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BOOK REVIEWS

Power, knowledge and the academy: the institutional is political, edited by Val Gillies and Helen Lucey, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, v + 194 pp., £45.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4039-9817-0

This edited collection articulates and explores ways in which tertiary institutions construct and shape academic habitus and knowledge. Using Foucauldian notions of power and agency or Bourdieuian concepts of embedded institutional power, a range of academic situations are explored. The editors, Val Gillies and Helen Lucey, have assembled a refreshing collection that illuminates 'the crucial relationship between power dynamics within the academy and the production of knowledge' (3). They argue that by exposing both macro and micro processes driving university research agendas, the forces shaping construction of what counts as knowledge and the promotion of particular research values are exposed. A central question in this book is whether institutionally ingrained administrative and research processes can be reconciled with broader ethical and feminist approaches to research.

In Chapter 1, Helen Lucey and Chrissie Rogers examine the issues of institutional and personal power in supervisory relationships. Exploring face-to-face supervision, they investigate beginning female academics' struggle to find and maintain an academic voice in the face of powerful institutional and supervisory constructs of what counts as knowledge. Chapter 2 details Kathryn Almack and Harriet Churchill's use of a multi-dimensional framework to examine the 'downward shift in power' (46) experienced by many females entering Ph.D. research. They highlight the issues where experienced knowledge workers in other fields are suddenly thrust into a position as a mature student. In Chapter 3, Kanwal Mana and Susie Weller discuss ways in which institutional power constrains and positions contract researchers, particularly in niche markets such as ethnic communities. They argue that the predominance of individual, specialist and single niche research as promoted under neo-liberal managerial agendas forces an undesirable compartmentalisation of research. In Chapter 4, Linda Bell and Maxine Birch discuss the complex power balance between 'practice skills, disciplinary knowledge and professional values' (81) within professional educational programs. Specifically, they explore the issue of the reinvention of academia in response to neo-liberal managerialism and performativity structures. Chapter 5 focuses on the very real managerial issues for researchers operating with ethical feminist perspectives. Using a four-element model of power, the authors conclude that women are often diverted in busy work on research projects, reducing time for quality thinking. They urge female academics to resist and 'create or find intellectual spaces to belong to where we feel valued and respected' (101). Val Gillies and Pam Alldred use Bourdieuian concepts of symbolic violence to examine the 'rules of the game' (111) in academic networking in Chapter 6. They detail specific experiences in which marginalisation and exclusionary practices operate in both formal and informal social and academic spaces, such as conferences and meetings. In Chapter 7, the power dynamics of who decides what is in or out of a literature review is the subject of Jane Ribbens McCarthy's work. She outlines specific tensions where funding agencies wish to 'legitimate authority' (125) by constructing the literature review in ways that have strong implications for policy and practice. Chapter 8 presents a fascinating account of the impact of the Research Assessment Exercise

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(RAE) in the UK on determining what is valued and how it is measured. This chapter speaks strongly to any academic facing similar research output based models where positivist concepts of quality drive funded research agendas at national and institutional levels. Pam Alldred and Tina Miller deconstruct ways in which political managerialism agendas promote consumptive and reified hierarchical approaches to educational research, which, they argue, reconstruct academic work in market competitive terms. Natasha Mauthner and Roasalind Edwards explore power relationships within feminist research teams in Chapter 9. They detail the key components of feminist research approaches and philosophy, then outline the ethical dilemmas that new managerialism in the higher education sector poses for 'Other' approaches to research. In an open, reflexive account, the authors 'name, acknowledge and work with the power resources and differentials that characterise management of research teams and collaborations' (186), in order that power can be openly discussed and negotiated.

This book is an articulate and striking account of power and resistance crises for female academics in universities. It strikes a chord for women at all stages of their academic lives. It exposes how the push for increasing measurement of knowledge, burgeoning corporate concepts of key performance indicators, deliverables and outcomes, undermine feminist values and feminist collaborative research approaches. The book describes key features of The Women's Workshop, a research group founded on principles of feminist ethics, and offers strategies to resist current competitive frameworks of academic research. It also clearly describes the kinds of 'elite understandings, practices and values' (5) preserved by the powerful male structures embedded in knowledge production in tertiary institutions. This book offers an excellent point of reference and clear theoretical research framework that is useful for university academics and postgraduate students across the globe. It consistently articulates ethical challenges that exist at all levels of university research life.

