

# **BECOMING BOY: A/EFFECTING IDENTITY IN A CATHOLIC BOYS' SCHOOL**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how identities are effected specific to time and space. In particular, I consider different masculine student identities enacted by boys in a Catholic boys' school. Motivated by my own experiences as a teacher in such a school, I address the dominant masculinity of the school, and how student masculinities are formed not only within this masculinity, but also how other student masculinities come into (and out of) existence.

In considering how different masculine identities continually come together, and move apart, within and between school spaces, I draw on Deleuze's concept of the assemblage, as understood through feminist new materialist notions of the posthuman. Through a post-qualitative autoethnography, I map the assemblages of my own encounters with student masculinities as a teacher in a Catholic boys' school. In so doing, I consider three events and the masculine identities that are un/made through the affective flows that de/compose them. I attempt to locate myself and my own affective capacity within this entangled research-assemblage, considering the role that my own feminine-teacher position has played in events, and in knowledge production. In understanding identity as an affective assemblage, I suggest identity is nuanced and contextual, continually brought into being by specific acts and their effects at particular moments in time and space.

Ultimately, this thesis recognises student masculine identities in a Catholic boys' school as constituted (and de-constituted) through affective flows. It finds masculinity is multiple and contextual, that it comes together fleetingly, and can (but not always) dissipate just as quickly. It provides a means for thinking about identity through attention to the elements that make up an assemblage, including the non-human. Deleuze's positive ontology makes possible a more nuanced understanding of identity as formed in the moment, contingent on time, space and context. Theorising identity in this way can contribute to improved social justice in the micropolitical practices of schools and their pedagogies, and to a politics through which dominant identities can be displaced. I seek appreciation for the many masculine student identities enacted within specific times and spaces, and to shift away from boys' school practices that presume only one understanding of masculine identity.



## DECLARATION

*This is to certify that:*

- i. the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Master of Education except where indicated in the Preface,*
- ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,*
- iii. the thesis is fewer than 20, 000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.*

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*Leanne Higham*



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## MY LINE OF FLIGHT: BECOMING-RESEARCHER

A convergence of experiences as Head of History in a Catholic boys' school brought me to ask, *'how is identity continually made and unmade in boys' schooling'*. The first was reviewing a curriculum filled with electives based on war. It troubled me that in offering such a narrow selection, our curriculum would shape students' understanding of history as solely revolving around war, and possibly even valorise it. Students asked: *'Why can't we study Renaissance Italy in VCE?'*<sup>1</sup> I put this to other heads of department at a meeting. One response was particularly disheartening: *'Who are those boys and why are they here!'* Although (I hope) this was said in jest, it troubled me. If other heads of department felt wanting to study Renaissance Italy was gendered, or negative because of its perceived femininity, what did this say about the school culture more broadly? What then, was considered to be an acceptable masculinity in a boys' school, or even encouraged? I was angered for the boys who wanted to know more of the world's cultural and social history, and who were deemed unacceptable because they weren't enamoured with war. Why should boys who wanted to study Renaissance Italy feel like they did not belong at school? Why should their schooling be less valued than that of more acceptably masculine boys? I began to question what school might mean for them, and others like them who also deviated from the accepted masculinity of the school. I questioned the school's micropolitical practices, and the identities they brought about with purpose, as well as unintentionally. Tiny acts of slipping out of approved school practices began to stand out to me. Bodies subverted uniform rules by wearing purple and black striped socks instead of regulation navy, though safely hidden under the school's uniform navy trousers. I noted the absence of bodies on school athletics and founder's day, sanctioned by notes from home, self-

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<sup>1</sup> Victorian Certificate of Education

excluding from sport and recreational activities. Bodies remained seated when they should have been standing during Mass, speaking volumes to me about boys' feelings on aspects of Catholicism, without verbalising a word. Rebellion might have been one way to describe what I was observing; yet some of these 'rebels' were 'model' students who were high academic achievers, and well-behaved. Precisely what they were 'resisting' also posed further questions, as there were multiple, complex levels on which this was occurring. Nor was it always the school itself being subverted, but specific ways of being male among the students themselves.

I am a female teacher embedded in my research setting, both insider and outsider, at a Catholic boys' school. This setting provides the context for my research. Initially, I was interested in how curriculum, and my role in implementing it, shaped masculine student identities. I came to realise that I am far more involved in identity-making than in merely implementing curriculum. My interactions with students, their performances of masculinity, and the settings in which these performances are expressed all contribute to the possibilities of students' masculine identities. Their capacity to affect me, and be affected by me, means I am layered into identity-making in messy and complicated ways. As an insider at the school, it is difficult to perform the detached objective researcher-identity required of a more traditional ethnographic approach, as I am entangled within the assemblages I choose to study. My embodied engagement in the specific micropolitics of the world I research, and my own role in opening up subjective truths is better served by mapping affects through an autoethnographic approach, than by a more traditional ethnography (these methodological approaches will be discussed further in Chapter 3). Here, my methodological approach takes into account my embodiment in the assemblage/s of my research setting, in all its affective messiness. It allows me to map the affects that enact the different masculinities I have perceived as they reinforce assemblages, or deterritorialise them by taking lines of flight to new ones. Inherently caught up in the assemblage of the school, I sought a line of flight from what had become for me, a striated space. This research is a manifestation of this line of flight, emerging as I become-researcher.

