didn't like me being on it.
194 195	Kathryn	Your Dad didn't like you being on it (.) how did the decision to come off your medication happen then.
196 197	Jay	I just thought I can be good by myself (.) so I tried (.) I've being doing it so I went off it.

Extract 5 (transcript 2c)

Line	Speaker	Text
210 211 212	Kathryn	And it would help to improve your behaviour (.) is that why your mum thought that it would help and she seemed to think you were better when you were [on your medication?]
213	Jay	[Yeah but I aint really.]
214	Kathryn	So have you proved her wrong then?
215	Jay	Yeah.
216	Kathryn	And does [she-]
217	Jay	[I said] I'd prove her wrong and I did.
218	Kathryn	And does she accept that now?
219	Jay	No not yet (.) she thinks I still need it.
220	Kathryn	Why do you think so?
221	Jay	She thinks I'm just the old Jay.

In these two extracts Jay uses extreme case formulations creating a declarative, assertive tone, for example by using the word "don't" repeatedly, "Don't like it (.) and I don't have it no more" (line 179), "I don't need it" (line 181) as if telling his mother through his conversation with me. He positions himself as being independent and in control, "cos I can be good without it, (line 181). The use of "good" here indicates that Jay acknowledges that he can be deviant or compliant, both of which are within his control and also suggests he alludes to his father's positioning of him as naughty and not in need of medication. Harris and Eden (2000) note that the individualisation of young people paves the way for various professionals to enter the personal lives of individuals, in psychology and psychiatry for example. Jay is quick to remind us of this and reintroduces the psychiatrist into the discourse "they thought that I needed it" (line 187) which reflects the powerful collusion the psychiatrist has with his mother.

A circular blaming strategy is used at the beginning of the following longer extract in which Jay is first positioned as having a deficit, an *inability* to control his anger which leads to the social practice of him being excluded and the secondary consequence of him missing the very anger management sessions he feels he needs in the first place. Jay finds a further opportunity to bring the psychiatrist into the discourse. Having referred in person to Dr A, the new professional is referenced in general and disparaging terms. He is not Doctor A but a "bloke" (line 149) and is not personified.

Extract 6 (transcript 2d)

Line	Speaker	Text
136 137 138 139 140	Jay	Yeah (1+) when I got excluded last year (.) I couldn't control my anger cos I didn't have many anger management lessons (.) cos this lad pushed me and then he ran off (.) I ran after him and then he started calling me names and that (.) so I 'it him and then I got excluded.
141 142 143	Kathryn	Okay (.) and that was because you hadn't got any way of dealing with your anger (.) so have you been on a anger management programme then do you think?
144 145	Jay	Yeah I was on it at errm primary school (.) and errm this school (.) and I've had it out of school as well.
146	Kathryn	Who does that with you then?
147	Jay	It used to be Dr A.
148	Kathryn	Oh (.) Dr A.
149 150	Jay	And now it's a black Asian bloke (.) I don't really like him (.) he's a bit dodgy.
151	Kathryn	What do you mean dodgy?
152	Jay	All he talks about is my medication.
153	Kathryn	Oh right (.) [is he a psychiatrist?]
154 155	Jay	[I don't have it no more] (.) I can do it without my medication.
156 157	Kathryn	You mentioned this last week (.) have you managed to keep off your medication since I saw you?
158	Jay	((nodded))
159	Kathryn	Great!
160 161	Jay	My mum thinks that errm (.) the key to my problems is the (.) the medication.
162	Kathryn	Mmm (.) but you've got a different view though haven't you?
163	Jay	I know I don't need it.
164 165 166 167 168	Kathryn	Yeah well I'm very proud of the fact that you've been able to keep your behaviour in check this term (.) and you've been calmer and able to learn and you've done all that without your medication which I think is really impressive (.) do you think your mum's going to really get the message about that when she comes in next week?
169	Jay	Probably (.) I don't know though.
170 171	Kathryn	Did she talk to you though (.) about the fact that I phoned her up before the holiday?
172	Jay	No (.) she never said anything.
173 174	Kathryn	She didn't say anything (.) mmm she didn't say that she knew that you were making really good progress in school (.) did she say that?
175	Jay	No.

The adjective "dodgy" (line 150) creates the sense that Jay wishes to avoid the psychiatrist at all costs as he cannot be trusted and this can also be seen as metaphorically linked with football, part of the 'game' discourse. Ironically, Jay, who is positioned later as a very talented footballer is imagined as using his football skills to try to fend off this new professional who is intruding on his personal life. The "black Asian bloke" (line 149) seems to symbolises his hatred of the medication. Jay's emphatic disclosure of his mother's silence "she never said anything" (line 72) is also symbolic. On the surface the narrative implies that his mother is unlikely to believe that Jay's behaviour is improving, but more significantly this statement suggests that Jay and his mother do not enter into any conversations where he can be anything other than pathologised.

'Behaviour-as-a-game' repertoire

Extract 7 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
33	Jay	Art I can be good.
34 35 36	Kathryn	These are good things about you (.) these are things that you can do (.) these are your skills and your talents and the good things I've noticed about you (.) and the things that you said last week.
36	Spike	He's good at cross country running.
37	Kathryn	You've got some of these things haven't you?
38	Jay	Mechanics I love !
45	Kathryn	Okay (.) so I think you are good at that Jay would you agree?
46	Jay	Yeah.
47	Spike	I don't have that on my list.
48	Jay	Being outdoors (.) love it love it I like getting mucky!

Extract 8 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
79 80	Kathryn	Spike (.) could you help out here could you (.) is there anything you've noticed about Jay around school?
81 82	Spike	Around school he's (.) we play football outside on the tennis courts a lot and that like.

Extract 9 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
179	Jay	You can go and play for Man United any year!
180	Kathryn	Can [you?]
181 182	Jay	[No] you can't go in the profs team you can go in the youngster's team.
183	Spike	Yeah?
184	Kathryn	Can you get in the-
185	Jay	=Because I've been training with Notts Forest.

These extracts as part of the game repertoire serve to validate Jay's positioning as athletic and energetic. He is also positioned as talented and as a team player, not just because he trains with Manchester United which by mentioning this adds credibility to his identification but because of Spike's inclusive use of pronouns “we play football outside…a lot,” (extract 8, line 82). Also noticeable and in contrast to the silencing and suppression of Jay's ‘voice’ in dialogue with his mother (transcript 1), Jay is far more animated in his tone and seems excited by my noticing that he likes mechanics which sends him into an emphatic repetition of the word “love” (extract 7, lines 38 and 48) and a positioning of himself as being playful like a young child or puppy at any opportunity, “Being outdoors (.) love it love it I like getting mucky!” (line 48). A ‘past self’ example of his playfulness occurs in extract 10, line 97 below, the introduction of a somewhat ‘deviant’ Jay as opposed to a disordered one. Another ‘change of state’ verb appears in extract 7, line

33, “Art I can be good” in which a picture begins to emerge of a young man who can make choices over his behaviour.

Extract 10 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
91	Jay	Everybody’s honest (.) to the people that they trust.
92 93	Kathryn	They are if they care about people and they trust them (.) then they will be honest with them.
94 95	Jay	They are not going to go up to somebody in the street and if they don’t know them then they don’t.
96	Kathryn	Yeah?
97	Jay	That’s what I used to do (.) just knock on the door and ran.
98	Spike	No you just don’t do it.

The construct of deviance begins to emerge as a new interpretative repertoire in the conversational data, although was present earlier as seen in media article 4.

‘Behaviour-as-deviant’ repertoire

Extract 11 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
306	Jay	Yeah (.) we have got (.) we’ve got a lot of naughty kids in our year.
307	Kathryn	Do you think so (.) compared to other years?
308	Spike	Yeah (.) well the year tens are bad.
309 310 311 312	Jay	Yeah the year tens are bad (.) but they just number out the year nines (.) they number them out (.) if they are naughty they are not allowed to go to the school trip (.) and everybody who is good goes on the school trip where there is one.
313 314	Spike	There’s about a hundred of them isn’t there (.) and a hundred and twenty some odd children in year eight.
315	Jay	And there is about a hundred that misbehaves.

Extract 12 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
326 327	Kathryn	So you think of about a hundred and twenty kids in your year you think about a hundred of them are naughty (.) is that what you think?
328	Spike	Yeah and even girls.
329	Kathryn	Girls as well (.) even girls (.) don't you think girls are naughty then?
330	Spike	Well most people think girls are more nice and flowers.
331 332	Jay	Look at Jade Jones she's horrible (.) she tells the teacher to fuck off and everything.
333 334	Kathryn	There was a bit of an argument going on with some girls when I was here last week.
335	Spike	Yeah (.) I was in the middle of it.
336	Jay	Yeah (.) it was Joanna (.) Jade and Joanna got excluded.

Although, not stated explicitly, Jay and Spike as pupils who have experienced school exclusion would be amongst the pupils who "misbehave" (extract 11, line 315) and this would place them as naughty or deviant which is a common phenomenon in their school with the extreme claim "there is about a hundred that misbehaves," (extract 11, line 315). Jay, does not mince his words in telling me his story about Jade, "she tells the teacher to fuck off and everything" (extract 12, lines 331-332) to make his point and his extreme case formulation "everything" positions Jade as capable of every possible deviant act. This discourse has a normalising effect and deviancy is seen to be a problem for girls as much as boys to the extent that "and Joanna got excluded," (extract 12, line 336). Hence, the dominant discourse in the literature that claims it is boys who are demonised, present a problem to society and detract attention away from girls (who are diametrically positioned as "troubled," Slater, 2005, p.7 or "withdrawn, quiet and less visible," Shaw, 2005 p.18) is destabilised by this local narrative.

Extract 13 (transcript 2c)

Line	Speaker	Text
30 31	Kathryn	=Like so you think there's quite a lot of kids here who aren't interested in learning.
32 33	Jay	And there's quite a lot of kids that want to learn (.) I want to learn now but I didn't last year I was a bit cheeky and that to the teachers.
34 35	Kathryn	So you have flipped a switch in your head then that says last year I was like that?
36 37	Jay	Yeah (.) but I'm still a bit cheeky if they if they get on my nerves I'll get on their nerves.

Extract 14 (transcript 2c)

Line	Speaker	Text
164	Jay	Yeah (.) last year I would probably have been ten out of ten.
165 166	Kathryn	Ten out of ten (.) would you have stood out as being one of the naughtiest then in your year (.) and where would you be now then?
167	Jay	About five.
168	Kathryn	About five (.) so that's pretty good isn't it?
169 170 171	Jay	Mmm (.) just more good than bad (.) I'm getting better in some lessons I just be quiet and not say anything not even ask what I've got to do.

Extract 15 (transcript 2c)

Line	Speaker	Text
249 250 251 252	Kathryn	Okay well I'm really pleased to hear things are doing well I am right in thinking that last year you had some exclusions you know like Spike's on exclusion at the moment didn't you have some exclusions last year?
253	Jay	Yeah I had millions.
254	Kathryn	You had millions of exclusions (.) have you had any this year?
255	Jay	No.

These last three extracts provide further examples of how Jay uses the conversation to position himself as *previously deviant*, "last year I would probably have been ten out of ten" (extract 14, line 164) and "I was a bit cheeky" (extract 13, line 33) but now *'partially' reformed*, "I'm still a bit cheeky" (extract 13, line 36). A change of state, past tense verb and an extreme case formulation is used to firmly establish this as an accurate account of his present self, "I had millions [of exclusions]" (extract 15, line 253). In his individualisation of his present self Jay now positions himself as learner and achiever as seen in the newly introduced learning repertoire. However, before we turn to this, the dominance of the pathological repertoire is evident much later in the group conversations and reappears in the following sequence:

Extract 16 (transcript 2d)

Line	Speaker	Text
420 421	Kathryn	Right do you think that then Jay you've grown out of a lot of your earlier behaviour now ?
423	Jay	Yeah (.) but I'm still like CJ (.) I'm worse than CJ.
424	Kathryn	Tell us a bit about you being angry.
425	Jay	If I get angry I stop angry for the rest of the day until I sleep on it.
425 426 427	CJ	You're not worse than me (.) cos I've never seen you kicked out (.) like I know you've got anger problems like me and you've got ADD or whatever it is-
428	Jay	=ADHD
429	CJ	ADHD or whatever that is (.) I've got ADHD.
430	Kathryn	Attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity.
431	Buster	I've got some of that.
432	Kathryn	You all think you've got a bit of that?
433	Jay	I have.
434	Kathryn	You have (.) definitely?
435	CJ	I checked average for it.
436	Jay	I've got Aspergers Syndrome.
437	Buster	What's that?
438 439 440 441 442	Jay	A bit confusing life (1+) I don't know how it is but it confuses you (.) I don't know how it is (.) somebody says something to you (.) either you don't listen or you take it another way (.) or its confusing (.) somebody tells you to stab somebody (.) you either wont listen or you take it the wrong way (.) I don't know what its like.
443 444 445 446 447 448 449	Kathryn	It's about misunderstanding situations (.) yeah when someone talks you misunderstand what they mean and you react the wrong way (.) that's quite a good description Jay (.) but you've learnt how to deal with that a lot of the time haven't you (.) you've understood what that means and you've managed to improve how you feel and how you behave so (.) you know as you get older you change and I think that's what you've just proved that you can leave your problem at the door.

After many weeks of working with the boys the above exchange unexpectedly reveals a stark example of the pathological repertoire where all boys become absorbed as pathologised subjects to varying degrees. Whilst Jay boldly expresses that he has ADHD and Aspergers Syndrome, declaring this in the present tense, his difficulty in making sense of these ascribed labels is evident later in the exchange with the phrases "it confuses you," "it's confusing" and "I don't know what its like" (extract 16, lines 438, 440 and 442). Buster and CJ enter into the construction but with a degree of uncertainty, "I've got some of that" (line 431) and "I checked average for it" (line 435). I use a developmental discourse to give Jay an opportunity to position himself differently, but with limited effect, "do you think that then Jay you've grown out of a lot of your earlier behaviour now?" (line 420-421) and "as you get older you change," (line 448).

In the following three extracts Jay seems to regain an earlier learning discourse that was quickly lost in the conversation with his mother (see transcript 1, extract 18). Here, I make use of dramatic words and an emphatic tone in response to Jay's commentary, for example, "brilliant!" (extract 17, line 47,) "Fantastic!" (line 60) and absolutely brilliant" (line 83), which unleashes a long upbeat narrative from Jay in which he now positions himself as a high achiever. Once again he is independent and fully in control of his actions and extends this version of himself to include his future self, "I'm going to get even better!" (extract 18, lines 87-88). However, as the learning repertoire indicates, the social consequences of Jay's past self (through the practice of exclusion, as seen in extract 17, lines 53-56 and extract 19, lines 112-113) have prevented him from being able to fully take up this new subject position, as seen in extract 17, line 51 below where he hedges by using the phrase "only a little bit."

'Behaviour-as-learning' repertoire

Extract 17 (transcript 2c)

Line	Speaker	Text
46	Jay	Kind of well I'm making an improvement.
47	Kathryn	That's brilliant!
48	Jay	It's gradually going up.
49 50	Kathryn	But you said something quite important a minute or two ago (.) you said you want to learn this year.
51	Jay	Only a little bit.
52	Kathryn	A little bit you want to learn?
53 54 55 56	Jay	Yeah (.) but I can't really learn a lot of science because I got kicked out of all my lessons last year and I weren't allowed in any of them (.) and I weren't allowed in some of my French ones and I weren't allowed in most of my art ones either.
57	Kathryn	What's the situation this year with these subjects?
58 59	Jay	Well art (.) I've made such as improvement I've been getting A stars and stuff like that.
60	Kathryn	Fantastic!
61	Jay	It used to be like D 1s.
62	Kathryn	Have you got a different teacher this year?
63	Jay	No and in English I used to get D 1s and stuff now I get A 5s.
64	Kathryn	And you can't tell me what's changed?
65	Jay	Well-
66 67	Kathryn	=Is it just you that's changed or do you think your teachers have changed?
68 69 70	Jay	No it's just me (.) Miss Bridges hasn't changed and Mr Crouch hasn't changed because Mr Crouch is a bit quiet and he don't like people snooping into his lessons.
71	Kathryn	Right okay.

Extract 18 (transcript 2c)

83 84 85 86	Kathryn	Hey that's brilliant absolutely brilliant because that's a good space to be in because you are at the beginning of the year aren't you (.) if you are making a good impression now you're going to get into your subjects (.) you're getting into your subjects.
87 88	Jay	I'm going to get even better!

Extract 19 (transcript 2c)

Line	Speaker	Text
109 110 111 112 113	Jay	I've being doing better than last year because I've got a better teacher (.) because the teacher last year was just horrible to me (.) you ask all the teachers they know about it (.) they'll just say that he was dead nasty to me (.) sarcastic to me just chucked me out of lessons as soon as I walk in.

In the following short exchange CJ and Buster are positioning themselves as caring and helpful in a learning context. However, CJ introduces the label "dyslexic" (extract 20, line 286) ascribed to another boy and this gives Jay an opportunity to join the learning discourse but mixing in interdiscursively with the pathological discourse so that unlike the other boys he becomes the one with the deficit. Although, Jay moderates this claim by hedging, "I'm a bit dyslexic," (line 292).

Extract 20 (transcript 2d)

Line	Speaker	Text
286	CJ	I help Ben cos he's dyslexic.
287	Kathryn	Yeah?
288	Buster	And I help Sam with reading and stuff.
289	CJ	I know.
290 291	Kathryn	That's really good (.) it's hard isn't it to be dyslexic and in class and you can't read.
292	Jay	I'm a bit dyslexic!