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Madonna's drowned worlds: new approaches to her cultural transformations, 1983–2003, by Santiago Fouz-Hernandez and Freya Jarman-Ivens, Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series, 2004, 246 pp., £16.99 (paperback), £47.50 (hardback), ISBN 0-7546-3371-3, 0-7546-3372-1-3

Most academic studies of popular culture have to contend with publication somewhat after the peak of interest in their chosen phenomenon has passed. To what extent such studies have a continuing life among academic readers (and they probably have no life at all otherwise) will depend on the strength of the theoretical engagements they demonstrate or, sometimes, on the depth of empirical research they report. This collection of papers, *Madonna's drowned worlds*, faces these difficulties explicitly. The editors claim that their volume's novelty 'lies not only in its primary focus on newer Madonna material (which has not yet received academic attention), but also in its inflection by the new theoretical approaches adopted by our contributors' (xviii). For readers with no particular interest in Madonna, the value of this book really does depend on the articulation of such new theory and on its demonstrable usefulness in making sense of current questions of gender and sexuality in popular culture.

Unfortunately, the series of 11 chapters does not begin well. Introducing 'Part I: the girlie show: gender identities', Stan Hawkins' 'Dragging out camp' is the most obtuse of all the contributions. The opening pages are marred by some dubious and imprecise syntax and, as the

discussion progresses, the vocabulary of musicology adds to the elusiveness of the argument. This is often a problem in academic writing about music. Musicology, in particular, remains a more specialised discourse than that of social and cultural analysis and readers mostly interested in popular, rather than classical, music are least likely to have much experience of it. In this collection, Hawkins' chapter, which also has much to say in non-musicological terms, would have been better placed much later, as a complex further statement on themes discussed in more familiar language by others.

Several chapters explore aspects of the 'performance of femininity'. Patricia Pisters, in 'Madonna's girls in the mix', offers a detailed reading of 'girlhood' in Madonna's performances, drawing substantially on Baudrillard. She argues that Madonna does not present us 'with some core "truth"' but 'demonstrates that all images are constructed but nevertheless have real effects: reality and performance start to blend into each other' (28). Discussing the video of 'What it feels like for a girl', and aspects of the *Drowned world tour*, Pisters argues that 'Madonna's work is no longer an articulation of her feminine subject as the beautiful centre of her 'gender-bending' performances… [and] now ensnares us in the layers of her performances that become 'falser than false'… an extreme statement about the epistemological fluidity of contemporary culture, a fluidity in which debilitating constrictive gender roles and brutalising violence can only be overcome through hyper-conscious performances' (33–34). Part 1 ends with the question 'Where is the female body?' – answered, in Corinna Herr's distinctive analysis, through an exploration of 'womanliness as masquerade'. Herr's reading is informed by the histories of hermeticism, surrealism and New Age thought. This is a fascinating but inevitably compressed account of Madonna's 'strategies of disappearance'.

Part 2, 'Post-virgin: sexual identities', brings together just two chapters, Keith E. Clifton on 'Queer hearing and the Madonna queen' and Freya Jarman-Ivens' 'What it feels like for two girls: Madonna's play with lesbian (sub-)cultures'. Though presumably most of the contributors to this collection start from some enthusiasm for Madonna, Clifton's piece is the most devoted reading, articulating both the author's own personal pleasure in her music but also claiming, more unequivocally than others, that Madonna's 'legacy lies in bringing the marginal, the forgotten and the oppressed to the centre of American popular culture' (66). Jarman-Ivens has a lot to say about the diversity of lesbian (sub-)cultures and makes a passing and thus somewhat intriguing reference to the 'apparently oxymoronic notion of the "male lesbian"' (70). This is an animated excavation of the meanings of Mrs Guy Ritchie and, embellished with many tantalising endnotes, a successful enticement to further reading.