### **Why identity/ies?**

To understand identity as acquired chronologically through an arc of psychosocial development, or as fitting neatly into an identity category, is to neglect that not everybody takes the same path in life, and glosses over significant social and cultural differences. This can be seen, for example, in the reality that not all boys in my school want to study war. Gewirtz (1998) claims that recognition of difference is important as it can inform more socially just

micropolitical practices within schools. A Deleuzist approach makes this possible through an understanding of identity made up of difference; different identities in different times, and different places. Taking up such an approach, I understand identity as an assemblage, shifting and constantly in flux rather than as static and finite, dependent on relationships of time and space. Identity is not understood as an evolution from a beginning to an end, but *for what it is and does in specific contexts*. Through a consideration of specific events, I consider how the body-assemblage connects through affects with other assemblages within the school space, resulting in snapshots of identities, revealed in constant becomings. I offer an autoethnographic account of my own observations, interpretations and experiences of boys' embodied masculine student affects. I show how my own embodiment within these assemblages both affects, and is affected by other bodies, sometimes creating affective tensions between my own different assemblage roles. By writing in the first person, I recognise my own embodiment within these assemblages, and the resulting implications for knowledge production. Following affects, I map the concepts, emotions, bodies and interactions that make up assemblages within the school space, and how they contingently affect and collide with each other and my own teacher-assemblage, and explore the identities that come into being in those moments.

### **Why a Catholic boys' school?**

School as a social institution has long been built up around the idea of the child as *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, unprepared for life until they have been subjected to schooling, where 'the aims of the social and cultural order are to be imprinted upon them' (Nelson & Reichert, 2012, p. 6). Schools educate children, preparing them in their own socio-cultural ideals so that children may later join society. As such, schools are a key site in which society's ideal masculinities are shaped.

Educational institutions are gendered in multiple ways, and can imprint gendered identities on their students. Connell (2014) argues that the study of whole institutions is key to the study of masculinities, as it is within these that masculinities are embedded, and have weight in the social order. Exploring the relations between bodies and the mundane materialities of school and the classroom can reveal crucial but often unnoticed performative work in enacting gendered power (see, for example, the work of Taylor, 2013). As a space, Catholic schools are largely underexplored, leaving a gap in educational research. Within the Catholic education sector, this has been recognised in calls to develop a body of research specialising in Catholic education, although much of it has focused on religious identity or one's identity as Catholic

(Lapsley, 2008; Pascoe, 2007; Schuttloffer, 2012). Bryk (2008) has drawn attention to the need for greater research on social justice in Catholic education. Davison and Frank (2006) argue that a fuller understanding of the diversity of student identity is a means of working towards better school experiences for all. Though my work is outside the focus of Catholic identity, undertaking research on student masculinities in a Catholic all boys' school will contribute to the field of Catholic education nonetheless. Within the confined space of a Master's thesis, I have limited my study to student masculine identities. There were times during my research when I noted how useful a similar approach to understanding other identities could be in bringing about a greater appreciation of diversity within Catholic schools. For a Catholic boys' school, research that takes identity to be materially and socially performed is particularly important, as there are multiple macropolitical layers where identities can be enacted, not only gender but also sexuality, race, class, and religion. Whipp and Scanlan (2013) argue that increased scholarship in Catholic schools has potential benefit not only for Catholic education, but education in secular settings as well. Hopefully, further work of this nature may serve to increase social justice in all educational sectors, through gaining recognition and improving practices surrounding identity and diversity in schools.

### **Why this theoretical approach?**

Coole and Frost (2010) claim the body has been rendered marginalised and obsolete in some feminist poststructuralist accounts of gender and identity, which instead focus on multiple and complex configurations of gender power. Yet the body is central to identity. In conceptualising gender and identity, 'we need a strong element of materialism', acknowledging the body is both socially constructed, and materially given (Paechter, 2012, pp. 229-230). Following the work of Youdell (2011), Ringrose (2011) and Hickey-Moody (2007), I suggest an appreciation of identity as a/effected bodily provides an opportunity to explore the roles physical space, objects and bodies play in identity practice, beyond subjects and the political. It enables an understanding of identity that takes into account specificity and nuance, which arguably is unavailable in traditional identity politics. Considering the body as an affective assemblage provides a point from which it is possible to understand the complex relationships boys have with their single-sex Catholic school, and how they engage in new boy-becomings of masculine student identity, within this space.