In the following longer exchange which reflects in part an oppressive repertoire, a picture emerges of where the boys stand relationally with their teachers and their teachers with them:

'Behaviour-as-oppressive' repertoire

Extract 21 (transcript 2b)

Line	Speaker	Text
233	Spike	Do you like Lappy now?
234	Jay	No I don't like him.
235 236	Spike	I never liked him when I come (.) but when you actually get to know him he's quite nice.
237	Kathryn	Who is Lappy?
238	Spike	Mr Lappitula.
239	Jay	Mr Lappitula.
240	Spike	But everyone calls him Lappy (.) because he is Lappy
241	Spike	And they call Madame Hill the Old Battle Axe because we hate her.
242	Kathryn	Is that what happens then have all the teachers got nicknames?
243	Jay	Mr Cratch is Badger.
244	Spike	Now that I do like (.) cos-
245	Kathryn	=What do you call Mr Stevens?
246	Jay	Mr Stevens (.) we haven't got a name (1+) Brian
247 248	Spike	Yeah (.) Brian (.) we shout it when we see him going down the corridor (.) Brian.
249 250	Kathryn	Because he's new (.) he hasn't been here very long (.) what do you think of Mr Stevens ((the headteacher)) then?
251	Spike	He's alright.
252 253	Jay	He's alright (.) but at the beginning everybody thought he was horrible.
254	Spike	No at the beginning-
255	Jay	=At the beginning everybody thought he was gay.
256	Kathryn	Yeah?
257 258	Spike	Yeah everyone thought he was gay (.) he was talking (.) he goes right then children ((said in an effeminate accent)) sort of errr-
259	Kathryn	=Is there a problem with being gay do you think?
260	Spike	No it's just a case-
261	Kathryn	=Because a lot of adults are (.) aren't they.
262	Spike	Well not a lot (.) 2 percent of a hundred in Britain are gay.
263 264	Kathryn	Where did you get that information from (.) is that something you've heard or read?
265	Spike	On the computer.
266 267	Jay	Everytime I've been in trouble with him (.) he's just told me (.) he don't shout at me.
268	Spike	He don't shout at me either.
269	Jay	He knows I've got problems (.) he tries helping me with it.
270	Kathryn	So that's the sign of a good teacher isn't it?
271	Spike	Yeah (.) everyone (.) there's head teachers (.) err Mr-
272	Jay	=Like Mr King last year (.) I used to hate him.

The discourse around these relationships is not all oppressive, but where it is Jay uses the rhetorical device of contrasting "I used to hate him" (as opposed to discussing certain activities in the game repertoire that he "loves") although he does refer to this in the past tense and uses hedges to moderate his claim, "I didn't like him." Therefore, whilst on first reading this extract appears to be oppressive in its construction a positive dialogic relationship begins to emerge as the boys start to 'get to know' some key adults in school. Jay repeats his use of "horrible" (extract 21, line 253) attributing the headteacher the same identification as Jade (extract 12, transcript 2b). I was unsurprised at the inclusion of the topic "gay" (extract 21, line 255) as this has been found to be prevalent in the discourse of adolescent males within school settings (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman 2002; Davies, 2003 and Edwards, 2007). However, Jay's initial description of the head teacher as "horrible" suggests the pupils were threatened and anxious in thinking that their head teacher is gay (as this is prohibited in hegemonic masculine identity construction) and would not want others to perceive them as having any relationship with him as this might position *themselves* as having a 'gay' affinity.

However, the boys expressed surprise at the way in which the head teacher had entered into a supportive dialogic relationship with them. Interestingly, they still do not admit that he is gay "everybody thought he was gay" (line 257) and refer to this as something in the past that is no longer relevant. As Cullingford notes (1999) it is essential for young people to have opportunities to discuss their experience of the world with key adults at home and school. Therefore, the practice of Jay and Spike accepting these dialogic opportunities seems to have outweighed the disadvantages of being seen to affiliate with a gay man. This finding also suggests that the desire for adolescents to seek relationships with key adults in order to make sense of their individuality is very strong. In the sanctity of the research context, it seems that the boys were able to reveal this narrative to me, perhaps also because I am female. What began as a discourse around oppression becomes one of liberation:

> Men suffer as a consequence of conforming to the values of the dominant masculinity, but would not see themselves as oppressed.
> (McLean, Carey and White, 1996, p.24)

Reflexive box

Reflections as a researcher

As the group sessions progressed I felt that I became close to the boys who disclosed much of their personal narratives to me through these conversations. It seems that research as a practice can be potentially very therapeutic and may enable adolescent boys to discursively practice different ways of *doing* boy.

Extract 22 (transcript 2d)

Line	Speaker	Text
23	Jay	Yesterday Mr Lappitula asked me where I was because I was twenty
24		minutes late because I went to the medical room (.) and I goes I
25		went to the medical room and he pulled a face at me taking the mick
26		out of me (.) being sarcastic and I told him to get lost and he goes (.)
27		telling me to get lost are you (.) so I goes what are you going to do
28		and then he goes (.) well what are you going to do (.) I goes I'm not
29		saying it.
30	Kathryn	This was a teacher you were talking to?
31	Jay	Yeah but he does my 'ed in.

In this later extract Jay refers again to the same teacher, repeats the word "sarcastic" and uses a rather graphic, violent figure of speech "he does my 'ed in" (line 31) to build a picture of oppression. This is far removed from the earlier description "he pulled a face at me" (line 25) showing his now familiar discursive strategy of extreme case formulations. It seems other discourses are creeping into this exchange, such as the way Jay's construction implies deviance and the way Jay tells the narrative about the teacher repeating his statements and turning them into questions, hence becoming a relational dance in which 'behaviour-as-a game' is played out.

Extract 23 (transcript 2d)

Line	Speaker	Text
71 72	Jay	I do own up to things I have done a lot (.) but sometimes I just don't bother owning up to it.
73	Kathryn	We talked about this before.
74	Jay	If I own up to it later then they don't believe me.
75	Kathryn	Right so sometimes you wait to tell the truth (.) do you?
76	Jay	Mmm.
77 78	Kathryn	Right (.) I think you're quite an honest person though you do tend to tell people yeah (.) mmm (.) anything else there?
79 80 81 82	Jay	I do what I'm told sometimes if a teacher gets on my nerves then I go back up and then they tell me to do something and then they don't say sorry because this happened this week as well (1+) the teacher says why did you hurt Andrew when I never it was Jack Pitt.
83	Kathryn	Mmmm.
84 85 86	Jay	I got done for it I walked downstairs to the house (.) went back up and then he told me to take my jumper off and everything (.) and I goes (.) not until you say sorry and then he just had a right go at me.

Jay persists in this extract of positioning himself as a victim of social injustice repeating his sense of hurt "they don't say sorry" and "not until you say sorry" (extract 23, lines 80-81 and 86). Again 'behaviour-as-a-game' is played out, but this is no fun game (like football) but a painful one "gets on my nerves" (line 79) and a show down where neither side want to give way until the teacher metaphorically delivers the final blow "he just had a right go at me" (line 86). I collude with Jay's description of himself as being truthful which seems to pave the way for the oppressive narrative to develop.

Closing family constructions of Jay

The final chapter in the story of Jay was produced in the closure family meeting which was loosely structured around a few questions (see Appendix 5). However, the closure family meeting for Jay was not able to take place at the end of the project due to Jay's permanent exclusion and move to a PRU and the difficulty I had in accessing time with his mother due to a family bereavement. It was many months later, in April 2007 that the closure family meeting took place. Jay elected not to be present at the meeting and was out with his friends. The following extracts are selected from transcript 3 which is provided in full in Appendix 18. A new identity for Jay begins to emerge:

'Behaviour-as-partnership' repertoire

Extract 1 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
4 5	Mum	Some days he's really well behaved (.) really polite (.) other days I don't see him at all he's out most of the time.
6	Kathryn	Yeah?
7	Mum	There's still a lot of conflict with his brothers.
8	Kathryn	Right?
9 10	Mum	Errm I think as long as he's doing the things that he wants to do he's fine.
11	Kathryn	Mmm.
12 13	Mum	Still got temper problems (.) we don't really talk that much (.) he tends to go off with his friends and do what they do really.

Extract 2 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
16 17	Mum	Some days he can be quite talkative and other days he like just can't be bothered to talk to me (.) this is what I've been doing.
18 19 20 21 22	Kathryn	Because one of the things that surprised me at the PRU (.) because he knew me quite well and he'd been very talkative in the sessions (.) I thought he'd be quite chatty with me at (1+) but actually it was like he blanked me (.) when I went in he'd say hello and that was it (.) and that was it.
23	Mum	No?
24 25	Kathryn	There was no conversation and it could be that he was round the other kids and in a different place.
26	Mum	But when there are things occupying his mind (.) he just doesn't think.

What is noticeable in these extracts from transcript 3 in comparison with extracts quoted from transcript 1 (produced 18 months apart) is that Jay's mother now constructs him in partnership with his friends who he is out with most of the time, whereas previously "Jay finds it very difficult to make friends but finds it very difficult to keep them" (extract 2, lines 56-57 transcript 1). Now, his mother is hesitant in her talk as if she no longer knows her son, "I think as long as he's doing the things that he wants to do he's fine," (extract 1, lines 9-10, transcript 3). She also uses a blaming strategy to explain why Jay no longer talks to his mother or to me, "he like just can't be bothered to talk to me," (extract 2, lines 16-17). She slides into a deficit discourse again but less convincingly than she did 18 months previously, as she replies with the contravention, "But when there are things occupying his mind (.) he just doesn't think," (line 26). The two extracts above also suggest that the quality of the discursive relationship between Jay and his mother is changing so that there is more symmetry and partnership evident, "Some days he's really well behaved (.) really polite," (extract 1, line 4) and "Some days he can be quite talkative," (extract 2, line 16).

Reflexive box

Reflections as a researcher and an educational psychologist

In lines 18-22 extract 2, I find myself using the research context to reflect on my own practice, trying to make sense of why it is Jay "blanked me" in the PRU after what had seemed a number of close dialogic encounters between us over many months. It seems that Jay may be mirroring his process of separating (and discursively distancing himself) from his mother through me. In our past conversations Jay's pathological self has emerged many times and it may be too risky for him to enter into a further discourse with me for fear that this past self will re-emerge. I can imagine, like the "black Asian bloke" who replaced Jay's psychiatrist Dr A, I represent another professional whom Jay wants to "dodge" before I re-enter his personal life (Harris and Eden, 2000) and discursively meddle with his individuality. Perhaps this also explains Jay's discursive silence, his need to opt out of the closure family conversation reflected in transcript 3.

Extract 3 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
29 30 31	Mum	He (.) err yes (.) errm even though he's got himself into a bit of trouble he's growing up more now and I tend to be able to trust him a little bit more in the things that he's doing (.) well I hope I can.
32	Kathryn	Can you give me some examples?
33 34 35 36	Mum	I mean now when he goes out I don't have to keep saying to him (.) Jay where are you going (.) what are you doing (.) stay out of trouble you know he just seems a lot more grown up than (.) and I don't have to do that with him now.
37	Kathryn	Yeah.
38 39 40	Mum	Whereas before I used to constantly worry (.) I mean now he's got a mobile phone I can contact him and tell him when I need him to come home (.) but I think I trust him now to go out and not get in trouble.
41	Kathryn	So when he is out and about is he fairly safe in the community then?
42 43	Mum	I think he is (.) he's got himself into a circle of friends (.) but they're not angels (.) but they come to the house (.) I've got to know em a bit.

In extract 3, Jay's mother continues her narrative about her new found partnership with Jay and in doing so she begins to acknowledge a 'behaviour-as-deviant' discourse, "he's got himself into a bit of trouble," (line 29) and "they're not angels," (line 40). She is emphatic about the partnership, repeating the word "trust" (lines 30 and 40) but is still hesitant about how to position the new Jay, "I think he is," (line 42).

Extract 4 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
81 82	Kathryn	...I wasn't sure if Jay was still seeing Dad and whether his relationship with dad was any different?
83 84	Mum	He doesn't see him very much at all (.) I would say they haven't got a relationship.

In contrast (perhaps to portray herself as a good mother to Jay and still needed by him) Jay's mother denies his father access to the partnership repertoire.

Extract 5 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
278 279	Mum	...it all depends on what's going on in his social life (.) because Jay's social life really means more to him than-
280	Kathryn	=Yeah
281	Mum	School or anything like that whether [he's wanted-]
282	Kathryn	[And that fluctuates?]
283	Mum	=Whether his friends want him around.
284 285	Kathryn	That's fine (.) and that's changed has it in the last year (.) that's been up and down?
286	Mum	I think it's got better.
287	Kathryn	Mmm (.) that's really positive (.) I'm impressed to hear that.
288 289 290 291	Mum	You know (.) if he's got good friendships going on Jay seems really happy because he's not an indoor person (.) he's not someone who wants to come home and stay and talk to me and go out and do something with me (.) he'd rather [be out.]

As seen in the above extract, the partnership discourse re-continues much later in the conversation and continues to position Jay as very keen to be out having social contact with his friends but wanting to avoid conversations with his mother. It occurs to me that despite the firmly established account of Jay as having the *label* Asperger's Syndrome the discourses that construct him singularly lack references to the characteristics that appear in the medical construction of this disorder. For example, under the category social impairment the diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome includes an "inability to interact with peers" and "lack of desire to interact with peers" (Gillberg and Gillberg, 1989, in Attwood, 1998, p. 195). The extent to which Jay is positioned as needing and seeking social contact with his peers is contradictory to this. Other categories within the Gillberg and Gillberg 1989 diagnostic criteria of Asperger's Syndrome include narrow interests, repetitive routines and speech and language peculiarities, none of which are evident in the discourse. It seems that if the label Asperger's Syndrome was deleted from the transcripts it is very unlikely that I would recognise this pathologising of Jay within the discourse.

An interesting tension in the text occurs when I claim that I had a very good relationship with Jay and that he sought me out to talk to even on days when the project groups were not meeting, further elaborating on the partnership repertoire. However, this contrasts with Jay's mother's variability in her accounts of Jay wanting to chat sometimes and not others as seen in extract 6 below:

Extract 6 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
202 203 204 205	Kathryn	Oh that's right I remember now (.) but my question is what difference do you think being in the project had made to Jay when he was at school (.) do you think it made a difference to him in that period of time?
206 207	Mum	I don't really know (.) like I said he's not big on conversation he wouldn't come home and say I've seen Kathryn [today.]
208 209	Kathryn	[Because] he used to ask to see me according to Mrs Brown.
210	Mum	Hmm.
211 212 213	Kathryn	It was hard because I could only come in once a fortnight and it was a shame because I think he would have responded quite well to weekly visits.
214 215	Mum	Yeah Jay only responded to certain people (.) other people he could take an instant dislike to and never have a relationship with them.
216 217	Kathryn	I can remember Mrs Brown saying to me at the beginning he will either like you or he won't like you.
218	Mum	Mmm.
219 220 221 222	Kathryn	I never got the feeling that he didn't want to come (.) I got the reverse feeling because he used to ask is Kathryn coming in today (.) so I think it was beneficial from that point of view in that we did have a relationship in that time.

Extract 7 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
235 236	Kathryn	I don't know whether you think that being at Blackville PRU has made a big difference?
237	Mum	I think it has personally (.) yeah
238	Kathryn	How do you feel they've helped him?
239 240	Mum	I don't know whether like as you say they work in a smaller group so his voice is heard more so than in a big classroom?
241	Kathryn	Mmm.
242 243	Mum	They tend to listen to him more you know (.) about his behaviour if he gets a bit irate they tend to talk to [him-]
244	Kathryn	[Mmm.]

These extracts suggest that Jay can make relationships and does although it could be suggested that his mother is using the construction of Jay as being rigid in whom he relates to which could be vaguely associated with the medical construction of Asperger's

Syndrome. Jay is positioned as valuing his conversations with me as these were helping him and his mother extends this construction to the perceived value of Jay conversing with staff in the PRU but seems hesitant in adhering to an account of me as someone who has helped Jay "I don't really know" and "he wouldn't come home and say I've seen Kathryn today" (extract 6, lines 206-207). It would appear that a dilemma of stake is in operation here (operating at an unconscious level?) as Jay's mother would not be motivated to perceive me (a fellow mother) as having a successful discursive relationship with her son when she has found it hard to establish this herself.

It seems that I inadvertently brought my own reflections as a mother into the discourse at an earlier point, which may have influenced the above exchange.

Extract 8 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
154 155	Mum	But other than that I think things have improved quite a lot and I don't know really (.) as I've said it's because he's getting older.
156	Kathryn	Yeah (.) it's hard to explain.
157	Mum	Yeah.
158 159	Kathryn	Well it may be because you feel you can trust him a bit more (.) you may be a bit more relaxed as well (.) there could be lots of reasons.
160	Mum	Yeah.
161 162 163 164 165	Kathryn	I certainly felt like that with my son when I stopped trying to control him quite so much (.) he had a lot of behaviour problems (.) he's much older now (.) I think there was a point when I stopped trying to make him do what I wanted him to do (.) I kind of backed off completely then our relationship changed.

Reflexive box

Reflections as a researcher and mother

At the time I had not quite appreciated how much my own needs and values had crept into the discourse with Jay's mother, but I was aware of one reason for embarking on the research in the first instance, to make sense of my own son's behaviour. My 'role' as a researcher here has become mixed up with my 'role' as a mother, which might be helping me personally but seems to have had a deleterious effect on Jay's mother who may have felt my discourse relating to *my* relationship with Jay to be uncomfortable, threatening and judgemental.

Extract 9 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
337 338	Kathryn	So it might open up some doors for him (.) he talked about working with dad at one time (.) what does his dad do?
339	Mum	His dad's a builder.
340	Kathryn	A builder (.) yeah (.) a carpenter by trade?
341	Mum	Yeah (.) but he's got a building firm and I don't think that would work.
342	Kathryn	Mmm?
343	Mum	Really they clash.
344	Kathryn	Yeah?
345	Mum	An awful lot (.) but Jay's not work orientated...

The above extract is yet a further discursive example (evident also in transcript 1) of Jay's mother denying Jay a relationship with his father, "Really they clash," "an awful lot," (lines 343 and 345). A parallel process seems to be occurring in that Jay's mother is motivated to position Jay as in continual opposition with his dad and that he would not be capable of helping him by offering him a job. In the same way, I am denied any credit for relating to and helping Jay.

Extract 10 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
415	Kathryn	Do you think he'll make it on his own (.) and go out there?
416 417	Mum	Errm (.) I think if he met the right person who understands him I would like to think so.
418	Kathryn	Do you think he's got a caring side?
419	Mum	[He can-]
420	Kathryn	[=Affectionate] and-
421 422	Mum	=He can to a certain degree (.) he's not as loving as the other two as in (.) as in physical.
423	Kathryn	Okay.
424 425 426	Mum	But when he goes out he'll say (.) love you (.) bye (.) but I don't know whether he's saying it or whether it's just the habit of saying it (.) but yeah I'm hoping he'll have a relationship.
427	Kathryn	Mmm (.) okay
428	Mum	Normal life.