The third part of the collection, 'Drowned worlds: ethnic identities', assembles four essays on the mercurial ethnic shifts in Madonna's career, each focusing primarily on one of her apparent 'identifications/appropriations'. Michael Angelo Tata reflects on Madonna's fleeting engagement with Hindu imagery, Rahul Gairola turns his attention to Madonna-as-geisha and Sean Albiez presents an interesting, and sharply critical, review of Madonna's 'adoption of the persona of All-American cowgirl' (coincident with her settling into life in England). Santiago Fouz-Hernandez provides a detailed and highly informative account of Madonna's more sustained encounters with aspects of Hispanic culture. Though the theoretical ground occupied by these contributions is familiar enough – postmodern challenges to the fixity of ethnicity – each offers a vivid case study of a feature of Madonna's self-presentation perhaps largely neglected elsewhere.

Finally, in Part 4, 'Blond ambition: consuming celebrity', two chapters offer some tentative evidence of efforts to engage with audiences, and particularly fans, of Madonna. David Gauntlett's 'Madonna's daughters: girl power and the empowered girl-pop breakthrough' is exactly the kind of accessible and engaging discussion that, positioned at the beginning of the book, would have effectively drawn in undergraduates and other, less determined, readers.

Though the 'audience research' is sketchy, the range of reference to contemporary popular music and to the meanings of 'popular feminism' brings the discussion of Madonna back into a context probably more recognisable to most student readers. The concluding chapter, by Lisa Penaloza, provides some more general commentary on the marketing of celebrities. But her observation that it is 'a real concern that the complexities of the many cultures she draws from are minimised in their presentation, with value accorded to those aspects which are marketable, while other less attractive, but no less significant features are ignored or discarded' (191) suggests that this might have been usefully placed with the earlier debates on ethnic identities.

This collection includes many strong contributions but, as a whole, its organisation is flawed. Rather than accept the ordering of these 11 chapters in four sections, readers really should select, and follow, what relates to their interests.

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Gender and the media, by Rosalind Gill, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007, viii+ 296 pp., £16.99 (paperback), ISBN 0-7456-1915-0

In *Gender and the media*, Gill expertly explores gender representations in the contemporary media through her own insightful analysis of particular media arenas and the existing literature in the field. Due to the media's recent expansion and the explosion of work in the field of feminist media studies, an endeavour was clearly needed to map the current media landscape, as Liesbet Van Zoonen did in 1994. Although Gill does not make explicit a link to education, gender representations have the potential power to 'teach' appropriate gender attributes, and their pedagogical function is implicit in her consideration of their cultural and social effects, in particular on young women.

Gill begins her investigation of the contemporary media by clearly mapping the field of feminist media studies, in particular its development in the last four years. Chapter 1 competently outlines the areas of debate in the field and provides a useful introduction to the debates presented throughout the rest of the book. Chapter 2 is a seminal chapter that presents a range of theoretical tools and methods for analysing media texts. Although these are not covered in detail, Gill notes that this chapter acts as 'food for thought', and provides a critical map of methodological perspectives with which to approach the texts and issues throughout the remainder of the book.

Chapter 3 marks Gill's investigation into five media sites, beginning here with advertising and exploring the changing nature of gender representations as a result of feminist thought. Gill highlights 10 key features of contemporary advertising, and for each of these usefully illustrates significant shifts by exploring examples of well known advertisements, making it an entertaining, illustrative and insightful chapter. The next chapter traces the shift in news journalism from being information to entertainment based, and considers the way in which gender has been caught up in this transformation. It provides a useful analysis of both the representation of women in news media, and their participation in the traditionally male dominated arena of news journalism.

Chapter 5 discusses the television talk show, not only with regards to gender and feminism, but also class and race. Gill discusses the value of considering the genre as the 'new public sphere', building on Habermas' concept, and as the 'new confessional' using Foucaultian theory.

Chapter 6 presents an insightful analysis of the debates and moral panics surrounding women's, teenagers and men's magazines. She explores existing feminist analyses of these texts, and concludes that research on magazines needs to integrate an analysis of their ideological nature and their pleasurable uses by readers; something with which I strongly agree.

The penultimate chapter explores the genre of romance, in particular the recent phenomenon of 'chick-lit'. Gill explores the themes of postfeminist romance, including self-surveillance, independence and sexuality, and also discusses the relationship between feminism, femininity and postfeminist TV dramas *Ally McBeal* and *Sex and the city*. The final chapter draws together the postfeminist sensibilities explored in each media site throughout the book, including a useful discussion of the confusing term 'postfeminism' itself. Gill concludes her book by setting a challenge for feminist media studies: to articulate the politics that can effectively engage with this sensibility, and therefore produce more open and generous gender relations.

This book is extremely well-written, which adds to its excellence as a text that combines an expert synthesis of the literature and Gill's own insightful analysis. For those wishing to gain a general understanding of the up-to-date issues and debates in the field of feminist media studies, as well as older feminist critiques, this book is invaluable. However, this book covers a vast amount of work, themes, theories and debates, and its lack of depth is one potential limitation. However, Gill's aim is to provide an overview of contemporary gender representations in different areas of the media, and she has certainly succeeded.

Gill's primary message is that the way gender is represented in the media is changing and that the aim of feminist media studies should be to reflexively understand and engage with the nature of contemporary gender representations. Gill's book is suitable as a core text for any media studies, cultural studies and gender studies course as an update of Van Zoonen's 1994 text, since it contains an analysis of a diverse body of work made suitable for undergraduate level thanks to Gill's accessible writing style. Academic media researchers may also find it useful in clearly mapping their field, highlighting key texts, and identifying appropriate methodological approaches. Due to its topical and entertaining engagement with popular culture, this book also has wider appeal to any consumer, critical or non-critical, of contemporary media.

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The Sage handbook of gender and education, by Christine Skelton, Becky Francis and Lisa Smulyan, London, Sage, 2006, xxiii + 536 pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN 9-78141-290792-7

Gender and education is an increasingly thrilling field of research as illustrated by the many edited and single-authored volumes recently published on the topic. Yet, I will argue that the *Sage handbook of gender and education*, a collection of articles of which the majority have been published in this journal and are authored by foremost academics, stands out for various reasons.

The book is structured around four sections. Section 1 ('Gender theory and methodology') explores the fundamentals of gender theory and methodology, and the diverse feminist perspectives on education. Section 2 ('Gender and the educational sectors') comprises chapters covering

the different educational sectors, ranging from early years education, to higher education, including one specific chapter about single-sex schooling. Section 3 ('Gender and school subjects') draws on a subject-based approach, with contributions exploring the gendered implications of teaching and learning in particular areas of the curriculum (that is: maths, science, citizenship, languages and technology). Identity issues are at the core of Section 4 ('Gender, identity and educational sites'), which proposes a sophisticated analysis of the way gender interacts with other identity markers, such as race, social class, sexuality and disability, while Section 5 ('Working in schools and colleges') explores the experiences of educational workers, whether based in schools, colleges or universities.

While the expected format of a book review do not allow going in detail through the content of each contribution (there are 35 in total), they share clarity of argument and a sophisticated theorising of gender issues. The book also offers a wide and comprehensive coverage of the field, thanks to providing an entry to it through multiple angles (by theoretical approach, subject, educational sector, etc), and manages to maintain a sense of unity despite the composite character of its contributions. More than that, it shows that gender is not just another specialism or solely a variable refining the analysis, but also a powerful heuristic tool, and gender theory a valuable analytical framework, both essential to the understanding of wider educational issues.

This book should captivate a wide audience. Gender studies scholars will appreciate the well-informed and strong theoretical framing of each contribution. The clarity of style and explanations, including when it comes to complex issues, allied with the book's format (short chapters focused on specific issues) also mean that the book constitutes an engaging introduction to the field. As a result, I would warmly recommend it both to colleagues, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students. It may however prove more difficult to attract audiences outside of the English-speaking world as this volume is very much dominated by English-speaking, Western accounts of gender. Consequently, the richness of research and experiences 'from the rest of the world' is ignored and non-Anglophone audiences may feel it is less relevant to their own experience or research. As Foucault once said, 'we are difference… our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks' (1969, 131). However big is the importance of gender in our lives, as the book itself recalls, it is an important matter that gender differences do not lead to the invisibilisation of other differences. Besides, the 'universal' dimension of gender (that is the male/female binary categorisation and the differential value of these categories as a pattern common to all known societies; Héritier 1996), should not opacify the fact that gender differences are socially constructed and thus gender patterns can vary greatly across societal contexts. As a feminist, I believe we need to reflect on what Elisabet Öhrn and Gaby Weiner have called the 'absences and presences in the field of gender and education' (2007) in relation to the lack of non-Anglophone issues in the literature. The fact that the editors themselves are well aware of it (see for example Skelton and Francis 2005) shows how difficult this is to implement. Despite this later observation, I believe this is a book with the potential to become a key contribution to the field, while also hopefully contributing to establish the legitimacy of the field within mainstream educational research and social sciences.