In the above extract Jay's mother extends the partnership repertoire to project Jay's futured self as one in which he is positioned as settling down with a partner. Significantly her use of the phrase "normal life" (line 428) is in contrast with her earlier pathologising of him, perhaps suggesting that her past and present constructions of Jay are temporary. However, the 'behaviour-as-pathological' discourse re-emerges at various points during the conversation in relation both to Jay's present and futured self and is fuelled by myself as seen below.

Despite the partnership repertoire taking shape at the beginning of the conversation and continuing throughout, I (unconsciously at the time) re-introduce the pathological repertoire. Although not evident in the transcript, I was aware that for a period of a few weeks during the time the project was running Jay (having been positioned as disordered) was on an indefinite fixed term exclusion from school as the assistant headteacher and his mother insisted that Jay took his medication before he could return to school, which he initially refused to do. My motive in reintroducing the pathological repertoire was probably to do with unfinished business relating to my work with Jay. The social practice of exclusion which appeared at the time to contravene Jay's human rights also compromised the research making it impossible for Jay to continue in the group sessions which had clearly revealed his struggle to shake off this disordered subject position.

'Behaviour-as-pathological' repertoire

Extract 11 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
89 90 91 92 93 94	Kathryn	I was told during the project he'd been fixed term excluded for a while and that Mrs Brown had said that you and she were trying to get him to agree to take his medication before he went back to school (1+) so I wasn't quite sure (.) it seemed like a confusing story and I wasn't quite sure what happened about that (.) and whether he's still on medication and what are your views on that.
95 96 97	Mum	He's still on it (.) and they changed the dose for him so he could take one in the morning and one at night (.) he won't take them weekends and school holidays (.) he refuses point blank.
98	Kathryn	Yes?
99 100	Mum	To take them (.) I think he takes them because he knows he can't go to school unless he's taken them.
101	Kathryn	Right (.) and is that something you've said to him (.) or-
102 103	Mum	=School if he goes into school and he hasn't taken it (.) then they send him home.
104	Kathryn	Even at Blackville PRU?
105	Mum	Yeah.
106	Kathryn	Right.
107 108 109 110 111 112	Mum	He can't be in school without his medication (.) errm well to be quite honest (.) I don't know if it's just now but initially I did see a difference in him when he was taking it (.) now I don't know whether it's because he's matured a little bit more but I think he could cope with things without it (.) but that's just my opinion (.) I don't see him every day at school and what he's like at school.

There is also an oppressive almost abusive discourse running through this extract in that a factual and stable account is made of Jay still needing his medication. Jay's very identity here as a disordered young person is forced upon him knowing the social consequence of being denied access to his education if he does not comply. However, perhaps realising the oppressive nature of the narrative, Jay's mother enters into disclaiming, "if he goes into school and he hasn't taken it (.) then they send him home," (extract 11, lines 102-103). The use of the pronoun "they" in this quote also signifies that the headteacher who would have made the decision to send him home, whilst not named, is also distanced from having to take responsibility. What appears to be a newly introduced deviant repertoire by Jay's mother creeps into the conversation and it appears that his mother is acknowledging that her son is changing which provides an 'opportunity' for her to position him as naughty, which is something previously denied:

Extract 12 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
252	Kathryn	Can you say in what ways in particular he's improved?
253	Mum	Probably behaviour.
254 255	Kathryn	Mmm (.) I mean do you still feel that the Aspergers Syndrome and the ADHD are still very big?
256	Mum	Oh yeah.
257	Kathryn	Are still very significant things that prevent him from-
258	Mum	=Yeah
259	Kathryn	Getting on in life (.) do you still feel that way?
260	Mum	Yeah.
261 262 263	Kathryn	Would you feel that he's got much better coping strategies for those problems now (.) do you feel he'll ever move on from that situation or do you always think he'll have those difficulties?
264 265 266	Mum	I really don't know (.) I hope he can (.) errm but I really don't know because I said we have horrible (1+) we can have a few months where everything's okay-
267	Kathryn	=Mmm
268	Mum	Quite happy (.) and then to me for no apparent reason-
269	Kathryn	=Yes
270	Mum	He just starts going downhill again.

Once again, during analysis I became aware that I re-introduced the pathological repertoire into the discourse at a time when Jay's mother is beginning to suggest that her son has changed. This has the effect of Jay's mother emphatically declaring her construction of Jay as pathological ("yeah" extract 12, line 256, which she repeats on lines 258 and 260) despite the repositioning him as happier and more settled. The contrasting strategy "he's come on" and "we can have a few months where everything's okay" (lines 251 and 265-266) in opposition to "we have horrible" and "just starts going downhill again" (lines 265 and 270) allows her to remain hesitant about the new Jay. The phrase "I really don't know" (line 264, repeated twice) seems to prevent her from letting go of Jay's disordered self.

'Behaviour-as-deviant' repertoire?

Extract 13 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
142 143 144	Mum	Well to be quite honest I think things are pretty good (.) I mean he's got himself in a bit of trouble you know and we've managed to sort that but-
145	Kathryn	=Trouble at school or-
146 147 148	Mum	=No he (.) errm got into the cricket pavilion and graffitied and ended up in court and things (.) and well I think we get on better now but I still find it frustrating when-
149	Kathryn	=Yeah
150 151 152	Mum	He errm (.) like if he wants something and you tell him no and I explain to him why he can't have it (.) and it's like he shut himself off (.) he's not listening to me (.) he wants it (.) and he wants it now.
153	Kathryn	Yeah?
154 155	Mum	But other than that I think things have improved quite a lot and I don't know really (.) as I've said it's because he's getting older.

Jay's mother presents the incident in the cricket pavilion in concrete terms but tries to play it down by hedging, "a bit of trouble you know," (line 143) and by contrasting "I think things are pretty good," "I think we get on better now," and "I think things have improved quite a lot" which are more suggestive of the partnership repertoire. The closely woven interdiscursive mix of the deviant and partnership repertoires in such a short extract also acts as a disclaiming function and the positioning of Jay as a criminal is easily overlooked as the partnership repertoire predominates.

Extract 14 (transcript 3)

Line	Speaker	Text
455 456 457	Mum	I think that's what it is (.) he's getting more I don't know (.) because I've never seen Jay as a naughty child (.) I've never seen him (1+) but I think he's getting (.) I hope he's getting a bit more sensible.
458 459 460	Kathryn	You've described him before as a child whose been diagnosed with ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome (.) that sort of child who sees the world differently (.) that his behaviour problems are not intentional?
461 462 463 464 465	Mum	He always acted the class clown that showed off (.) and there would be no reason for him to act that way (.) but I don't know (.) I thought at one time Jay he's got to impress people to get them to like him (.) sort of thing (.) and I think that's what's happened with his friendships throughout the years.
466	Kathryn	Yeah?
467 468 469	Mum	Whereas now with him being a bit older (.) his friendships seem to be more important to him (.) and if he's happy with (1+) to me Jay's friendships are the main thing in his life.
470	Kathryn	Right?
471 472	Mum	They really are the most important thing (.) I think (.) and if he's really happy in his friendships (.) then it makes me happy.
473 474 475 476 477	Kathryn	Mmm because the classic thing with children with Asperger's Syndrome is that those children don't like to have social contact so do you feel those are still the right labels for him at this point because sometimes its quite hard to tell (.) even paediatricians and psychiatrists don't always get it right.
478 479	Mum	When he was small Jay would force himself on people he would just invade their space.
480	Researcher	Yes?
481 482 483 484	Mum	You will play with me (.) you will be my friend and he used to get so upset when they refused to play with him (.) you know really really over the top upset (.) and I said friends are friends they stand by you no matter what.

However, in this final extract Jay's mother rejects any discourse of deviance, "I've never seen Jay as a naughty child" (line 456) and within the talk (where I play a significant part by once again re-including the pathological repertoire) she holds onto her positioning of Jay as disordered but has no difficulty positioning him alongside this as a maturing, sociable young person.

Finally the partnership repertoire shines through this exchange and within the discourse Jay is positioned as being a changed sociable self as he grows older. This account is made more solid by Jay's mother's contrasting his identity as a younger child struggling to relate to his peers. She also uses a repetitive device (and extreme case formulation) to emphasise Jay's disordered self without directly answering my question about labelling, "you will play with me", "you will be my friend" and "really really over the top upset" (lines 481-283). However, the use of hedging moderates her claim that he has changed, "but I don't know", "I think that's what's happened" and "I think" (lines 462, 464 and 471) as if in this final exchange with me she still does not want to let the pathological discourse go. It seems as mentioned earlier from the work of Wooffitt that attention should be given to comments such as "I don't know" as these 'uncertainty markers' (Wooffitt, 2005 p. 121) can mask an underlying sensitivity. In the final moments of the relationship between me and Jay's mother (now spanning a period of 18 months) she still has too much at stake to confidently declare that her son is now a 'normal' adolescent as this might position *her* as having failings as a mother in her upbringing of Jay. The best compromise for her is to allow both the pathological and the partnership discourses to exist alongside each other and to position Jay's past, present and future selves as formally disordered, but presently and potentially sociable. The story of Jay ends on an optimistic 'turn of talk.' Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) stress that according to Fairclough's theory of critical discourse analysis a high level of interdiscursivity is associated with change whereas a low level signals reproduction of the established order (or in the case of local narratives the established identity construction). The interdiscursive mix of repertoires in the conversation between me and Jay's mother enables a change in Jay's adolescent identity to begin to be realised.

Summative presentation of the analysis of conversational data

A summative presentation of the key constructions from the conversational data is provided in model 3 below which is also based on the original framework for the construction of the identity of excluded adolescent boys proposed in model 1. The use of underlining is to represent repetition of terms and dominant discourses. By examining the "available choreography of discursive moves" (Wetherell and Potter, 1992, p.92) it becomes possible to identify the subject positions that are made available for Jay and his mother to take up through talk.

Model 3 A construction of the identity of Jay an excluded adolescent boy, based on Lacanian Theory integrated with a critical discursive analysis of conversational data

Chain of SIGNIFIERS→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→METONYMIC AXIS

Lacan's Symbolic Order

Discursive Practice: Tracing the order of discourse, identifying the phrases used across the conversational data showing intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Transcript 1	Transcripts 2a-d	Transcript 3
couldn't concentrate, difficult to make friends, don't believe he's naughty, it's torture for him, put him on medication, his dad doesn't believe in these things he's got, he finds life difficult, can't organise himself, gets frustrated, always got on in PE, got my own teams, I used to train, play outdoors, kick a ball around, gets on my nerves	during the day I'm knackered because I have my tablets, I do everything, football basketball, you name it, I aint hyperactive very much now, I've never wanted medication, they thought that I needed it, I can be good by myself, being outdoors, love it, I'm still a bit cheeky, I'm getting better in some lessons, A bit confusing life, I'm going to get even better! I'm a bit dyslexic, ADHD	he's out most of the time, we don't talk that much, he just doesn't think, a lot more grown up, I think I trust him now, he's got good friendships going on, he's not big on conversation, his voice is heard, things have improved quite a lot, I'm hoping he'll have a relationship, normal life, up in court, just starts going downhill, never seen Jay as naughty

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

METAPHORIC AXIS

Linguistic terms become selected and condensed

Interpretative Repertoires: Behaviour as…

Pathological	Pathological		Partnership
A Game	A Game	Learning	Pathological
Oppressive	Deviant	Oppressive	Deviant?

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

SIGNIFIED Lacan's Imaginary Order

Jay as an excluded adolescent boy becomes positioned as:

Having multiple deficits and disorders, being out of control, helpless and dependent, a former football player previously fast and energetic, oppressed by his mother and some teachers, improving vs deteriorating	Medicated and exhausted, athletic and energetic, hegemonic masculine boy, a talented footballer, independent and in control, capable of making choices, a learner and achiever a victim of social injustices	Sociable and trustworthy, mature, capable of living a normal life, verging on criminality, a bit more sensible

Jay's mother in relation to Jay becomes positioned as:

Caring and concerned, loving her son but averse to punishing him. Rewarding him but having difficulty communicating with him.	Beginning to let go

This leads to the social practice of:

Exclusion from some lessons, and from football teams	Permanent exclusion from school	Social inclusion

To elaborate on the summative presentation of the conversational data I return now to the main research questions:

How is the identity of excluded adolescent boys discursively constructed nationally (in the education media) and locally (in family and peer group conversations)? and What counter discourses exist that encourage new identities facilitating the inclusion of adolescent boys?

Model 3 reveals that a number of interpretative repertoires present in the national media texts were also present in the local narratives surrounding Jay, these being the oppressive, game, deviant, learning and partnership discourses. The dominant pathological discourse in Jay's constructions was merely hinted at in media article 5. What is evident is that the same interpretative repertoire can be used to enable *different opposing players* to take up the *same subject position.* For example, it seems that teachers do not have the monopoly in being positioned as oppressed by some adolescent boys. The same boys, it appears can be equally positioned as oppressed by their teachers to the point that for Jay it is "torture for him to actually be in the lesson," (transcript 1, line 128). Conversely, a repertoire can also be used to enable the *same player* to take up *very different subject positions.* For example, Jay is discursively constructed as pathological and he vacillates between trying to shake off his oppressive subject position as disordered and using it in a way that positions him positively, for example declaring that his "hyperactivity" enables him to take up the position as a skilled footballer. He also uses the terms ADHD and Asperger's Syndrome as if proudly sporting these as emblems and we see a merging together of pathology and deviance as all the boys in the group (see extract 16, transcript 2d) want to share in this pathologising whilst at the same time present the vast majority of pupils within their schools as deviant. This 'normalising' of the disordered subject position represents the absurdity of labels and indicates the confused meanings that surround the labelling of young people with behavioural problems. These examples suggest that constructions of identity are unstable, transient, manipulative and subject to multiple interpretations. Also, the identity of boys such as Jay cannot be reduced to pathologising terms as these deny the rich complexity and individuality of their storied lives as seen in Jay's hegemonic masculine struggle to position himself within discourse as an athletic, energetic and skilled sportsman:

> In defining pupils according to a powerful medical discourse, support services and educators may reduce opportunities to harness a child's individuality, complexity and creativity, particularly when trying to address their long term social needs...support services need to acknowledge the impact of debates around ADHD on children and young people and not leave them alone to deal with these struggles...genuine dialogue with children takes time.
> (Arora and Mackey, 2004 p 125)

In view of Lacan's 'signified,' model 3 shows that despite the liberating and emancipatory discourses present in transcripts 2a-2d where Jay is able to take up the subject positions in the group sessions with me as athletic and energetic, independent and in control, capable of making choices and learning and achieving, this does not prevent the practice of him becoming permanently excluded. It seems the pathological, deviant and oppressive discourses that make up the interdiscursive mix overshadow these counter discourses and also exist outside of the group sessions (eg as seen in the conversations with Jay's mother and reported conversations between Jay's mother and the assistant head teacher and between Jay, his mother and the psychiatrist). As such the counter discourses are prevented from being played out in dialogic relationships other than those that exist with me and the group of Jay's excluded adolescent peers. The research context allows boys such as Jay to become positioned in new and liberating ways but how can this be emancipatory when the site of identity construction within homes, schools and in the media is so pervasive, creating a constant struggle for boys such as Jay to position themselves as improving when they are surrounded by discourses that position them as spiraling downwards to the point of permanent exclusion?

The answer to this question may be evident in a surprising location. Whilst many of us working in education strive to promote the inclusion of challenging and disruptive adolescent boys in mainstream schools, the social practice of permanently excluding Jay seems to have had an emancipatory effect allowing a 'genuine' partnership discourse to emerge. The end of Jay's story is symbolized by Jay gaining some sense of relational symmetry in his discourses with staff in the PRU and on occasions with his mother. I can fantasize that the seeds of these liberating discourses and new subject positions may have been sown in the unique relational space created through this research in the home visits and group project sessions that found their way into subsequent discourses. The reality, or to use Lacan's notion of the 'illusion' of a fixed meaning (Lacan 2002) is that the practice of social *inclusion* is now realised for Jay as he can discursively take up his subject position as sociable, trustworthy, mature and capable of living a normal life. If he continues to spend time relating to his peers and minimally engaging in discourse with his mother it is possible that this newly acquired inclusive identity can be maintained.

By the time we reach transcript 3 Jay's relational experiences have changed. He is working in the small educational environment of the PRU where it is difficult to escape frequent dialogic encounters with staff and pupils and he is spending a significant amount of time relating to his peers outside of the family context. Therefore, I suggest that not only are schools and families key sites for the construction of identities, for adolescents who choose to spend time away from the home environment the local community is also influential as a site for identity construction and allows boys new opportunities to play out their masculinities. Just as we see in transcript 1, extract 1, Jay running away from his mother, it seems he has spent his childhood metaphorically and discursively running away from her. This separating from her in order to dialogically relate to others such as myself, staff in the PRU and his peers allows Jay to find new ways of *doing* adolescent boy.

Therefore, across the 18 months from the beginning to the end of Jay's story there is evidence of a discursive shift occurring. Jay's mother's positioning of Jay as disordered is fiercely contrasted with what she constructs he is not (ie deviant). This positioning of Jay appears to say more about her motivation to construct ***her own identity*** as a caring and concerned mother which is in opposition to Jay's father's constructions of her as a less than adequate parent. Her 'defended subject position' is therefore interpreted as a dilemma of stake to establish herself as a good mother, which she does at the expense of pathologising her son. In this respect the subsidiary research question can begin to be addressed and can be seen to be integral and inseparable to the way in which Jay's own identity is constructed:

How is the identity of those who parent, teach and research excluded adolescent boys constructed in relation to them?

Although Jay's mother eventually engages discursively in repositioning Jay as sociable and trustworthy she holds fast to her denial of any deviance, despite his recent criminal behaviour and remains ambivalent about Jay's futured self. Her use of talk towards the end of transcript 3 shows a lack of commitment to her new positioning of him as she wavers to the point of uncertainty about Jay's changed self. In doing so she holds on to her pathologising discourse and protects her own subject position as a credible, caring and concerned mother.

As reflected in the analysis contained within this chapter there were various points that prompted me to reflect on my own part in the constructions. Like Jay's mother, I also have difficulty in letting go of the pathologising discourse and find myself re-investing in this, even during transcript 3 in which Jay's mother persistently constructs and extends a partnership repertoire in which Jay can take up a 'normalising' and sociable subject position. Therefore, to my dismay I find that I am largely responsible across the discourses for the intertextual chain of signifiers that link the pathologising discourse across the metonymic axis. However, it is reassuring to find that as a researcher I am positioned as successful in relating to Jay and supporting his more liberating constructions in which he becomes positioned as independent and in control and a learner and achiever. A further dilemma of stake may also be at play here in that I have a vested interest as a practicing educational psychologist in identifying as a professional who can engage with and help the most difficult permanently excluded young people, this being the professional role to which

I am assigned. I would claim that this is realised as a point of reflection during the analysis of the discourse data rather than as a conscious decision during the conversations that took place. It seems, therefore, that any researcher in discursive research must engage in a careful and thorough reflexive effort throughout in order to raise awareness of any underlying subconscious processes.

There is a further reflexive point to note that occurred whilst the data was being produced which prompted me at the time to write a letter to my own son. The following letter also reflects the parallel process that appears to occur through the discourse data between Jay's mother and myself as we are both mothers of adolescent sons who have presented with behavioural problems at school and at home. The letter reveals my projected anxieties and how behaviour resolves itself with the relational symmetry that develops between myself and my son:

> Dear Mr C
> Now that you are approaching your sixteenth birthday I want you to know that my work with a group of boys in secondary schools has helped me reflect on the struggle I felt in bringing you up and my great pride in the young person you have now turned out to be. When I was summoned to your infant, junior school and secondary schools to discuss incidents of misbehaviour I felt humiliated and ashamed and resorted to punishing you at home. When you were bullied on the school bus I talked to you about sticking up for yourself and resented being late for work because I had to drive you to school. When you refused to go to school and had panic attacks I became angry and stressed and considered giving up my hard earned career to teach you at home.
>
> But when at aged 13, I gave up the fight, stopped trying to control you and let you make decisions for yourself, our relationship changed. My response to your emotional needs was to feel sorry for myself when all the time you needed greater emotional support, reassurance and acceptance than I seemed able to give. I also look back at the meetings I had with your clinical psychologist and my surprise (and now my delight) that he did not feel it appropriate to label you. I have learnt so much about myself from being with you. I just hope those parents,

> like me who put their own emotional needs first can recognise that small changes in their relationships with their sons can lead to enormous rewards. If the parents and teachers of challenging adolescent boys can take the same steps as I did as a parent with you then the world would be a far more peaceful place.
> All my love
> Mum
> (Pomerantz, 2007b, pp 94-95)

It seems that much of what occurs within talk is in Lacanian terms the 'language of the unconscious' that presents itself within ordinary everyday speech and is collected together to become signified in a way that attracts meaning and promotes subject positions that are used to justify social practices (in this case the exclusion of adolescent boys). Therefore, in order to make sense of what motivates the dominant discourses that construct the identities of excluded adolescent boys, whether these occur through the media or in local narratives, we need to turn to a deeper psychoanalytical and emotional reading of the text. In doing so it may become possible to consider ways that the identified counter discourses of 'partnership', 'learning' and 'game' can be promoted to facilitate the inclusion of adolescent boys.

Chapter Four   Behind the Curtain

In this chapter I will attempt a psychoanalytical reading of the text as I have come to consider, as other discourse researchers before me, that rhetorical devices (such as blaming, disclaiming or extreme case formulations) can be considered to be "unselfconscious social activities" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 34). However, to prepare for this it is firstly necessary to re-examine Lacanian theory and to briefly consider other post Freudian approaches that may be considered 'psychodynamic' as opposed to traditionally psychoanalytic.

A brief resume of psychoanalytical perspectives

Psychoanalysis has its own methods for studying subjective experience, based on the premise that we make sense of the external world by representing it symbolically inside, creating our own psychic realities and selfhood. This internal psychic reality is thought by most psychoanalysts (eg those from the school of object-relations) to be created from internalisations (introjections) of the external world that are formed very early in life initially through pre-verbal relationships with others. In Kleinian psychoanalysis, for example, the quality of the mother baby relationship is thought to be most influential in forming the structure of the psyche and following a developmental process the 'subject' is motivated towards developing an integrated sense of self. Klein (1932) believed in the existence of a primitive ego from birth and that a satisfaction of basic instincts drives this process as these instincts are always directed towards 'objects,' (people or things) hence combining both a biologically deterministic *and* relational approach. Klein's approach to 'splitting' (a concept introduced in chapter one of this thesis) refers to the distortions that occur in the shaping of the mind (conflicting forces) due to innate drives and desires and powerful emotional states such envy, greed and loss. The importance of the work of Klein is the possibilities that her theory opens up for a relational basis towards understanding the construction of 'self'. Also her contrasting of the external public world with the unconscious creates a new way of thinking about the way in which subjects may 'position' themselves, an idea explored by Wetherell (2003) in her psychoanalytical reading of discourse data collected during a research project on men and their masculine identities. The idea proposed by Klein that external encounters can influence the construction of 'self' (due to the relationship of the developing ego with objects) has helped pave the way for a later object relations approach to psychoanalysis, although the latter is based on the premise that subjects seek out objects to form relationships rather than the directing of instincts towards objects in an attempt to gratify desires. Object relations theorist Winnicott (1960) is known in part for the distinction he makes between the conformist 'false self' that can be formed and split off from the 'true self.' This is thought to occur when the child avoids expressing his or her desires in situations where the mother fails to address the child's needs. The psychoanalytical concept of 'splitting' is therefore an important one, despite there being variations amongst theorists about the nature of splitting and can be said to arise as a defence mechanism to protect against anxiety about the disintegration of the self.

Psychoanalysis based on 'object relations theory' is a more socially oriented perspective on the construction of the self and considers the type of environment available in which a child can develop which is characterised by a pattern of relating leading towards 'separation-individuation,' (Mahler, Pine and Bergman, 1975). This premise enables us to move away from Klein's focus on the primacy of relationships during infancy, towards a psychoanalysis that acknowledges the importance of cultural influences over an entire lifetime, similar to the work of Erikson (1968) with his special consideration of the identity traumas of adolescence. Instead of an ego that in its primitive state strives to develop coherence (Kleinian theory) the child is believed to begin life with a total ego that can become split in the face of failures in the child's environmental relational experiences, from an "acceptable, rewarding 'good' object, and an unsatisfying 'bad' one" (Frosh, 1999, p. 106) creating Winnicott's distinction between the conformist 'false self' and the 'true self' which remains hidden to protect its integrity, (Winnicott, 1963).

The work of Lacan has some parallels with Winnicott but also deviates from the above position. For Lacan the infant also receives a gift of subjectivity from the outside as he captivates his image in the mirror (analogous to the mother's admiring gaze) although the Lacanian position is that the 'mirror' gives a misleading perception of a whole integrated self (Lacan, 2002). As the child progresses in the verbal world of discourse the ideological structures of the social world continue to create these misperceptions of reality. For Lacan (as interpreted by Frosh, 1999) he emphasises the 'split' nature of the human subject:

> The subject can never be present to itself because the only formulation that can be made is through language, in which the subject appears as an alienated 'I' constructed in the discourses that surround it...as each subject is split by the operations of the language and the unconscious, so every human subject finds her or himself looking for proofs of love, and standing.
> (Frosh, 1999, pp 147-149)

Therefore, Lacan's theory can be perceived as negative, where identity is in a constant state of fragmentation which contrasts with object relations theorists who propose the creative pursuit of a coherent and integrated self. This brief resume of psychoanalytical perspectives 'positions' Lacanian theory as one of pessimistic determinism where the array of subject positions and meanings available is fixed by the cultural order. However, conversely, it can be argued that this 'constant state of fragmentation' creates opportunities for resistance. As such I continue to be drawn to Lacan's theoretical position, for the following reasons:

- Lacan proposes that notions of 'self' represent a discursive struggle between individuals. This is demonstrated in the case of Jay (chapter three) who continually strives to position himself in opposition to his mother, but is also drawn into her pathologising of him in ascribing meaning to himself.
- Lacanian theory is a psychoanalytical theory that provides a means of understanding identity as influenced *(over a life span as opposed to just infancy)* by the broader ideological social world of discourse. This is demonstrated in chapter three through an analysis of media texts that perpetuate the positioning of some boys in education and society as deviant, hence justifying the social practice of school exclusion.
- Lacan believes that the subject is never separate from the social world and oneness is unavailable except through the Imaginary (an illusion of who we are) and he provides a psychoanalytical position that unusually deviates from essentialist assumptions of human integrity and biological drives. This fits with my position that identity is actively strived for and constructed within the social world in ways that are driven by largely unconscious motives.

Frosh (1999) reveals that a Lacanian approach to analysis is to attend to formal features of the discourse and in particular the signifiers that repeat themselves. It could be argued that I have already engaged with this process through a critical discursive analysis of the text (as presented in models 2 and 3). Frosh's point does also suggest, however, the value of seeking patterns in a reading of the text. In the earlier study quoted by Wetherell (2003) although she draws from a Kleinian perspective rather than Lacan, we can see that a psychoanalytical reading of the text is useful for identifying patterns, especially those that signal emotions and for providing an interpretation of the investment shown by subjects in constructing the discourse in particular ways.

Applying a psychoanalytical perspective

This brief tour of underlying psychoanalytical concepts provides a basis for exploring the focus of the thesis at a deeper level in constructing subjectivity whilst preserving the notion that identity construction is relational and developmental. Through a model based on Lacan it has been possible to demonstrate in chapter three how discourse constructs versions of the self both in and through the external social world. Now I seek to uncover how these constructions are influencing and being influenced by the internal 'unconscious.' Despite variations in the psychoanalytical approach, all forms of psychoanalysis converge in the belief that human behaviour and consciousness is largely determined by unconscious motives and that our consciousness and internal versions of the world are systematically distorted so as to avoid anxiety (Thomas 1996). As such, a psychoanalytical reading of the text (based on table 3 below) will seek out the emotional tone and the patterns of investment of those speaking to consider what unconscious defence mechanisms may be influencing the constructed identities of excluded adolescent boys.

Table 3 Prompts for undertaking a psychoanalytical reading of the text

1. What feeling states are being projected over the course of the text and how can these be interpreted?
2. What hypotheses can be given to account for the persistent way speakers use rhetorical devices to establish their discourses as factual and stable representations (dilemmas of stake) while other accounts are deconstructed, denied or repressed?
3. What are the specific emotional responses aroused in myself as the researcher and how would I reflect on these?

The third prompt included in table 3 is more than an attempt at researcher reflexivity but represents the "emotional calibration" that is experienced by the 'psycho'analyst which enables him or her to understand the speaker's internal world (Frosh, 1999, p. 302). The purpose in attempting this level of analysis is as follows:

- To provide a deeper layer of interpretation unavailable through discursive research methods
- To hypothesise as to how the internal psychic world reveals itself in subjective accounts of excluded adolescent boys
- To attempt to understand and explain the motivation surrounding the positioning of excluded adolescent boys and the identities this allows them to take up in the social and cultural order

Looking back at the discourse data selected and interpreted in chapter three a further selection (a subset of the existing data) was required to attempt a meaningful psychoanalytical reading of the text. As psychoanalysis is a method for studying subjective experience, only media articles representing biographical accounts (media articles 3, 4, 5 and part of article 6) were analysed as these provide more suitable material for analysis rather than accounts constructed by journalists based on a variety of sources such as government reports. Secondly as the case of Jay provides just one in depth example based on personal narratives, discursive data relating to a second boy Spike, already introduced in the group conversations involving Jay was extrapolated to provide a contrast.

A psychoanalytical reading of biographical accounts in the media

The following points emerged during my analysis of the media discourse data, many of them as emotional metaphors that evoked strong feelings in me due to the build up of anxiety that is revealed. Media article 3 (appendix 9) represents a deeply emotive and vivid biographical account of one head teacher's experience in permanently excluding a boy, Sammy. The headteacher exposes the vulnerability of his staff, "How many staff have been diminished in pupils' eyes because of their inability to deal with him, and felt worthless because they had no strategies left?" and "Staff struggle to maintain their dignity in their encounters with him." These quotes suggest that staff not only feel humiliated in their interactions with Sammy but that they may be projecting their own emotions such as anger back onto him. From my experience having worked in many secondary schools, this example reflects a common occurrence for teachers interacting with challenging pupils. A psychoanalytical explanation (McBlain, 2006a) would be that when young people project raw emotions onto teachers (transference) their teachers are unable to act as a 'container' to these emotions (and the emotions the young person's transference arouses) and unconsciously project back to the young people raw emotions of anger and rejection (counter transference). This notion of 'containment' derives from the work of Kleinian psychoanalyst Bion (1962) and relates to the containing function of the mother in which the mother processes the raw emotions of the infant and responds in a way that acknowledges the infants needs and desires. Some educational psychologists (McBlain, 2006a; Pomerantz, 2007b) have applied this psychoanalytical concept to the capacity of schools (and teachers within schools) to have an emotionally containing function for groups of adolescents.

The headteacher in media article 3 also positions pupils and himself as vulnerable and afraid. This evoking of fear throughout the text is very pervasive, culminating in feelings of terror in myself as I am confronted with the graphic image of Sammy in threatening pursuit of me, "He'll be your intruder in the middle of the night, the person who snatches your mobile phone, threatens you with a knife in the street." In this way Sammy also symbolically represents not only disruptive and dangerous boys in schools but also the criminal youth in society. The effect of this on me is to enter into emotional synchrony with the headteacher, unconsciously justifying *his* act of excluding *and* political and cultural acts of separating and punishing.

Further to this the 'behaviour-as-life-or-death' and the 'behaviour-as-war' repertoires add a morbid flavour to the story, provoking further anxieties and a need to ensure protection of staff and pupils and survival, “he’ll try to settle old scores” and “the headteacher must sign his life away.” The headteacher’s disclosure that he had ‘thought’ of fighting Sammy, “I secretly think a crossbow would be more effective” suggests a link to unconscious motives that he may be repressing. A link here can also be made with Klein’s emphasis on the “Death Instinct” (Klein, 1975, p.4) that we must at all costs defend against by seeking ‘good objects’ in order to avoid the disintegration of our own ego states. In essence the headteacher has his own identity to protect. This is also evident in media article 4.

In the emotionally charged media article 4 (appendix 10) teachers report that the only way they can cope is to be “unnaturally cool and calm” and “I have learned to detach myself,” which can be interpreted as ways in which teachers contain feelings of counter transference (Slater, 2007). These accounts also refer to the “incredible tension” and “worries for the future of society” linking individual school experience with problems in society as seen in the story of Sammy above. Most of the voices of teachers in media article 4 seek to persuade the reader that it is other teachers who experience extreme problems with pupils rather than themselves. There are clear dilemmas of stake here for teachers in positioning the professional self as competent whilst inferring that their own emotions are suppressed yet close to the surface. The effect on me here is to evoke an image of a bubbling emotional cauldron in schools where it is easy to get burnt, personally and professionally. This in turn triggers memories of my early days as a teacher in a secondary school struggling to maintain discipline, fearful of particular lessons during the week where there was always the potential of losing control.

To interpret this point further, Vanheule and Verhaeghe (2005) draw on a Lacanian perspective of psychoanalysis to explain the construct of "professional burnout" (p.285), perceived as the disruption of professional identity as a result of difficulties experienced at an intersubjective level:

> By means of the social relation, the subject can at least develop an idea of who it is in relation to the other. Professional work can be thought of as both a culturally and a subjectively important medium by which such recognition can be achieved. (Vanheule and Verhaeghe, 2005, p.287)

In their study Vanheule and Verhaeghe used the narratives of burned out professionals working with young people in residential settings to look at the meanings the professionals associated with incidents in their intersubjective relations and how they related these incidents to their own identities. Taking Lacan's position that the subject exists only in relation to others, a sense of profound loss and emptiness was experienced by the participants as their imagined professional selves became fragmented through their interactions with the young people and others in the work place. The results of this study, however, cannot fully explain why some of the teacher's biographical accounts in media article 4 infer burnout "I gave up the job" while other teachers distance themselves from being thought of as incompetent, unless this distancing is perceived as a form of denial. What is revealing, however, is that whatever position these teachers take the outcome for them is still a sense of emptiness, an emotional coldness. It is hard to see how this detaching of themselves from pupils is in turn helping construct the pupils' sense of self, hence constituting a further loss, a lost opportunity to develop a partnership. Is this perhaps why some pupils in turn detach themselves from schooling as they are unable to foster a dialogic sense of self in an institution that is in detached from them? Another suggested interpretation is that some professionals are burnout-prone in that they have a narcissistic longing to be appreciated and as such "tend to treat their clients as 'self-objects,' through whom they try to satisfy a basic need such as the need to be liked or admired," (Vanheule and Verhaeghe, 2005, p. 301).

A psychoanalytical reading of these two media articles demonstrates how a discourse of fear and deviance perpetuates difference and separation creating a 'them and us' situation (a splitting off of good from evil). It is not just the order of discourse that perpetuates the practice of the social and educational exclusion of adolescent boys in society but unconscious motives relating to anxiety that lead teachers to position themselves in opposition to adolescent boys in order to defend against the integrity of their own selves.

Reflexive box

Reflections as an educational psychologist

As an educational psychologist working in PRUs I am continually frustrated by the way in which the staff in their interactions with me persist in the pathologising of specific children. It occurs to me that as professionals they perceive themselves as competent in managing pupils deemed to be 'deviant.' However, when they feel unable to contain some pupils' projections of anger their anxieties around being seen as unable to fulfil their professional roles unconsciously project into within child formulations. These constructed formulations position pupils as pathological and needing to be separated from the 'deviants' and educated in more specialist settings. I see more clearly now how this powerful defence mechanism enables the staff to protect their own sense of self.

Drawing from Lacanian theory here (Lacan, 2002) it seems to me that once 'the other' (ie adolescent boys) are perceived as threatening they no longer represent a relational partner through whom recognition of who teachers 'imagine' they are can be expected. Identity here is firmly one of intersubjectivity operating mainly at an unconscious level and can be used to explain more fully the persistent practice of school exclusion.

In media article 5, the dominant rhetorical device used by the author of the narrative to establish her account as factual is one of 'blaming.' It can be argued psychoanalytically that she positions the government as creating the conditions for 'splitting' to occur, that is to say the impossible and irreconcilable pressure to include pupils yet meet increasingly higher targets for levels of attainment. Consequently, she positions some head teachers as acting immorally and illegally by officially and unofficially excluding pupils at key times in the school year that coincide with external examinations. My psychoanalytical interpretation here, drawing on the ideas of Vanheule and Verhaeghe (2005) is that head teachers act to preserve their own professional identities which are dominated by the way in which they are positioned as succeeding in enabling children to reach their potential. Pupils with whom they do not succeed pose a threat to their competence as managers ultimately responsible for the raising standards agenda within their own schools, hence creating anxiety that needs to be resolved to maintain their professional integrity.