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Black women and the ivory tower, 1850–1954: an intellectual history, by Stephanie Y. Evans, Gainesville, University of Florida, 2007, 275 pp., US$59.95 (hardback), ISBN 978-0807858813

Opening the doors of academia

Although the African-American educator Mary McLeod Bethune is widely known to those who have studied the history of American education, many other black female educators and their accomplishments remain virtually unknown. For example Maria Baldwin, acknowledged to be the first African-American school principal, receives not a glance in most history textbooks. In her *Black women in the ivory tower, 1850–1954: an intellectual history*, the University of Florida's Stephanie Y. Evans elucidates the educational and intellectual history of black women, enlightening readers on their progress through a cohesive narrative featuring intellectuals such as Maria Baldwin. Her scholarly work explores and interprets black women's place in higher education and the relationship between their cultural identity and knowledge-making, while using their experiences to attempt the inspiration of current educators.

In her introduction, Evans clearly explains her goals, main ideas, and frameworks clearly, marking a path for her readers to follow. She examines African-American women's involvement in higher education through the perspectives of presence, oppression, and contribution and creative resistance. Evans acknowledges that her viewpoint on what constitutes an academic differs from commonly-held standards and calls for a wider definition. By widening the traditional definition of scholarship through the intellectual history of black women, she hopes to 'outline a more democratic approach to higher education' (2). Like Andrea Walton does with the term philanthropy in her *Women and philanthropy in education* (2005), Evans revises the idea of scholarship to include previously neglected ways of fulfilling that idea.

Evans' first six chapters concern the practical history of black women's involvement in higher education. The work's greatest strength is in this section, where she uses a wide variety of primary sources to present a unified account of the progress of African-American women in higher education. She explores the tension between a culture of service and the women's academic goals. She mines the vast numbers of surveys on black participation in higher education, evaluating the reliability of every source. Evans acknowledges the contrast between the experiences of middle class black women and those from working classes, as well as women who attended Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) and Predominantly White Institutions (PWI's). A major strength of this section lies in Evans' 'college memoirs' of six women who participated in higher education over the century she covers. Their stories add detail to an otherwise large-scale history and highlight themes across the black female college experience, including an international context, isolation, and friction between freedom and captivity.

The intellectual history of African-American women, which makes up three of the remaining four chapters, is significantly shorter than the first section, but more revolutionary and deeply felt. Here Evans uses three lenses, research, training, and service, to expand the

meaning of scholarly activity. For black women, experience, not only research, should lend legitimacy to truth claims. Black women often used dialogue and conversation to develop and test their ideas, instead of academic writing. In discussing how ideas of service and giving intersect with black female scholarship, Evans illustrates how an ethic of care pervaded education. Social justice and civic responsibility are evident in all the examples she gives of black women's scholarship. Evans' concluding chapter, in which she looks to the future and brings in her personal stake in the matter, shows how the accomplishments of black women are still generally viewed as inferior. The personal activism of this chapter, only slightly hinted at in her introduction, takes away from the otherwise consistent tone of the work, but Evans' linking history with a more personal activism than usually seen is bold, and will make other historians take notice.

Evans' goals, which she clearly states, are the investigation of the history of black women in higher education, interpretation of the historic relationship between cultural identity and knowledge production, and inspiration of educators 'to transform the academy into an effective tool for increased social equality and opportunity' (2). Through her coherent history and exploration of issues such as class, service, and sexuality, Evans clearly accomplishes her first two goals. When illustrating her ideas with case studies, she generally uses already-known scholars, such as Mary McLeod Bethune and Zora Neal Hurston.. Further in-depth documentation of neglected figures would make her case even stronger. Overall, *Black women in the ivory tower* dispels the idea that black women made little intellectual contribution until recently, and expands our ideas of what constitutes academic work.