Therefore, the anxieties experienced by classroom teachers as seen in article 4 and by head teachers as seen in article 5 may arise out of different discourses but in both instances the need to be acknowledged for who they are professionally can be said to represent a powerful underlying unconscious motive that perpetuates the separating out, excluding and losing of pupils. For those psychoanalysts like Lacan who believe that notions of 'self' arise out of intersubjective experiences across a life span, the above example simply represents a re-enactment of the earliest defence mechanisms projected by the infant to maintain a sense of unity and is identifiable in the discourses that position a variety of professionals: teachers, head teachers and politicians. Lacanian theory (Lacan, 2002) proposes that our experience of our 'selves' is never 'real' or complete and, therefore, the self is a defensive structure that will continue to act in ways that protects a sense of wholeness.

So, if much of what happens discursively in schools is driven by these largely strong emotional undercurrents, what would motivate teachers to enter into a genuine emotionally attuned 'partnership' discourse with pupils who might be deemed at risk of exclusion?

Article 6 provides some clues through the dominance placed by the author on the partnership discourse. The only short narrative, however, within this extract comes from a boy, Danny who has now boxed his way "out of trouble." Danny's testimony "If a teacher is stressing me it doesn't bother me so much," he said. "I think it's calmed the other kids down as well," hints at the underlying emotions experienced by boys at risk of exclusion and reminds us that it is not just teachers who have the monopoly on anxiety and feelings of stress. The powerful metaphor "fear of losing face" introduced by the author of the text provides some evidence of the cause of anxiety experienced by boys in that they feel pressured to live up to the hegemonic masculine ideal, an experience that can create considerable fear in school settings which as we know from earlier quoted studies are key sites for the construction of masculine identities. Through interventions such as paired reading and having time with teachers who act as befrienders, boys become positioned as partners in relational symmetry with others which in some respects allows the feeling states of boys to be legitimately realised. The consequence for boys is that they can, "discuss emotions and explore feelings, a readiness to participate without fear of scorn or discomfort." We have seen how this article begins to position boys as not only capable of having emotions other than anger (such as stress and discomfort) but of being able to discuss and explore these feelings. What the author of this media text appears to achieve is that he makes the unconscious feeling states of boys conscious and infers that these have previously been repressed by other writers.

The other opportunity provided by the author is the introduction into the discourse of "teachers as befrienders." This in itself may unconsciously motivate teachers to take up a new professional identity which in Lacanian terms can only be realised in and through the subsequent dialogic relationship, the discursive space that exists between teacher and boy. This opportunity for relational symmetry may well overcome the effects of the ascribed term "teacher" which in studies using conversation analysis is demonstrated by means of an asymmetrical dialogic relationship where the teacher dictates when and who can speak and shows dominance in the use of speech acts, such as questions and commands (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975, Edwards and Mercer 1993).

In chapter three I demonstrated that along the metonymic axis the media discourses appeared to shift over time, the same identified interpretative repertoire could be used to position boys differently and the same author could use different interpretative repertoires to emphasise the positioning of boys as both excluded and included. This suggests instability in the use of discourse around the national identity of excluded boys providing optimism that counter-discourses can be identified that promote inclusion. However, a psychoanalytical reading of the media discourse data suggests there is a largely unconscious and powerful feeling of anxiety evident across the order of discourse experienced by all subjects (adolescent boys, teachers, head teachers and politicians). This fearfulness is thought to strongly influence the way in which subjects become positioned in and through text and the subsequent social practices of exclusion. This may explain why Lacan (2002) held on to the belief that meanings become unconsciously fixed within the symbolic order which in turn represents supremacy, society and the law. Klein, despite her emphasis on the primacy of the infant mother relationship in the construction of the self (where the child's world becomes saturated with fear and loss, causing the child to defend against these feelings) also believed that adults may return to this way of thinking when under pressure, (Gough, 2004). Despite the differences between Lacan and Klein the above points suggest a psychoanalytical convergence in explaining the relational or intersubjective quality to the way anxiety becomes managed in a social context.

In one respect the focus of this thesis has arrived at a point of pessimistic determinism (a realist position?) where the hegemonic discourses surrounding the identities of challenging adolescent boys are seen to reinforce a perpetual 'problem boy' paradigm:

> We place ourselves in a constant state of ambiguity towards otherness, firstly by creating it to ensure our own psychic survival and secondly by fearing it, as a threat to our survival. In neither part of this tortuous equation can we honestly declare that we are taking seriously the need to understand the groups upon whom our fears are projected.
> (Brown, 2005, p.25)

Exposing the unconscious feeling states of excluded adolescent boys and the feelings of their 'mothers' may provide this greater understanding of the way in which the identity of these boys is constructed and may help see what possibilities exist for the 'discourse' and practice of inclusion.

The Case of Spike

Before entering into this next psychoanalytical task, it is necessary to provide some background to the second case, the case of Spike who also began work with me in the group sessions where Jay was a participant. Like Jay, Spike also arrived at a point where he had to leave the same school, but in Spike's case this was via a 'managed move' as an alternative to permanent exclusion. Spike in fact transferred to the second school involved in the inclusion project where he continued a dialogic relationship with me and became part of the second project group. Unlike the dominant discursive pathologising of Jay, Spike was constructed on the contrasting negative pole of being either 'mad' or 'bad' and was from the outset positioned by his step mother and later on meeting his father, as deviant.

Applying a critical discursive psychology to the conversational data surrounding Spike (interviews during two home visits and a small number of group sessions he attended in the second school) the signifiers and interpretative repertoires are found to be dominated by clusters of terms which become discourses of deviance and war. Discourse relating to Spike is, therefore, more closely aligned to the media texts than that of Jay.

Spike was first described to me by the assistant headteacher as a "lovable rogue." Interestingly the headteacher and author in media article 3 uses the exact same phrase to describe Sammy, the boy he eventually permanently excluded. In both cases this can be interpreted as a disclaiming device used to anticipate and reject potential negative attributions that any researcher/reader may make towards the speaker/writer. To set the context, Spike lived at home with his father, step mother and three half sisters. At the time the project commenced his step mother was about to give birth to a baby boy. Spike's step mother had known him since he was three months old as she lived nearby. During his infant education Spike's mother reportedly went to Cumbria and left Spike with his father and the woman who became his step mother who already had a daughter from a previous relationship. Spike sees his mother for two weeks each summer and at the point of first meeting him had just returned from his annual visit.

During this first visit, Spike's father, a long distance lorry driver is positioned as the dominant figure in the household, the one who makes decisions including the purchase of a pet rotweiler whom no-one can handle. Deviant constructions of Spike at first appear to mirror the image of his powerful, intimidating father who epitomises the hegemonic masculine stereotype. However, the contrasting repertoires of 'behaviour-as-oppressive' and 'behaviour-as-fear' are also subtly evident. Within the discourse in the home, *hints* of fear around the influence of Spike's father and paternal grandparents emerge as the following examples reveal, although these are not just specific to constructions of Spike and need to be seen in a context as revealed in extracts from the initial home visit (full details are given in transcript 4, Appendix 19):

Extract 1 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
420	Step mum	Yeah (.) and now we've got to see Banardos.
421	Kathryn	And this is bothering you?
422 423	Step mum	It is bothering me because I don't get on with his Mum and she's been invited to the meeting as well.
424	Spike	But she's not coming so you're safe.
425	Kathryn	Presumably you had to agree?
426	Step mum	I had to agree yes.
427	Kathryn	You had a choice?
428 429 430 431 432	Step mum	We've had a choice but I haven't signed anything to have to agree I just said yes if it comes to a point I'll just go (1+) but how I look at it I've been through this (.) I know what Spike's going through (.) he don't understand that because I've been here before so I know what the meeting's going to be like.
433	Kathryn	When you say you've been here before?
434	Step mum	I had a social worker.
435	Kathryn	When you were young?
436 437 438 439	Step mum	Yeah (.) and done everything like Spike is going through (.) it wasn't my bad behaviour it was like different things (.) and we had to and discuss it all (.) but Spike don't look at it that (.) I've been through it and I'm trying to explain to him what's what.

In the above extract the constructed discourse and its meanings are deliberately vague. This effect is brought about by disclaiming "it wasn't my bad behaviour it was like different things" (line 436-437) where "different" is left undefined along with the phrase "I've been through it" (line 438). The introduction of the phrase "social worker" suggests that the "it" may have related to child protection issues. The discourse of fear, therefore, subtly positions both Spike and his step mother as victims, unsafe in the family home although there is no explicit disclosure on the basis of which I could professionally take action.

Within this context the following extracts provide a *summary* of the constructed identity of Spike and are selected from transcript 4, Appendix 19, transcript 5a, Appendix 20, transcript 5b, Appendix 21 and transcript 6, Appendix 22 which represent the initial family meeting, group sessions in school and the closure family meeting respectively.

'Behaviour-as-deviant' repertoire

Extract 2 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
21 22 23	Step mum	He just played up half the time (.) his mum couldn't cope with him errm (.) I'm trying to think what he was like (1+) oh yeah I used to have to send him back from school.
24	Kathryn	They used to send him back?
25 26 27	Step mum	No me (.) I used to have to catch him half way down the road because he used to (.) if it was snowing outside he used to go to school in shorts and tee shirt errm (.) what else was there-

Extract 3 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
40	Kathryn	What can you remember about primary school?
41 42	Spike	I used to play up a bit (.) quite a few times get in detention but Old Lane I can't remember much.

In extract 2, early in her first conversation with me, Spike's step mum uses an historical perspective to introduce Spike as deviant. At the same time she positions herself as a caring and sensible adult "I used to have to catch him," (extract 2 line 25) and in doing so positions Spike's mother as an irresponsible parent. Spike joins in the constructing of himself as deviant in extract 3, but moderates his claim, "I used to play up a bit," (extract 2 line 41).

However, in extract 4 below, Spike's step mother persists in her account of Spike as deviant, stressing the authenticity of this by reporting the majority view of teachers. The phrase "chucked/chucks out" is used repeatedly during the narrative and is an evocative term (see extracts 4 and 5).

Extract 4 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
93 94 95 96 97	Step mum	What I am aware of about school (.) errm he's having problems with a couple of the teachers (.) errm everytime he walks into the lesson he gets chucked out (.) errm we found out that when we went to parents evening (.) we went round everyone and we only had like one view that was like putting Spike down.
98	Spike	That was my form tutor that I don't like.
99	Step mum	Yeah (.) that's the one that chucks him out.
100	Kathryn	So does your form tutor teach you as well?
101 102	Spike	Yeah for English so that's why for every single lesson I'm always out of the lesson...

Extract 5 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
351 352 353	Step mum	I've been up to school to complain about her (.) because he steps in the class (.) when he first went before they broke up (.) and he got chucked out straight away.
354	Kathryn	Sorry (.) he did what in the class?
355	Step mum	He got chucked out straight away.

The dictionary definition of 'chuck' (McLeod and Hanks, 1985) includes the meanings "to reject" and "to abandon" creating an image of a boy who is of little worth and needs to be removed. Spike colludes in this positioning of himself as 'bad' and ultimately excluded from class as seen in extract 4.

Extract 6 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
508	Step mum	But he shows off he bullies he just tries to take over.
509	Kathryn	Have you got friends Spike?
510	Spike	I'd say I'd got about 22 friends!
511	Kathryn	Are you sure that's enough?
512	Spike	((laughs))
513 514	Step mum	If he goes out around here he either gets hit or gets picked on or he makes trouble for himself.
515	Kathryn	Is that right?
516 517 518	Spike	Yes unless I play football on my drive against another drive I don't play away from the house (.) I'm more relaxed around the house (.) I've got a lot of footballs (.) I've got 6 footballs.
519	Kathryn	You've got 6 footballs but not many people to play with round here?
520	Spike	Well yeah (.) but I never play out.
521	Step mum	He's always in trouble you see.

Extract 6 begins and ends in the deviant positioning of Spike but also contains a number of contradictions and can be said to be an interdiscursive mix of: 'behaviour-as deviant,' "He's always in trouble," line 521, 'behaviour-as performance,' "I'd say I'd got about 22 friends!" line 510 (a repertoire elaborated on later in which Spike has a tendency to exaggerate his accomplishments) and 'behaviour as-oppressive,' "he either gets hit or gets picked on," line 513. Spike also uses the word "relaxed" (line 517) in reference to being at home which also contradicts the earlier hinting around fear and lack of safety in the home. Along with the positioning of Spike as controlling yet victimised he is also positioned paradoxically as popular yet lonely.

Extract 1 (transcript 6)

Line	Speaker	Text
11	Step mum	Your attitude it hasn't changed towards me has it?
12	Spike	It has a bit.
13 14 15	Kathryn	Because I came to visit you last August it's been nine months so there's been quite a long period of time (.) and I just wanted to know if you'd seen any difference at all?
16	Step mum	Have you Barry?
17 18 19	Dad	Well no because he's had his (.) no I'm saying (.) no because Spike's behaviour one minute it's good (.) the next minute it's not (.) one minute it's good the next minute it's not.
20	Kathryn	Very changeable then.
21	Dad	That's right.
22 23 24 25	Step mum	And we're still having loads of pain (.) it isn't helping at the minute (.) it's putting pressure on me and Barry (.) it's like I was trying to explain to him last night (.) there isn't just him we have to sort out (.) we have to sort out the rest as well.
26	Kathryn	Of course you do (.) yes.
27	Step mum	So-
28	Dad	=He hasn't learnt the concept yet (.) they all have the same.
29 30 31	Step mum	I don't want to read that ((referring to Spike's suitcase, Appendix 6 that I took to show his parents which included positive attributes)) because of what your dad's just pointed out.
32	Spike	I know.
33 34 35	Kathryn	The reason for putting that together is that (.) that a lot of the work we've done has been trying to look forward and notice and recognise in the children that work with us (.) the good things that we see.

Spike in the final family meeting (extract 1, transcript 6 above) tries to resist his step mother's persistence in positioning him in a negative light although he hedges "a bit" (line 12). His father struggles to commit to a total negative construction although repeats the word "no" three times adding weight to Spike's deviant subject position. Characteristic of the discourse constructed in the initial family meeting, here we see Spike's father hesitating and leaving things unsaid, that are merely hinted at, "Well no because he's had his..." (line 17). The discursive strategy used by Spike's step mother is one of blaming him for the family's problems. Spike's emphatic response "I know" (line 32) suggests that this is a familiar narrative. The effect here is to position Spike as a scapegoat for the burdens and tensions within the family. I work within the discourse to present Spike's 'good' side, but his step mother's absolute refusal to engage with this possible positioning of Spike, even though the written text relating to his 'good' identity is put in front of her appears significant. One interpretation is that if she begins to consider the possibility of Spike taking up a 'good' as opposed to 'bad' subject position this places her own position in her relationship with his father "it's putting pressure on me and Barry" (line 23) as one in which she or his father might be to blame for their difficulties. She holds fast to her positioning of Spike as deviant to protect herself.

Extract 2 (transcript 6)

Line	Speaker	Text
135 136	Kathryn	What about joining the local cadets if he's thinking of going into the forces?
137 138 139 140 141	Dad	Things like that we've seen about it (.) then unfortunately he's let himself down yet again (.) you know he always seems to (.) we start something and give him incentives (.) he has confidence he has all the build ups and there's a problem (.) he's doing this (.) doing that (.) well well well (.) and then it stops.
142	Kathryn	Has he signed up for cadets at all?
143	Dad	No.
144 145 146	Kathryn	I know that some young lads it's made a difference to them (.) especially if they've been in bother at school (.) they've got into cadets regularly (.) the discipline and everything it makes a big difference.
147 148 149 150	Dad	It would do (.) it really would do you know (.) but it's like kick boxing that's round the corner (.) but he starts getting into trouble with kick boxing and he can't go there at all (.) so it's you give him something and he seems to chuck it back at you (.) it's hard (.) it really is hard.

Spike's father having suggested that at times Spike can take up a 'good' subject position allows Spike's deviant identity to predominate as one that is continually inevitable. He is careful in the discourse to position himself as a supportive parent and one that seeks sympathy from me, "we start something and give him incentives," (lines 138-139) and "it's hard (.) it really is hard" (line 150) yet he uses the same phrase as Spike's step mum in transcript 4 where he was not present, "chuck it back at you" (line 150). This suggests the presence of intertextuality and although not written text this phrase may be a common script in family conversation. The combined narratives of Spike's father and step mother give prominence to the discourse of deviance whilst possible alternative constructions of Spike are actively deconstructed.

'Behaviour-as-war' repertoire

The following discourse is presented as a solid and stable account of Spike, constructing him in constant conflict with others, especially his peers and his step mother, interactions that are characteristic of violence:

Extract 7 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
81	Spike	It was all for fighting.
82	Kathryn	Fighting (1+) was that the biggest problem that you had?
83 84	Spike	I did it at that school (.) I haven't had that many problems with fighting it's just more one handed fighting.
85 86	Kathryn	Right when you say you've had problems at school now (.) that's been for fighting as well?
87	Spike	Yeah mainly.
88 89	Kathryn	Because kids get excluded for all sort of reasons (.) for cheeking teachers and swearing-
90	Spike	=Mainly it's just fighting.
91	Kathryn	Yes.
92	Spike	Actually (.) all for fighting.

Extract 8 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
118 119 120	Step mum	Yeah but you see it isn't just at school I get it at home so it's a waste of time me going up there to sort things out at school because he don't listen to me anyway.
121	Kathryn	When you say you get it at home?
122 123	Step mum	I get the attitude and I'm not doing this the banging and the slamming doors.
124	Spike	Punching walls (.) punching doors (.) punching of everything.

Having created a view of herself as a responsible parent the discourse becomes self defeating reducing Spike's step mother to the position of helpless victim. This exchange ends with Spike's intimidating repetitive phrase "Punching walls (.) punching doors (.) punching of everything," (line 124) hinting that everything may include his step mother.

Extract 9 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
270	Kathryn	So that's what's given you the idea of going in the RAF then.
271 272 273	Spike	Just the idea of going into a force (.) because I asked my dad which ones about the best but (.) well he said (.) well in the RAF if you are going to die you just die quick (.) you go splat ((laughed))
274	Kathryn	That's a bit gruesome!
275 276 277	Spike	((laughs)) In the army you'd have a long death of course (.) and in the navy you'll have a long death as well because you'll probably just get trapped and just drowned or some'at.

Continuing the fighting theme, Spike relays his father's ambition for him to go in the RAF. As seen above, the 'behaviour-as-life-or-death' repertoire evident in media article 3 emerges here in Spike's narrative. The laughter from Spike has a trivialising effect on his self worth, suggesting this is fragile and hinting that Spike perhaps considers his life will be cut short.

Extract 10 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
374 375 376 377 378	Step mum	He kicked the lad (.) what they said is he kicked the lad in the head three times (.) I got told the day it was on the Wednesday he got excluded but they wouldn't let me get him home (.) Barry's dad had to go and fetch him home because I rang Barry to explain what was what and Barry said right (.) I'll get my dad to fetch him.
379	Kathryn	Was that because Spike was angry?
380	Step mum	No.
381	Spike	I was angry at the time.
382 383 384 385	Step mum	They just kept telling me on the phone he was all right (.) where he was he was safe (.) but I wanted him home if he was excluded (.) I wanted him home and they wouldn't let me fetch him home (.) so Barry rang and said that his dad was picking him up.
386	Kathryn	So this is grandad is it?
387	Step mum	Yes.
388	Spike	I didn't want him to come to the meeting because I don't like him.
389 390 391	Step mum	You see grandad has been up to school because they don't listen to me (.) because with me being the younger Mum (.) they won't listen to me at all (.) so Grandad has been up as well.

In this extract the repetition of the violent offence creates a factual account. Spike's mother is again positioned as vulnerable and weak, both at home and in the eyes of teachers. Spike provides a direct account of his dislike of his paternal grandad who like his father is positioned as powerful. Spike's father although absent from the conversation is very much within it and is constantly referenced, further reinforcing the patriarchal dominance.

In extract 11 below, the discourse of war and fighting is directed at Spike as if he is at war with himself where there is no escape. Spike is pessimistic and hesitant about working on his anger, perhaps because of an unconscious, underlying fear that if we remove his anger we are fragmenting his sense of self. His anger may well be masking an underlying hurt. It is as if Spike has no alternative self, no other subject position available to him:

Extract 11 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
487 488	Kathryn	So anger's something you want to work on (.) and would that please mum if you work on your anger?
489 490	Spike	I think so because if you look at my door you can see that I broke the handle on my door and I punched it right through.
491 492 493	Kathryn	But I go to lot of houses where things get broken (.) you're not the first boy to have said that (.) but there are different ways of dealing with your anger (.) has anybody tried to help you with your anger?
494	Spike	No-one ever can.
495	Kathryn	Okay so do you think its hopeless then?
496	Spike	I don't (.) I don't know.

Extract 1 (transcript 5a)

Line	Speaker	Text
85	Spike	I've got a penknife (.) usually I take it out if I'm going far.
86	Kathryn	What would happen if you took a knife into school?
87	Spike	I already did that in my [old school] but I just kept it in my back pocket.

In the school context Spike elaborates on the war and fight discourse by positioning himself as someone who needs to be prepared to either fight or defend himself from attack. This could be an attempt to appear brave and macho around the other boys, or could be revealing the reality of his lived experience as someone who his 'watching his back' because he predicts that something unpleasant is about to happen. Spike reinforces this account of himself as at war with others and needing to defend himself, but the following story which relates to him around the age of seven years seems rather far fetched:

Extract 2 (transcript 5a)

Line	Speaker	Text
138 139 140 141	Spike	At my old school when I was in year three I used to always get hit by this one lad who goes to my old school (.) and then like once he kept hitting me so I just head butted him and put him in hospital (.) then he got kicked out.

Extract 3 (transcript 5a)

Line	Speaker	Text
154	Kathryn	Right (.) you can get a police record.
155	Spike	I've got a record already for kicking someone's head in.

Extract 4 (transcript 5a)

Line	Speaker	Text
176	Spike	My great grandad's told my grandad to hit back (.) my grandad's told
177		my dad to hit back (.) and my dad's told me to hit back and I said I can't
178		it's illegal and he goes show it then (.) and then when someone hit me
179		round the mouth with a baseball bat so I hit him and I had to go to the
180		police and my grandad turned around and said (.) I think it's a bad idea
181		to hit back now so at least I proved it.

Extracts 3 and 4 above reveal further violent narratives in which Spike is having to take action in the war zone of his 'reported' lived existence. The hitting back and the proving "it" to his grandad adds weight to the already repeated and stable construction of him in frequent conflict with others in which he gets the better of someone else.

'Behaviour-as-performance' repertoire

An underlying 'performance discourse' appears in the home setting and reappears across the group sessions as a series of narratives:

Extract 12 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
67	Kathryn	So he was a fun teacher (.) you didn't do much work then?
68	Spike	No.
69	Kathryn	Did you like him?
70	Spike	Yeah (.) I used to be teacher's pet.

Extract 13 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
180 181	Spike	I like all sport any sport (.) I'll do I like tennis football basketball (.) I did cross country and I always used to come first.

Extract 14 (transcript 4)

Line	Speaker	Text
203 204 205 206	Spike	Basically PE's my favourite subject (.) I've won but I haven't had any medals as such it's on the school records that I've beat the school records at school (.) but you don't get awards just I've got a certificate upstairs for loads of stuff.
207	Kathryn	Brilliant!

In these three extracts we see a positioning of Spike as a performer, capable of high achievements and being valued by his teacher whilst at primary school "I used to be teacher's pet," (line 70). I contribute to this positioning of the 'valued Spike' although at no time in the home visit narratives do his step mother or father enter into this performance discourse. The reported valuing of Spike by teachers contrasts with his family's devaluing discourses. Spike introduces the performance discourse into the group sessions in school and is very persistent in doing this. In this context other boys in the group help in this constructing of Spike, as seen by Spud's response below in which he is clearly impressed:

Extract 5 (transcript 5a)

Line	Speaker	Text
20 21	Kathryn	Okay (.) what do you think (.) not really sure (.) have any of you felt unsafe when you've been walking around the school?
22 23 24	Spike	Yeah round the school (.) usually I'm not safe when I play football instead of being against my year and a couple of years ahead (.) we're against year elevens and I don't feel safe at all.
25	Spud	You never won against year sevens?
26	Spike	Year elevens cos we won the year elevens and the year sevens.
27	Spud	Cool!
28	Spike	That's why I keep on playing.
29	Spud	We played the year elevens we always lose.

Spike's use of football within the performance discourse also allows him to take up the position of hegemonic macho male, especially as he brags of beating the older boys. As the narratives progress, the discursive strategy Spike uses of *extreme* case formulations calls the believability of his performance discourse into question along with apparent contradictions to this macho image which position him as afraid and powerless. This is surprising in that the other boys Tazzer and Spud take up the subject positions of brave and macho within the performance discourse and at no time admit to feeling vulnerable:

Extract 6 (transcript 5a)

Line	Speaker	Text
70 71 72	Kathryn	So if a group of lads about nineteen (.) twenty walked through the grave yard and came towards you and you didn't know them (.) maybe they were a bit drunk?
73	Spike	I'd say I'd run off.
74	Kathryn	You'd run off (.) what would you do?
75	Tazzer	Walk straight past them.
76	Kathryn	And what if they started to mess around and hurt you (.) push or-
77	Spud	=Kick them and then run.

Spike's comment "I'd say I'd run off" (line 73) not only contradicts his earlier positioning of himself as brave and macho but it rather discredits his earlier story in which he bravely competes with and beats the older boys in football. What remains constant across these two contradictory extracts is the underlying reference to Spike's fear which is explicit in the former extract and hinted at in the second.

Extract 1 (transcript 5b)

Line	Speaker	Text
102	Kathryn	Do you lads get pocket money then (.) that you save?
103	Spud	I have to earn mine but I can't be bothered to earn it (.) so I don't get any.
104	Tazzer	I've got a hundred quid that I've been saving for two weeks so-
105 106	Kathryn	=For two weeks so you get fifty pounds pocket money a week (.) that sounds like a lot.
107 108 109	Spike	I get some money from my grandad for my birthday (.) cos my grandad's almost a millionaire (.) I think (.) because every time it's my birthday he gives me a hundred quid.

In this extract it is Tazzer who from the outset had taken on the position of 'joker' in the group sessions introduces an extreme example in his story telling when referring to how much money he has. Spike joins in with the construction but hedges a little "I think," (line 108) perhaps because I sound incredulous. Spike is also aware that I had visited him at home and would not believe his father would have the resources to give him this amount of money. The intertextuality here seen in the repetition of "a hundred quid," (line 104 and 109) is too much of a coincidence and suggests that Spike's story may be fictional. The exchange also appears to represent a competitive game in which Spike does not wish to appear outdone by Tazzer. This could be described as a relational dance, a theatrical performance in which a type of discursive symmetry is displayed.

A psychoanalytical reading of the conversational data

Having introduced Spike as a second case study following the study of Jay it is now possible to consider the contrasts between the two excluded adolescent boys in the way their identities have become discursively constructed. A psychoanalytical perspective seeks to provide a deeper level of analysis and a greater level of understanding as to how these boys can be represented differently. Table 3 presented earlier in this chapter and used to psychoanalyse biographical accounts in the media was used as a framework for this level of analysis. It can be argued that some interpretations have already been proposed relating to the unconscious motives of the mothers of Jay and Spike and also those of myself in entering into these constructions. As such the feeling states of the boys represent the main focus initially although I propose that these can only fully be understood by attempting to expose the unconscious motives of their mothers.

Jay's constructions are dominated by contrasts and contradictions between love (of sport) and hatred (of some teachers) and feeling exhausted (because of his medication) whilst at the same time feeling energetic (able to play football to a high standard). Jay is able to take up the subject position of hegemonic masculine boy through his love of football and his accomplishments in training with Manchester United and training with several different teams. He attaches himself through sport with his father whilst at the same time his mother attempts to deny him this attachment. However, despite his footballer identity, Jay appears very limited in the subject positions he can take up and his discourses around sport and 'behaviour-as-a-game' are laced with underlying sadness and loss of his former athletic self. Feelings of pain are metaphorically and frequently expressed through Jay's often heard expression "gets on my nerves."

A continual discursive struggle between Jay and his mother in which he attempts to position himself as capable and achieving is suppressed and given way to his mother's persistent pathologising of him. It seems that Jay for the most part succumbs to his mother's and other professionals' identifications of him and protects himself by refusing to reveal or even imagine what his true self would be, "I would be able to tell you nothing about myself they tell me what I'm like to my Mum" (transcript 1 line 741-742). At several points during the narratives Jay attempts to identify with his father as someone who could help him with his problems at school, someone he could play golf with and someone he could work with in the building trade but his mother's antagonism of his father leads to him repressing other versions of himself. To protect himself it appears that Jay colludes with his mother's pathologising of him and he conforms to this reality through his false self.

The picture is not, however, a simple one and Jay finds a few opportunities in the presence of me and away from his mother to use extreme case formulations in order to position himself as doing remarkably well at school. These constructions are in marked contrast with those of his mother who sees him as deteriorating. At the same time Jay presents as being very motivated to attend the group sessions with me which contrast with his mother's accounts of him going out all the time at home and entering into few conversations with her. The interpretation here would be that Jay is seeking out 'good objects' with whom he can achieve relational symmetry (me and his friends) who collude with him in more liberating constructions that allow an alternative Jay to emerge. At the same time he is splitting off from his mother, the "dodgy" new psychiatrist and eventually myself whom he unconsciously perceives as bad objects where pathology and oppression pervade the discourses that are available to him.

By the time I meet up with Jay some months later in the PRU setting, he virtually ignores me. It seems by this stage he has entered into a new relational partnership with a group of peers through which he can *do* Jay. His new sense of self could be threatened if he re-establishes discourses with professionals such as me or the new psychiatrist who have the power to deconstruct and reconstruct him by ascribing labels and facilitating practices such as medicating him and excluding him. Frosh (2002) reminds us that meaning can never be total and that there are always elements that resist being known. Therefore, the story of Jay is never closed and at this point in his story it appears that both his mother and I no longer 'know' Jay especially as I have lost my dialogic relationship with him.

Spike unlike Jay is positioned as deviant and worthless (by family members) and valued (by teachers through the stories he ascribes to himself). Family discourses surrounding Spike are characterised by vagueness but hint of the bullying, intimidating presence of his father and paternal grandparents. Frosh (2002) refers to the psychology of hinting in reference to psychoanalysis, that within the narrative turn the therapist should focus on what people are *trying* to say:

> as psychoanalysists have often demonstrated, talking is not quite the same as being, and one of the deepest impulses and aggravations of human subjectivity is the feeling that it is not quite possible to put reality into words.
> (Frosh, 2002, p. 16)

I felt that in reading and re-reading the transcripts relating to Spike, the feeling states of fear and anxiety were being continuously projected through the talk in which Spike and his step mother interacted with me and later when Spike interacted within the group discourse, as seen in extract 7 below. A narrative of abuse 'begins' to emerge during the group session on the theme of 'staying safe' as this extract reveals:

Extract 7 (transcript 5a)

Line	Speaker	Text
95	Spud	Domestic violence.
96 97 98	Kathryn	Right and that's a big problem in all countries (.) but in this country we have Social Services and we have something called child protection (.) so the law protects children.
99	Spike	If someone hits a child then it's illegal.
100 101 102 103	Kathryn	It is illegal (.) you're not allowed to hit any children (.) you know like in schools you used to be caned (.) you can't do (.) that can't happen any more (.) it's against the law we have something called the children act that protects children.
104	Spike	That's funny.
105	Spud	The cane got banned because it killed a child with a heart condition.
106 107	Kathryn	That's possible but I think it got banned for human rights issues because it's not an appropriate thing to do.
108 109 110 111	Spike	My dad signed a form saying that so I could go to this school (.) my other school where you could actually get the cane (.) wear the dunce hat and that (.) so I didn't think (.) he actually signed it saying I could get caned.
112	Kathryn	He told you this?
113 114	Spike	My dad said right put your hand out (.) so I put my hand out he went whoosh I said what the heck he said look I have the form.
115	Kathryn	Do you think that was a bit of a joke or just to get you to toe the line?
116	Spike	I don't know (.) it was funny (.) I was just sitting there ((laughs))

The discursive clue here is in Spike's persistent use of the word "funny" (lines 104 and 116). Luxmoore, 2000 (a trained counsellor and psychodramatist) in his youth work with young people refers to adolescent boys' tendencies to joke around which represents a strategy for masking their underlying anxieties. Salisbury and Jackson (1996) also emphasise this point from their own work with adolescent boys in which they stress that 'there is always insecurity, fear and self doubt co-existing with boys' boasting and swaggering (p. 9). Is Spike disclosing abuse here or is he joking around? Is he revealing an underlying fear, anxiety and self doubt? On reflection I feel unhappy that I did not provide Spike a further opportunity to explore this topic. However, a chance meeting with the deputy head of Spike's previous school a few months later and after the project had come to a close revealed that Spike *had* disclosed physical abuse in the home and as a result had gone to live in Cumbria permanently with his mother. Perhaps the opportunity to discursively explore the topic of 'staying safe' in a group session with me and other boys enabled Spike to unconsciously rehearse the conversation where the reality of his lived abusive experience moved beyond that of hinting.

Another interesting facet to Spike's case is the way in which he constructs his masculine identity and the elaborate stories he tells of his fighting conquests. In one sense Spike's projected fears can be seen to be represented symbolically through the fear he 'appears' to inflict on others (his step mother, other boys). This positions him as a strong, powerful male, but at the same time this construction represents a very troubled masculinity, one in which he appears to be pursued, needs to be ready to protect himself from attack and needs to win all the battles that come his way. Wetherell (2003) in her psychoanalytical reading of two men who had been in the army, who formed part of her research on men and masculinity, describes one of the men as having the following internal world:

> ...made up of battles, power struggles, and conflicts between relatively undifferentiated idealized and denigrated competitors, with Phillip as the hero in these battles...
> [in which there is]...evidence of the defence mechanisms of splitting and projection...
> Wetherell, (2003 pp 109-111)

Comparing Phillip with Spike there appears to be a marked similarity in the way in which these males construct their masculine identities. If the projection here with Spike is one of fear, then we are left explaining the unconscious experience of splitting. Luxmoore (2006) talks of his experiences in working with adolescents and the tendency among some young people to invent elaborate stories about themselves:

> Nathan is physically small for his age but the stories he tells are large...I think one of the characteristics of suddenly losing it is that it makes a person feel much bigger.
> (Luxmoore, 2006, p. 55)

Applying this theory to Spike it may be that he needs to feel big and noticed by the stories he tells as the other discourses that surround him put him down as someone small and worthless. In a similar way to that of Winnicott (1960) who refers to the false self and the true self in which the true self remains hidden, Luxmoore interprets this split as follows:

> The fear, the knowledge of their continuing limitations and frailties, is denied (or projected onto others). Josephine Klein (1987) describes this as a split developing between the 'grandiose self' and the 'wretched self,' (pp. 222-223).
> Luxmoore, (2006, p. 111)

It seems that this unconscious strategy of Spike's in creating an elaborate 'grandiose self' is likely to be based on his denial of his own helplessness and loss of parental support and encouragement.

Finally, although Spike and Jay are positioned differently, there are points of overlap in their cases. Both boys strive to construct their masculinity through accomplishments in football yet their psychobiographies exude a sense of loss and emptiness. The masculine subject positions they can take up through family discourses are limited in that Jay is mostly denied access to a dialogic relationship with his father and Spike's discourses with his father are devaluing and intimidating. At times both boys present themselves to me as high achievers but closer examination reveals these to be grandiose stories in which the helplessness of their situation in the home in being able to create a positive liberating adolescent identity is denied.

Both Jay's mother and Spike's step mother engage in projecting their anxieties around the boys' fathers towards Jay and Spike. To elaborate on this it seems that Spike's step mother in constructing Spike as 'bad' is symbolically using her construction of Spike to mirror the intimidating and bullying behaviour of his father and that by allowing Spike to absorb these characteristics she is denying the abusive identity of his father. Both mothers appear unconsciously motivated to protect their own sense of self and want to be perceived as good mothers. However, the complexity of and conflict within their own discursive relationships with the boys' fathers is projected into their constructing of the boys' identities and serves to disadvantage the boys by the subject positions that become available for them to take up through talk. Jay protects himself from this by separating from his mother and spending time relating to his peers and Spike's strategy is to invent increasing stories of grandeur.

It seems that the discourse data is in places rich in emotional tone and that psychoanalytical theory and analysis *can* be applied to the data in a way that provides further insight and could potentially help future researchers develop a more combined psycho-discursive methodological approach.