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The schooling of working-class girls in Victorian Scotland: gender, education and identity, by Jane McDermid, Abingdon, Routledge, 2005, viii + 202 pp., £25.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-415-37558-0

The scope of this book is ambitious. It aims to challenge the representation of the Scottish educational tradition as imbued with the notion of a 'democratic intellect', a feature integral to its distinctiveness from and superiority to English education, by showing that it was gender-blind. While the book, as its title implies, focuses on the schooling of working class girls and aims to redress the gender balance, Jane McDermid does more than merely investigate these girls' schooling from a gender perspective. She complicates gender issues by showing them to be inextricably interrelated with social class, national identity and religion. Thus the Scottish educational tradition's objection to a class-based education served in part to distance it from English education: Calvinism, which 'lay at the heart of Scottish education' stressed the need for universal education in contrast to the Church of England which feared schooling of the poor created a 'potential threat to the social order' (26). At the same time, however, 'Whatever democracy there was in the Scottish system' (8), the meritocratic ideal was reserved for boys.

One key issue was the teaching of domestic subjects to working class girls, which many parents resisted, considering these courses not to be 'educational'. McDermid argues that this gender-specific curriculum was class-based and that it was part of an 'overt and conscious' policy to differentiate the schooling of working class girls and boys. The much vaunted universalism of

Scottish education did not exclude a gendered curriculum predicated on the notion of subjects deemed appropriate to each sex.

One contention of McDermid's study is that gender policies and practices can be at once restricting of women and manipulated by women for their benefit. Thus, on the one hand, Victorian Scottish education was gendered – and therefore limiting – through the ideal of domesticity, on the other, this gendering was defended and supported by feminists because it could provide middle-class women with opportunities for work in a male domain, which were particularly scarce in Scotland. This does not mean that women were content to submit to the strong patriarchal ideology associated with Scotland at the time, for women do not 'simply do as is expected… but rather they modify those expectations' (13). McDermid reiterates a point made by one tendency of English nineteenth-century pioneers of girls' education, that without challenging the masculine educational tradition and the strong patriarchal ideology, Scottish women were not for all that 'passive victims nor willing dupes' (18). Whether this agency was possible in part because of attitudes towards women which were themselves an outcome of the educational system practiced in Scotland is not addressed directly. But it is fascinating to realise that in the 1830s, the solution advocated for the perceived crisis in Scottish education was the establishment of a national system of education to impart the same education to both sexes of all social classes up to the age of fourteen. Significantly, although McDermid does not develop the point, this meant that the faculties of both sexes were viewed as being the same. Equally remarkable is the evidence she provides that in co-educational schools – which had been the norm in Scotland since the Reformation – girls often outperformed boys, and mixed-sex schooling was recognised to be academically and intellectually advantageous for girls. This did not prevent the emergence of pressures for single-sex schooling for girls among the middle classes. McDermid also highlights the tensions in Scottish women's schooling between the pressures to maintain traditional gender roles and the fear that this would open the way to an assimilation of English ideals – especially as regards the ideal of domesticity. Her study contends that through their schooling, and because women are the 'reproducers of the nation in cultural as well as biological terms', Scottish women were agents in the 'making and remaking of Scotland' (13).

Exploring working class girls' schooling in all areas of Scotland, country districts as well as city regions, and encompassing the development of schooling throughout the Victorian period, McDermid's book offers a comprehensive picture and fills an important gap in the history of British schooling. By taking account of gender, class and national identity, she punctures the 'myth' of the democratic ideal and of the 'egalitarian tradition' of education in Scotland. But she also makes a broader point. She shows that education is a particularly appropriate site for the study of national, gender and religious conflicts, because of expectations regarding women's place in the home and the national community. This is a clear testimony to the centrality of education to historical process and cultural change. Such breadth and comprehensiveness comes at a price. The writing is at times dense, little concession being made to the reader, but perseverance brings many rewards.