Chapter Five Future Performances

The performance of research espoused in this thesis is a discursive construction in itself, driven by my conscious and unconscious motives. The act may now appear a purely selfish one motivated by my desire to be valued as an academic, as a competent researcher-practioner and as a good mother achieved through the reflexive narrative that weaves itself in and out of the discourses relating to excluded adolescent boys. However, the discursive struggle to produce the thesis also evokes feelings of loss, of what will now take its place as well as the loss that I felt in separating from the boys who participated in the study. An analogy can be drawn here with the projected anger of the boys who experience school and social exclusion. If adults take the anger away or suppress it, how can these boys dare to be other selves? In order for me to protect my own sense of self and to avoid emptiness I need to replace this research performance with another. Future performances will depend on what has gone before. As such, this chapter will:

- arrive at a summative point in the search towards including excluded adolescent boys through discursive constructions of their identity
- seek to critically appraise the methods used
- consider the possibilities for future performances

Including excluded adolescent boys

Identity in education and in society reveals a 'problem boy' paradigm which is played out in media texts and local narratives. The main interpretative findings are presented below:

Model 4 A construction of the identity of excluded adolescent boys based on Lacanian theory and a psycho-discursive analysis: towards counter discourses and subject positions

Chain of SIGNIFIERS →→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→→ METONYMIC AXIS

Lacan's Symbolic Order (language of the unconscious and language of ordinary speech)

The order of discourse reveals the following words and phrases used intertexually and interdiscursively across the national media (in green) and local narratives (in brown) texts

fight
battle
gangs
daily
struggling

tackle
culture
abuse
gangs

lovable rogue
terrorising

daily
abusive
foul mouthed
monsters

struggling
attention deficit

culture
improve

Jay: play football, gets on my nerves, attention deficit disorder, never wanted medication, getting better, out most of the time

Spike: lovable rogue, chuck it back at you, problems, fighting, punching everything, excluded, play football

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

METAPHORIC AXIS

Linguistic terms become selected and substituted due to largely unconscious motives that can be understood through a psychoanalytical reading of the text:

Teachers **use a range of defence mechanisms to protect their professional 'selves' and to reduce feelings of anxiety: by projecting back anger onto pupils (counter transference), emotional detachment through avoidance of dialogic relations with challenging pupils, denial of relationship problems with pupils, splitting of good 'objects' from bad 'objects'**

Mothers **use a range of defence mechanisms to protect their parental and marital 'selves' and reduce feelings of anxiety: by projecting feelings of fear of their partners onto their sons, holding onto pathologising or deviant constructions to avoid criticism of parenting style, denying alternative good or 'normal' constructions of their sons**

Excluded adolescent boys **use a range of defence mechanisms to protect their 'true' selves and reduce feelings of anxiety: conforming to their mothers' constructions of the boys' 'false selves', avoidance of dialogic relations with mothers and professionals, denial characterised by joking around, projecting anger onto others (transference), splitting an 'elaborate grandiose self' from a 'wretched self' by inventing stories of academic success and fighting prowess**

Signifiers cluster together into the following interpretative repertoires: Behaviour as…

war

concern

fear

deviant
oppressive

learning

a game
partnership

Jay: pathological, a game, oppressive, deviant, learning, partnership

Spike: deviant, war, fear, oppressive, performance

An interdiscursive mix of repertoires is evident within each text and some take on more prominence than others, but resistance to these dominant discourses is seen to emerge…

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

SIGNIFIED

Lacan's Imaginary Order (conscious)

Through interpretative repertoires excluded adolescent boys become positioned as:

hegemonically masculine (controlling and aggressive) pathologised, deviant, helpless and lonely **or** **hegemonically masculine (leaders, sportsmen), achieving, independent, helpful and popular**

This leads to the social practice of

exclusion **or** **inclusion**

Model 4 represents the final version of the interpretative framework used throughout this psycho-discursive study and represents my interpretation of how discourse surrounding the identity of these problem boys is constructed and how it can be deconstructed to allow inclusive subject positions to be taken up. Elaborating on model 4 the research questions will again be considered in turn:

How is the identity of excluded adolescent boys discursively constructed nationally (in the education media) and locally (in family and peer group conversations)?

The order of discourse that constructs the identity of adolescent boys contains a wide range of similar words and phrases, some of which appear across the media texts (intertexually) but are also played out in local narratives, such as "lovable rogue," "fighting" and "attention deficit." The chain of signifiers moves along the metonymic axis over time creating discursive shift. Through media texts this appears to relate in part to the political agenda and the associated needs of politicians at a particular time, such as the lead up to a general election where 'problem boys' are seen to be exploited for political gains. Quieter political periods, such as following a general election allow alternative constructions of boys to emerge. This was evident across the media texts in the six month period preceding the collection of local narratives. This indicates instability in the way the identity of adolescent boys is constructed and creates possibilities for change from discourses that perpetuate the social practice of exclusion and those that promote inclusion. Articles in the education media written predominantly by journalists or teachers are also more likely to display dramatic terms and metaphors which sensationalise the text (eg "terrorising," "foul-mouthed monsters") and evoke fear in contrast to biographical accounts which are less metaphorical but still high in emotional tone. The signifiers develop meaning when they cluster together into interpretative repertoires. The identity of adolescent boys who experience fixed term and eventual permanent exclusion is constructed through these powerful and prominent interpretative repertoires. In media discourse the 'behaviour' of boys becomes personified within the dominant 'behaviour-as-war,' 'behaviour-as-fear,' and 'behaviour-as-concern' repertoires. Interestingly across media texts a 'behaviour-as-partnership' repertoire also exists but is not used in a way that advantages excluded adolescent boys (that is to say influences the social practice of *inclusion*) until we reach media article six. Up to that point the 'partnership' discourse perpetuates the unconscious defence mechanism of 'splitting.' For example, teachers in media article four talk of joining up with parents to deal with problem behaviour in boys, but this in turn reinforces a 'them and us' situation and the discourse remains stuck within the problem boy paradigm and the possibility of relational symmetry between adult and adolescent is significantly reduced:

> ...the enemy is experienced as "entirely different from us" and subjected to an extreme splitting between in-group and out-group... the dialogue becomes extremely asymmetrical and power laden...
> (Hermans, 2003, p. 104)

Both nationally and locally problem boys become positioned as either deviant or pathological which suggests that the construct of 'bad versus mad' (Bridgeland, 1971) is still alive and well over thirty years later than its early appearance in the literature. This reinforces Lacan's premise that "the array of meanings available to each person are fixed by the cultural order" (Frosh, 1999, p.218) and the point made by Harre and Moghaddam (2003) which suggests once these meanings become 'signified' they place limits on our actions:

> "Positions" exist as patterns of beliefs in the members of a relatively coherent speech community...a position can be looked at as a loose set of rights and duties that limit the possibilities of action... This feature of the concept of "position" makes it possible to generalize the concept in studies of discursive interactions between larger units than one-on-one conversations.
> (Harre and Moghaddam, 2003, pp 4-5)

What is also suggested here in defence of a critique of this study is that it is possible to generalise and make links between the positioning that discursively occurs in local narratives and the positioning that exists in national texts. It is also felt that access to wider cultural narratives helps us make sense of local individual accounts (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006).

Discursive strategies such as blaming, disclaiming and extreme case formulations are used by speakers and writers to establish their accounts as factual and credible and to deny or deconstruct alternative constructions. The dominant 'behaviour-as-war,' 'behaviour-as-fear,' and 'behaviour-as-concern' repertoires reflect the strong undercurrent of anxiety surrounding excluded adolescent boys that influences the use of these discursive strategies. A psycho-analysis of the text helps explain the dilemmas of stake at play for politicians, teachers and mothers in particular and the defence mechanisms that help protect their own selves within their dialogic relations with the boys. Parental and professional identities of adults are constructed within these dialogic relations and these adults will do anything discursively possible to protect against being perceived as bad or incompetent. Excluded adolescent boys such as Spike and Jay conform to their deviant and pathologising identities by entering into these constructions of them as they discursively relate to their mothers and their peers. This can also be explained psychoanalytically as a defence mechanism as there are limited subject positions available to them to take up in *doing boy* within the cultural and social order as influenced by the discourses available to them locally.

However, as this study has also demonstrated, discursive constructions are unstable both nationally and locally and can shift over time. This gives us hope that problem boys do not have to remain problem boys if alternative counter discourses can be found to position them differently. This allows us to address the second key research question:

What counter discourses exist that encourage new identities facilitating the inclusion of adolescent boys?

Despite the prominence of discourses described above that position boys as either deviant or pathologised that in turn justify the practice of exclusion, analysis reveals an interdiscursive mix of interpretative repertoires and the discursive struggle by Jay and Spike as they seek to promote alternative discourses that position them in a more favourable light. Through these counter discourses the interpretative repertoires of 'behaviour-as-a-game' 'behaviour-as-partnership' and 'behaviour-as-performance' begin to emerge. Boys it seems are pre-occupied with *how* they are supposed to 'do boy' where constructions of masculinity are continually played out and can be performed through stories of sporting and fighting prowess. It becomes easy to see how some boys can become caught up in being positioned as deviant or pathologised as these subject positions are more often likely to be within the repertoire of masculine subject positions found in British society.

To construct alternative identities excluded adolescent boys need opportunities to engage in new dialogic relations that are not unconsciously driven by the defence mechanisms of anxious parents or professionals; dialogic relations should allow for alternative subject positions to be discursively practised. The following are examples of opportunities less dominated by anxiety and characteristic of partnership discourses that allow a *relational symmetry* to occur in a number of ways:

- through discursive research where group sessions with boys allow for free narratives to emerge
- when adolescent boys separate from their mothers and become conversationally distant but at the same time spend increasing amounts of time relating to their peers
- when mothers change the way they start relating to sons and refrain from controlling discourses
- when boys enter PRUs and can enter into closer emotional and dialogic relationships with key staff
- in mainstream schools where teachers adopt new dialogic relationships with boys (eg as befrienders)

Reflexive box

Reflections as a researcher and mother

Just as I am writing this it seems on reflection that in the group sessions more was occurring than my ability as a researcher to put the boys at ease and allow their narratives to flow freely. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) suggest that parent-child relations are unconsciously transferred into other, daily social relations. In their own research they contend that one participant, Jane, became unconsciously positioned by the researcher as 'daughter' and that in turn Jane positioned the researcher as 'mother.' As the boys I worked with were similar in age to my own son and I felt at ease with them it seems that I may have transferred the mother-son relationship into the research context through which the boys in turn positioned me as 'mother.' It was certainly evident that both Jay and Spike persistently sought me out to talk to and seemed attached to me in a way that was dialogically opposed to the relationship they had with their mother and step mother respectively. This also resonates with a comment from McBlain (2006b) in which she stated that "adolescent boys need lots of mothers."

In addition, it seems that through media article six in which boys discursively shift from 'being problems' to 'making progress' the opportunities described here such as schools providing boxing lessons and boys taking the lead in helping other pupils cleverly allows these boys to live up to the hegemonic masculine ideal by being athletic and showing leadership, but no longer needing to take up the hegemonic masculine ideal of being controlling of others and aggressive. In these ways adolescent boys can remain included socially and academically. Developing an adolescent masculine identity can, therefore, be seen as a discursive performance and one which can lead to either the practice of inclusion or exclusion. Much depends of the quality of the dialogic relations and discursive opportunities that exist for boys as they enter adolescence within families, schools and the wider community. Where in media article six the idea of teachers as befrienders takes prominence, this poses a challenge for teachers as they need to find new ways of relating to pupils. In contrast, research shows that institutional interactions are typically characterised by asymmetrical speaking rights (Thornborrow, 2002).

Other research suggests that some children are helped better by some adults than others. Lang (1999) found that children prefer to be supported by 'people who act as people and not professionals' (p.29). However for teachers to show more 'people' rather than 'professional' skills then the giving of unconditional positive regard needs to become a feature of classrooms which requires both training and supervision (Cowie and Pecherek, 1994). Beyond this it seems that teachers and pupils need to get to know each other better for inclusion to be realised (Rosenthal, 2001). In this way similarities and differences will be recognised. Where the 'getting to know each other' involves some disclosure at an emotional level teachers may surprisingly find they have more in common with 'problem boys' especially if feelings of anxiety and vulnerability can be acknowledged. This in turn would allow for more than relational symmetry but also a form of emotional calibration through which pupil and teacher can experience empathy with one another. For Jay and Spike it seems they were separated from relationships with parents who could assist in constructing their adolescent identities in ways that could enable them to grow, become independent and succeed. Cullingford (1999) argues that where parenting falls short, then other adults need to adopt this dialogic role otherwise school exclusion is likely to be a consequence:

> In the need to make sense of all the experiences of all the raw complexities of the physical and social world, children need people both to relate to and with whom they can share their own understandings. This is not just an emotional relationship but a joint dialogue about the experience of the world as a whole...the crucial point of a child's growth, academic achievement and behavioural maturity is the relationship with an adult...if the parent does not take on this part, and no one else is there to do it, if the child finds that the social world in which he or she is placed is 'not bothered' all kinds of consequences follow.
> (Cullingford, 1999, p. 159)

It seems that Jay had more opportunities than Spike to take up new subject positions as he distanced himself from his mother and engaged in new conversations within the PRU and amongst his peers. He was able to take up new subject positions as independent and popular as his pathologising constructions began to dwindle over time. The dialogic relations that reinforced this pathologised positioning of him (that occurred with his mother, the psychiatrist and in some respects me) became less frequent. Spike's constructions as deviant remained with him as he moved from one school to the next and were continually reinforced within family discourses although his liberation can be said to have occurred when he finally found the words to disclose the practice of abuse within the home. Spike's identity as it is constructed now can only be imagined but is likely to have shifted as a result of the dialogic opportunities that occurred within the research process and a shift in discursive encounters from his anxious defended step mother to his natural mother who renewed her role as his main carer.

The power of including a combination of critical discursive psychology and a psychoanalytical reading of the text (a psycho-discursive approach) reveals that there is a parallel process occurring in the constructions of excluded adolescent boys *and* the constructed identities of their politicians, teachers and parents. Therefore, to understand the central tenant of identity within this thesis, the subsidiary research question carries with it considerable importance:

How is the identity of those who parent, teach and research excluded adolescent boys constructed in relation to them?

Not only are teachers and parents discursively positioned as oppressed, vulnerable and helpless, so too are excluded adolescent boys. Behind these subject positions are underlying feelings of anxiety and a fearfulness of loss of who (as Lacan proposes) we imagine ourselves to be. Defence mechanisms come into play and reveal themselves through discursive strategies of blaming, disclaiming and extreme case formulations as we strive to hold onto our imagined selves as parents, teachers, politicians and researchers and become defended subjects. There is much at stake to shift the repertoire of positions within the social order that perpetuates the social practice of exclusion as we continue to split off the good from the mad or bad in order to protect ourselves and keep our own identities safe. So how can parents and professionals recognise the unconscious motives that drive discursive practices and feel able to move towards a new dialogic relationship with these adolescent boys?

Discourse determinism?

A final point to address before leaving model 4 is that of discourse (or linguistic) determinism. Presenting the interpretative 'findings' in model four in this way using a framework based on Lacanian theory could be *misinterpreted* by the reader as one of a belief in discourse determinism. This would also 'suggest' that I lean towards a more realist position. Simpson (1993) notes that many linguistic studies where asymmetry is under investigation (eg studies of sexism in language) can easily slip into a linguistic determinism which takes the position that language determines the limits of our world and constructs reality (Spender, 1980, influenced by Sapir-Whorf). The same critique could be made of my study where asymmetry is under investigation in relation to the exclusion or inclusion of adolescent boys. As such the researcher can become trapped in determining two possible positions, that of good or bad discourses. Model 4 could, therefore, be perceived as a simplistic construction that exclusion or inclusion (either/or) is determined by discourse and worse still, if we eradicated the bad discourses that promote inclusion and promoted the good discourses, exclusion as a concept may cease to exist. This simplistic and reductionist accounting of the analysis is clearly is untenable as comments within the detailed systematic analysis outside of what I present in model 4 reveal.

A more useful and more relativist position (and one to which I adhere) would be to take a more functional view of discourse as it applies to this study in which the shape of discourse is determined by the function that it serves. What I have tried to expose in this study is that the "angle of telling" (Simpson, 1993, p. 167) is "predicated upon an underlying dominant political ideology" (Simpson, 1993, p. 171) and that the detailed, systematic critical discursive psychology applied to the analysis of the data has been able to deconstruct and de-naturalise everyday talk and text to expose this.

Two examples from my study can be used to extrapolate on the above. Firstly, the discourse that constructs the 'reality' for teachers as seen in media texts (behaviour-as-war; behaviour-as-fear) functions to position adolescent boys in ways that justify their exclusion (perpetuating the dominant ideology). However, the adolescent boys themselves are around the same time busy constructing discourse that functions to represent their reality very differently, as one of 'behaviour-as-a game' and 'behaviour-as-learning'. Secondly, the 'behaviour-as-partnership' interpretative repertoire is clearly used quite differently across the texts analysed. In most media texts, for example, the 'behaviour-as-partnership' discourse functions to construct a 'reality' of teachers and others (other teachers and parents) needing to work together to 'sort out' problem boys. The effect of this is to perpetuate the ideology of separating adolescent boys at risk of exclusion from other children and from adults. In contrast a 'behaviour-as-partnership' discourse functions to construct a very different 'reality' for adolescent boys at risk of exclusion as working together or socialising happily with their peers. This 'reality' is less evident in the data but can be identified by careful analysis of inconsistencies in the text. Both these examples reflect a more relativist position that enables us to acknowledge that discourse develops to suit the needs of users, providing weight to a functional rather than deterministic view.

Promoting psycho-discursive research

One way of addressing the above dilemma that has arisen from this research is to propose further research performances using similar methodologies in the hopes of highlighting the same key issues that perpetuate the exclusion of adolescent boys. However, we also need to be aware of the limitations of the current study and the methods used. If I am proposing further studies of this nature then I must acknowledge that in research circles there are opposing views of how to tackle this research topic. Archer (2004) holds on to the view of masculine identity as one of biological determinism as empirical research has shown behavioural sex differences emerge early in development. He is scathing of social constructionists whom he believes practice pseudoscience and claims that it is through the social constructions of femininity that boys have become perceived as problems rather than through their social interactions. However, it seems that those who study the activities children engage in would argue that it is different *activities* between girls and boys that lead to different sociolinguistic subcultures which encourage boys talk to be competition oriented as opposed to girls' tendency towards collaboration oriented talk (Maltz and Borker, 1983). Lacan would argue that it is through discourse that culture and social practices that make up the social order are constituted. Boys themselves propose that there is a cultural expectation for boys to be treated dialogically differently from girls and that because of this 'growing up boy' is a painful process that is evident in the positions available to them in order to be boys:

> A lot comes from parents. Girls are treated like another human being. Boys are expected to be big and butch...You can be tough on the outside, no-one must know you're dying inside.
> (Katz, 1998, pp 3 and 6)

Such ideas along with discursive studies investigating constructed masculine identities (eg Edley and Wetherell, 1997; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002) suggest that the way in which adolescents develop their identity would be simplistic and reductionist if we relied solely on notions of biology. However, my turn to psychoanalysis does expose my study to critique in view of the biological and determinist notions emanating from traditional psychoanalysis as discourse methods and psychoanalytical methods do not on first appearance seem compatible. Before we address the psychoanalytical method used, the data gathering tools and discourse methods will be reviewed.

Firstly, I made used of a corpus of education media texts, simple semi-structured interviews used during home visits and more naturalistic data constructed during group sessions. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) indicate that it is easier to show discursive shift and associated change in social practice across a range of texts when applying critical discourse analysis, however, a number of critical discourse studies appear to restrict themselves to a small amount of texts to highlight contrasting styles. I selected six media texts for analysis which did seem sufficient to set a context within which to view the local constructions of Spike and Jay and did contain various biographical accounts as well as journalists constructions based on political and research discourses. This small amount of text produced a wealth of signifiers, interpretative repertoires and subject positions that could be further identified and made sense of through analysis of the conversational data.

Regarding interview data used with parents this could be argued to be the least satisfying as mothers and step mothers were permitted to dominate the discourse during home visits with their ideological constructions of Jay and Spike. To contrast with this, the group sessions with the boys in school which were only themed and had no question-answer structure allowed for more free association and provided a discursive space where all participants were able to negotiate turns in the talk. Also, the boys came to develop a trusting relationship with me over many months resulting in a series of what felt to be naturally occurring, spontaneous conversations. Criticism of interviews in discourse research is evident in the literature. Cameron (2001) for example, argues that the conventions within an interview require a particular sort of speech event which discourages certain kinds of disclosures, limiting what is spoken about. As such interview subjects rarely initiate or change the topic. Further to this Willig (2001) warns that in discourse research, analysis of interview data can reveal more about the ways the interviewees manage their stake in the interview than the discursive strategies used in everyday conversations. On reflection, if I was to repeat this study I would begin a conversation with the parent(s) without any script or would invite parents into a focus group to talk about their adolescent sons in the hope that free narratives would emerge. However, the potential for parent talk to reflect anxious, defended subjects is likely to occur under such conditions as it did when I met the parents for the first time. Ideally, capturing naturalistic conversation in the home and in school contexts such as the playground could provide more spontaneous data for investigating the construction of the identity of adolescent boys but would be ethically and practically difficult to achieve. However, it seems that where possible, discursive psychology has moved away from using open-ended interviews to "analysing situated interaction recorded in natural settings" (Potter 2005, p. 740).

Willig (1999) highlights three key problems in the application of discourse methods: ethics, politics and epistemology. Although these will be addressed separately these areas are clearly interrelated. Regarding ethics, it would be difficult for me to deny my position of influence in the research process. Such ethical problems are also documented elsewhere, for example by Stenner (1993) who claims that due to the subjective nature of the research method a researcher has power and control over other peoples' words, without the reassurance of objective methodology to back her up. One means of counteracting this critique is for a researcher to strive towards what Harding (1991, p.161) refers to as "strong objectivity" by applying "strong reflexivity." I would argue that I stated my own motives and position in pursuing the research topic and throughout the analysis and discussion of my findings I demonstrated reflexively how I influenced the discourses in ways that both disadvantaged and advantaged the discourse participants. It can also be said that the manner of writing up discourse research that has been adopted in this thesis attempts to explicitly reveal the status of the 'knowledge' and how this has been rigorously arrived at whereas the presentation of traditional scientific research as neutral and objective is ascribed what Phillips and Jorgensen (2002, p. 200) refer to as "underserved authority."

Critical discourse analysis by its very nature is driven by an interest in politics, power and dominant ideologies. However, a focus on language can be said to be privileged over the role of social, material or cultural factors. These factors, Willig (1999) argues need to be addressed in order to affect change in people's lives, and as such the capacity of a researcher's ability to affect change is likely to be over-estimated. This is especially true of adolescent boys who may have limited access to discourses within the education media both as producers and consumers of media texts. Some would argue that the hallmark of good research is measured by a researcher's capacity to share and check out the validity of his or her findings with participants so they can draw their own conclusions and take action should they so wish. Appendix 6, Spike's suitcase, is an example of a very simplistic technique used by me (with Spike) to acknowledge and confirm key signifiers that arose frequently in the discourses surrounding Spike. However, I am reminded by Benwell and Stokoe (2006) that words (signifiers) themselves only carry meaning through "a history, connotations, personal associations, metaphorical uses" through which these signifiers become "ideologically encoded" (p. 113). It is hard to see how the signifiers associated with Spike that position him as a young person with a positive, inclusive future could have gained significant currency in the school and family context that surrounded him during the project. Perhaps his sudden transition to a new life in Cumbria enabled such counter minority discourses to emerge?

Another difficulty for me as the researcher of this study in verifying the nature of my findings with participants and affecting change relates to the complexity of the methodology used, especially the tentative, interpretative nature of the psychoanalytical reading of the text:

> ...it becomes difficult to share our discourse analysis with speakers. When we do so participants are forced into a defensive posture which makes it difficult for them to develop a critical view of the 'texts' they produce.
> (Marks, 1993, p.150)

However, this does not invalidate my work which can be said to have validity and authenticity in creating a means and process by which the identity of the excluded adolescent boys became deconstructed allowing for new more inclusive discursive possibilities to emerge. The process of conducting the research through which the boys were largely present and active appears more important than trying to establish key findings of which no general claims can be made. It seems that Jay developed a strategy of avoiding conversations with his mother and professionals to nurture, develop and protect his developing sense of self and I am reminded here of Mark's (1993) reference to 'silence' as a form of resistance. Spike on the other hand found his voice and through his disclosure of abuse created a whole new context for himself in which new and more liberating discourses may have begun to emerge.

With regards to epistemology, Willig (1999; 2001) highlights the point that discourses construct different versions of reality, therefore, on what grounds do I as the researcher promote my version? Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) join this debate and assert that by necessity a researcher must choose one representation over another and the researcher who is within the talk and part of the constructing can do this by virtue of their privileged insight. Another reader of the discourse data may extract different interpretative repertoires from the text that position boys and their teachers and parents differently. I have always been open to this possibility and provide the full transcripts (see appendices in Volume II) to invite further scrutiny and analysis, relishing the idea that alternative meanings and readings of the text may be found.

Arguments have already been proposed in chapter two to rationalise my combined methodologies of critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology into a critical discursive psychology. Whilst discursive psychology is a well established method for investigating the construction of identity, critical discourse analysis is felt to be a far less well developed tool towards the understanding of 'self' (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002). However, the combined approach allows individualised and socialised identities to merge and closes the gap between biographical narrative identities and ideological encoded national identities. This in turn opens up possibilities for resistance and emancipatory change that has the potential to liberate the identity and associated subject positions of individual adolescent boys. Ultimately studies such as this could also influence what Lacan refers to as the "master signifiers" (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002, p.42) that inhabit the wider national discourses justifying the practice of exclusion that exists in the social and cultural order.

In chapter four I provide a rationale for including an additional layer of analysis beyond the critical discursive psychology, that of a psychoanalytical reading of the text that seeks to interpret why participants in talk are so invested in promoting one or more discourse over another. A psychoanalytical interpretation does not sit well with all proponents of discourse analysis. Parker (cf Hepburn 2003 p.82) for example, argues that the post modern tendency towards social constructionism can only be understood by exposing what is on the surface and denies the notion of what lies beneath. However, the analysis detailed in chapter four demonstrates the rich emotional tone identifiable in the discursive data that was not previously highlighted through the critical discursive analysis although early references to metaphors and dramatic signifiers provide clues to prompt deeper psychoanalytical interpretations. I would also argue that the psychoanalytical reading has helped me understand more fully the *complexity* of the discursive relationship between excluded pupil and parent or excluded pupil and teacher which can be characterised by a 'collision of discourses' that come together in an antagonistic relationship to one another (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002). Within this relational space parents and teachers in particular are competing to establish their own caring or professional selves alongside and through the constructed identities of excluded adolescent boys. This reinforces the view that "psychoanalysis shows very clearly that there is a point where discourse fails...where what is known in and by a person lies quite simply outside symbolisation," (Frosh, 2002, p.135).

Lacan as a psychoanalyst has done much to bridge the gap between psychoanalysis and ways of understanding the discursive production of selves. The work of Hollway (1998) in particular has promoted this approach further. By combining these methodological approaches, and in collusion with Hollway, I consider that this study allows the complexity of identity construction to be realised by demonstrating the dependence of cognitive (language and meaning) and affective (emotions and unconscious motives) factors on each other. However, it is important to clarify what is meant by psychoanalytical research practice as opposed to clinical psychoanalysis:

> The primary difference between the two practices is that clinicians interpret *into* the encounter, whereas researchers will save their interpretations for outside it...Their interpretative work comes later, is separate from the participant and has a different audience.
> (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, p.77)

The above quote, however, highlights problems evident in this study that relate to the validation of psychoanalytic interpretation. Gough (2004) notes that issues surrounding participant validation in psychoanalytic research, due to the connections the researcher claims to make between language and (inter)subjectivity, are difficult to resolve. In psychoanalysis, interpretation occurs through the therapeutic relationship where knowledge (of the patient) is mediated through the knower (the analyst) more openly. A limitation of my study and others that utilise psychoanalytic interpretations of the text is that whilst the research context (especially the group interventions where I met regularly with the boys) was potentially therapeutic, it is unlikely that enough time was spent with the boys or their mothers for the deeply emotional relationship that characterises therapy. As such explanations of transference that I summarise in model four are at best speculative and should be considered "provisional, constrained by the conditions under which it [they] have been produced" (Frosh and Saville Young, 2008, p. 114). Despite acknowledging the flimsiness of psychoanalytic interpretation I am encouraged by the work of Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003b) who claim that a psychoanalytic approach addresses the "agentic struggles of particular subjects as they locate themselves in these discourses" (p. 42) whereas they claim the place of the subject as agent is lacking in theory surrounding discursive psychology.

As much of the biographical data interpreted psychoanalytically in my study involved me in the constructing, the importance of reflexivity appears paramount. Despite including reflexive comments in the text it could be argued that the research relationship in the narratives produced could have been subjected to more scrutiny in order to demonstrate both "commitment to reflexivity and systematic narrative analysis respectively" (Frosh and Saville Young, 2008, p. 124). In relation to my conversations with Jay's mother whose experiences were similar to my own I can now see *myself* as a defended subject in resisting the need to address reflexivity more thoroughly.

I have argued that to add a psychoanalytical interpretation to the critical discursive psychology adopted in this study can only enhance the interpretation of the data despite the limitations of validation being evident. To address this, I need to consider how future research might avoid such problems evident in my study. Hollway and Jefferson (2005) provide a psychosocial exploration of agency in the case of Vince, a man who became ill and unable to work. They claim that the warrant for psychoanalytically informed data interpretation comes from "multiply informed (hermeneutic) interpretations of interview claims in the context of everything that is known about the person" that is informed by theory (Hollway and Jefferson, 2005, p.151). Such an approach it seems would require very detailed and historical biographical information. It seems that Wetherell (2005) is critical of the psychoanalytical claims made by Hollway and Jefferson above and considers they have ignored the discursive context in which they place. Frosh and Saville Young (2008) similarly present the case of Tom in which they claim that applying psychoanalytical ideas thickens the discursive reading by taking account of such biographical detail and exploring how this links to particular social discourses. To resolve this issue, Wetherell (2005) suggests that we need to rework psychoanalytical concepts and define 'psychic' differently in relation to the social, by staying within the patterns evident in the discourse itself.

Finally, Hollway and Jefferson (2005) suggest that a further warrant for psychoanalytic interpretation comes from attending to the counter-transference responses of the researcher. They acknowledge that as different researchers they were differently positioned in relation to Vince through different counter-transference responses. Frosh and Saville Young (2008) suggest the use of field notes can enable counter-transference feelings to enrich the analytic interpretation and provide coherence. Also, some innovative German studies have involved researchers meeting together to explore thoughts, feelings and associations that have come from research to help identify issues that may have been communicated indirectly or unconsciously from the research participant (Marks, 2001). Such practice could, it seems, also explore issues of counter-transference responses of the researcher, providing further validation of a psychoanalytical approach.

Future Performances

The multiple discourses and ways of positioning adolescent boys that have been identified in this study reflect the dynamic and reproductive nature of discourse production and provide us with optimism that we can "reshape discursive practices" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 88). The responsibility now is to move beyond describing how the identity of excluded adolescent boys comes to be constructed, to think about what needs to be done to change these constructions which are oppressive and limiting. The following suggestions for future performances in research and educational psychology practice are proposed using a three part framework taken from literature relating to critical discourse analysis and identity (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p.116):

Ideational performances

Firstly, identity is a "*representation* in language" an "ideational metafunction" in which vocabulary and metaphor can be used to analyse its construction. I would advocate the following ideational performances:

- more etymological studies to identify the sources and development of signifiers in localised and societal discourses that become associated with each other and metaphorically to form inclusive interpretative repertoires.

- studies of the discursive competencies available to adolescent boys who become excluded (eg their use of vocabulary and conversational skills) that may advantage or disadvantage them in being able to use discursive strategies to resist limiting identifications and subject positions. Pickering (2006) has found that in psycholinguistic studies dialogue is extremely repetitive; therefore, we should look more closely at the communication skills of young people. Such work could also extend to the discursive skills of teachers and parents.

Interpersonal performances

Secondly, “identity is a position within discourse” an “interpersonal metafunction” in which language is used to position subjects. I would advocate the following interpersonal performances:

- to find ways of supporting teachers and parents to create more “dialogical spaces” (Hermans, 2003) characteristic of relational symmetry between adults and adolescent boys. This is particularly important at critical periods during development such as educational transitions between key stages and when young people are particularly vulnerable (eg when they are at risk of exclusion; when they experience loss, separation or bereavement). Those caring for and working with these boys also need to understand the dilemma facing these young people and that at first they may resist adult’s attempts to engage with them.

> Young people are stranded between childhood and adulthood. They can’t go forward as quickly as they would like and they can’t go back. They work hard to stay in control, trying to hold things together so that nothing more can be snatched away.

(Luxmoore, 2006, p. 38)

- to provide more opportunities for adolescent boys to work in groups where they can experience discourses that position them differently and that allow them to redefine themselves. Discussion around sensitive topics such as child protection and domestic violence (under the Five Outcomes heading of 'staying safe' DfES, 2003) where the 'psychology of hinting' may allow them to find the courage to speak of what has previously been silenced or repressed.

Expressive performances

Thirdly, "the *expressive* dimension of language (straddling ideational and interpersonal metafunction)" that can influence individual and socialised identities can be explored:

- finding ways of publicising the narratives of adolescent boys in both academic and popular literature. Attempts to do the former are on the increase as seen for example in the publication of *Children at the Margins* (Billington and Pomerantz, 2004) and *How to reach 'hard to reach children'* (Pomerantz, Hughes and Thompson, 2007). New publications such as *Composing diverse identities*, (Clandinin et al, 2007) present these narratives in ways that 'could' begin to influence the curriculum in schools in a way that takes account of lived cultural and social experiences.

- Building on the above, those working in education could do much to support troubled young people in developing "counterstories" (Nelson, 2001, p.150) where for example, through the use of therapeutic stories that are characterised by metaphors, new meanings and identities can begin to be explored (a form of narrative repair). Hermans (2003) reminds us that in Greek the word metapherein means 'to transfer', therefore the use of metaphor with young people has transformative potential.

Psychoanalytical performances

I would add a fourth category to this framework, one of *psychoanalytical* performance. This could be achieved in the following way:

- By encouraging teachers, parents, practitioners and parents to practise the ability to be reflexive, to reflect on conversations they have with young people, especially those with strong emotional tone and to problematise the everyday conversations they have with young people who present with challenging behaviour. Frosh (1999, p.115) refers to intersubjectivity which involves the "recognition of appreciating, accepting and relating to others as 'like subjects.'" As Lenney (2006) suggests inclusion will only happen if we realise what we have in common with adolescent boys rather than our differences. It seems we have more in common than we might first think: fear, anxiety and insecurity. Professionals, therefore, need support to acknowledge the anger in themselves and how this divides us from some young people.

> ..to be inclusive is to work through emotional and rational projections of difference that perpetuate professional practices.
> (Lenney, 2006, p. 182)

> ...inclusion does not fully involve immersing one's self in the world of the other, but being able to stand in both the other's world and one's own world at the same time.
> (Cooper, 2003, p.149)

The last word comes from Raggy, a boy who was involved in the inclusion project with Jay and Spike until he also became permanently excluded. His story below is now in the public domain but had not previously been heard by those responsible for the social practice of excluding him:

> Raggy, a thirteen year old boy sits in the group on a cold Friday morning in November, his shoulders hunched over, his contribution to the conversation on 'experiences of being fixed-term excluded from school' limited. The researcher can only imagine the reality of Raggy's lived experience in the last twenty-four hours: being in the school isolation room for failing to comply with teachers' requests; feeling frustrated and angry; returning home to his mum with whom he encounters a raging argument with expletives bandied on both sides; grabbing his daily nourishment of half a packet of custard creams before heading out to play football for at least four hours with his brother Dodge; and returning home to a broken night of sleep with his sister's baby two feet away from his head on the other side of the bedroom wall.
>
> Waking up today on that cold Friday morning feeling like the frost is biting into his toes (no heating again and his winter coat is too small and beyond repair), Raggy reluctantly drags himself to school. Friday is often a day of excuses to attend, avoidance of work or protesting so vehemently that he will be internally excluded or sent home from school. However, this is a project Friday and Raggy despite his hunched, quiet presence in the group is present and contributing in a small way, a wry smile on his face as he comments, 'I could stay in the project all day'. (Pomerantz, 2007b, p.73)

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