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Dude, you're a fag: masculinity and sexuality in high school, by C.J. Pascoe, London, University of California Press, 2007, ix + 227 pp., £11.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-520-25230-1

Dude, you're a fag is a timely and highly readable addition to the literature on gender, sexuality and schooling. Devoted to the intersection and interrelation of sexuality and gender in the school setting, C.J. Pascoe presents a detailed 18-month ethnographic study of the lives of straight, gay and non-normative students in a North American high school. Combining constructionist and poststructuralist theories in a manner suitable for all, the book is thought-provoking, insightful and, most significantly, accessible.

The most interesting section is on male adolescents' homophobia, and the insult 'fag'. Here, Pascoe identifies the fag epithet as gendered because it is only directed at boys. Conversely, the term 'gay' is hurled at each sex and even inanimate objects. Pascoe shows that 'fag' is a pervasive slur, yet it is most often a temporary and fleeting state. She shows that it is primarily used to punish transgressions from the dominant discourses of masculinity within the school. While others have commented on the gendered nature of homophobia, this is a particularly detailed account which suggests that the fag insult could be better understood as gender bigotry with an inherently sexualised nature.

Pascoe asserts convincingly that there is a 'fag discourse' which regulates masculinity and attacks non-normative bodily expressions by men. This discourse invokes the 'spectre of the fag' (71) through parodic imitation and insults and is used to regulate masculine identities. Yet this spectre only becomes embodied – that is, the label only sticks – if a student combines both effeminate behaviour with an openly gay identity. To highlight this, Pascoe presents the experiences of Ricky, a non-conforming openly gay student, to show how the embodied fag is excoriated, with harassment forcing Ricky to leave the school. Ricky's story is one of the most intense passages of the book – I was left wanting more analysis of the school life of Ricky and the other two openly gay male students who are only mentioned in an endnote.

Although Pascoe skilfully highlights the differences between 'gay' and 'fag' in her analysis and although the intersection between masculinities and homophobias is stimulating, I would have liked to see her investigate the use of homophobia in school to contrast with the fag discourse. It would have been helpful if Pascoe had discussed how bodily imitations and insults were identified as part of a fag discourse rather than a specifically homophobic one. It is possible that homophobia has been underplayed in the focus on the gendered nature of the fag discourse. The book also neglects the macro level of gender: it lacks the analysis of the complex relationship of masculine structures provided by Anderson (2005) as well as the institutional analysis of the exclusions that occur in school offered by Youdell (2006).

However, *Dude, you're a fag* highlights the privilege still accorded to heterosexual students in school. While her notion of compulsive heterosexuality (84–114) does not appear to build significantly on Rich's (1980) 'compulsory' version, Pascoe sets out the ways in which a social hierarchy of genders is maintained in school, and how behaviours are enacted to try and attain a valued masculine status. Furthermore, girls are shown to be agentic in these power struggles, utilising various gender strategies to challenge (or conform to) these hierarchies.

Providing a counterpoint to traditional male masculinity, Pascoe discusses instances of masculinity in female students. She details how two groups of girls utilise a variety of gender markers (such as clothes, deportment and the claiming of a phallus) to present masculine identities, but only on occasion. Pascoe discusses politically minded students who set out to challenge gender norms as well as certain girls who readily embody stereotypical traits of masculinity. This latter group is marginalised in school but also have social power, achieved by stigmatising in traditionally macho ways other girls and non-normative boys. Thus, both boys

and girls experiences are presented, providing rich ethnographic evidence of female masculinities in the school setting.

While Pascoe's synthesis of poststructuralist and social constructionist theories is particularly welcome, some nuance is lost. For example, it is overly-simplistic to describe Butler's work as part of an 'interactionist approach to gender' (14) and, after the excellent introduction, the intrapsychic elements of identity construction seem neglected. While the text is highly accessible, with much ethnographic data, the stories are often a bit pedestrian. I felt that given Pascoe's constructionist approach, other interpretations of the data should have been explored. Yet, *Dude, you're a fag* is an engaging, perceptive and scholarly book that offers both an excellent introduction to and new understandings of the sexualised nature of masculinity in male and female bodies within a school setting.

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Gender and teaching: where have all the men gone?, by Sheila Ridell and Lyn Tett, Policy and Practice in Education 17, Dunedin Academic Press, 2006, ix + 94 pp., £13.50 (paperback), ISSN: 1479-6910

Professors Sheila Riddell and Lyn Tett both have well established credentials as researchers in the fields of social awareness and the provision of inclusive learning environments. Both have already contributed to the *Policy and Practice in Education* series and this reader picked up the present book in expectation of finding new insights into reasons why teaching generally and primary teaching in particular has become so markedly devoid of male practitioners. This book is based on a Scottish Executive funded research project on the gender balance of the teaching force in publicly funded schools in Scotland (Riddell, Tett, Burns, Ducklin, Ferrie, Stafford and Winterton 2005) and as such is quite specific to a time and place. However, the issues underlying the 'problem' of absent male teachers are of interest throughout the developed world as evidenced by the UNESCO world education indicators; the very debate as to whether a landscape of schooling increasingly peopled by women teachers is in fact a 'problem' is worthy of serious discussion. This small book packs a great deal of statistics and analysis of research data particularly concerning the ratios of men to women teachers in Scottish publicly funded schools into the first two chapters. It addresses the reasons why men are much less in evidence in Scottish schools than formerly from analysis of the perspectives of undergraduates, practising teachers, careers' officers and other key informants (male and female head teachers, male and female coordinators of ITE programmes in Scottish universities). These data were largely collected from focus groups, carefully constituted to represent gender balance, and findings are analysed and presented in separate chapters with different authors. The result is a feeling that

what we are getting here is a presentation of disparate data from different sources, some analysis of these data by different researchers, admittedly with one, sometimes both of the authors names appended but lacking a depth and coordination in its presentation. There is some depth however to be found in the last chapter of the book, where the authors address 'the central themes of the book' (77) and the concluding ten pages touch on the nub of the issues concerning the current situation of the shifting gender balance in classrooms.

Chapter 1 of this book is called 'setting the scene' (1) and it comprises a succinct review of the gender and work literature and argues that differing attitudes to the workplace between men and women may account for differing attitudes to teaching as a career. Alterative readings of the situation are posed. Is it a sign of the increasing social empowerment of women that they seek to occupy posts in secondary teaching and in management, previously held by men? Or does their choice of teaching as a career, when in rich economies, men make other career choice signify women's relative lack of power? Three central themes of the book are outlined: gender, identity and employment; the effect on education of the new managerialism; the decline of men in teaching and the 'problem of boys'. These themes have application well beyond the Scottish scene and it is the authors' discussion of them, while drawing on the local data in the previous three chapters which makes this work interesting. Their evidence suggests that there are nuances around career choices by men and women, which are masked by polarisation in the current debate in the field of gender and employment. They point to a 'yawning gap' between the 'strategic essentialism' of applied equality policies and newer theories of sex and gender arising from post-structuralism (83). At a practical as well as at a theoretical level, it is suggested that there are certain positive aspects to the decrease male teachers. Specifically male focussed efforts to change the current downward trend may actually be bad for education, by reinforcing negative gender stereotypes. Three kinds of possible actions to attract men into teaching are suggested. One is to emphasise the male aspects of the job but with the proviso that this may be at the expense of women. Another is to 'sell' the pay and career opportunities available to men and women in the profession. The first suggestion is the most problematic; to discuss and challenge subject and work–experience choices early in the pupil's career so that boys and girls may be enabled 'to make gender atypical choices with the minimum of barriers' (84). This would require that school communities adopt a 'gender autonomy' (85) approach to all sorts of choices from the earliest years of schooling, a more subtle interpretation of the Scottish Executive Education Department and local authorities' 'new duties to monitor the gender balance of the teaching profession closely and set targets for the gradual eradication of gender differences' (5).

The authors of this book do not call for more research and yet further research may be helpful in framing creative outcomes. Consultation with pupils, even quite young pupils about the impact of male and/or female teachers on their lives might be insightful. A shift in focus from 'Where have all the men gone?' of the title to – for example – 'How are teacher identities constructed (and gendered)?' could lead to other perspectives on the issue of gender and teaching. This book is a beginning.

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