Though there have been studies of discourses of masculine subjectivities in boys' schools (see, for example, Connell, 1996; Martino, 2000; Martino & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003, 2007; Pallotta-Chiarolli & Martino, 2001), research taking a Deleuzist approach to bodily practices

and their affective assemblages offers important new ways of understanding identity beyond the established success of particular frameworks of theoretical thought (see, for example, Coffey, 2013; Ivinson & Renold, 2013b; Mulcahy, 2012; Ringrose, 2011; Taylor & Ivinson, 2013; Youdell & Armstrong, 2011). It enables thinking about identity that moves beyond the notion of subjects as created by discourse, towards an understanding of identities as being continually un/made by changing affective flows. Identity in this way can be understood as constituted not only discursively, but also materially. Bodies become vital, a component of an identity-assemblage, rather than a canvas for identity to be written upon. Coole and Frost (2010, p. 27) suggest an embodied mode of social analysis calls for a detailed study of ‘diverse lives as they are lived’, noting that an understanding and appreciation of how power develops, and both manages/is managed by embodied identities can bring to view difference and subtlety, and can augment and challenge existing theoretical approaches that categorise and impose pre-existing concepts.

Connell (2011, p. 11) notes the difficulty in raising issues about boys’ diversity within feminism without ‘falling into a backlash posture and affirming men’s rights’, or moving outside a gender framework altogether. I suggest looking through Deleuze’s lens of difference at affective micropolitical relations makes a discussion about boys’ diversity possible. Such work is already being done on the sexualisation of girls, drawing attention to overly simplistic notions of feminine sexualities (see for example, Ringrose, 2011). Egan (2013) claims the psychological frames drawn on in popular literature deny the feminine subject any nuance, complexity, ambivalence or difference. Feminine identities in popular literature have largely been constructions of middle-class, white heterosexual girls, with those who deviate cast as ‘slut’, or ‘ladette’. Taking a similar approach, I attempt to trouble the notion of a singular masculine identity, particularly within the hegemonic masculinity of the school I work in. Here, acceptable masculinity is middle-class, white, and heterosexual, but also athletic and nationalistic. This dominant notion of masculinity is privileged and valorised within the school’s culture. Masculinities that are complex, nuanced, different or ambivalent have not had such privileged expressions.

### **How does this look?**

My thesis begins with a discussion of the main theoretical influences that have informed the subsequent analysis. I bring together selected concepts of Deleuze and Guattari to highlight new ways of thinking about identity. In an attempt to think methodologically in a Deleuzist fashion, I consider how autoethnography as an unruly, emerging means of data collection suits

my particular purposes for this study in taking lines of flight from more traditionally used, ‘tried and true’ methods such as ethnography. Then, I discuss how mapping the affective flows of these data events allows me to consider my own entanglement (as researcher, teacher, affecter/ed) within the assemblage of knowledge production practices that is this thesis. I demonstrate through my own experiences within the school that masculinity is multiple, complicated and highly contextual through mapping identity-assemblages and three material events: Saint-Benet (the school and its practices), Benet-Boy (the dominant, acceptable hegemonic masculinity), Fluffy Purple Anzac (an Anzac remembrance service on the school oval where a fluffy purple embrace and Anzac spirit collide), Parisian Squares (a Saint-Benet ball-game in Paris), Saint-Jacques Stairwell (I encounter a group of Saint-Jacques boys in a stairwell), and also my own, teacher-researcher-assemblage, which permeates all of the other assemblages, with varying degrees of influence. My thesis concludes by highlighting how different masculine identities come into being through affective flows among bodies, objects and space, and possibilities for further identity-based research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This review is presented in two parts – a review of gender and education in Australia, followed by a consideration of how identity and gender theory has evolved. I conclude with a feminist, new materialist conceptualisation of masculinity as socially constructed, and materially given.

### GENDER AND EDUCATION

Multi-layered social institutions, schools provide specific settings for identities to be enacted. White and Wyn (2013) argue that for educational sociologists, identity provides a broad framework for interpreting and describing the relationship between young people and society through their schools as social institutions that enable identity enactment and recognition. During the last few decades, interest in masculinities has proliferated in academia as well as popular media (see, for example Biddulph, 1995; Biddulph & Stanish, 1997; Sax, 2001a, 2001b). This resulted in attention being focused on gender by policy makers in Western countries with boys becoming the focus of gender research. Constructed as ‘victims of feminism’, policymakers engaged in ‘recuperative masculinity politics’, or ‘what about the boys?’ debate. Mills (2009) observes this debate was grounded in essentialist and ‘common-sense’ understandings of ‘being a boy’ that sought to return to a societal arrangement perceived to have existed prior to feminist politics. In Australia, this took form in government documents such as *Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools* (1997), which sought to ‘enable improved educational outcomes for girls and boys in Australian schools’ - signalling the end for national girls’ educational policies by indicating that boys were now included in gender equity policies. The Parliamentary Inquiry into Boys’ Education, *Boys: Getting it Right* (2002), took this further by essentialising differences between boys and girls, casting boys as a disadvantaged group in Australian education, masking an ‘anti-feminist politics’ (Mills,

Martino, & Lingard, 2007, p. 5). Mills (2007) asserts that a politics of recuperative masculinity fails to take into account issues of diversity such as class, race and ethnicity, sexuality or disability, by homogenising men and women, and boys and girls.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity originated in research conducted in Australian high schools ‘as a way of understanding the relations between different patterns of masculinity and the overall gender hierarchy in an institution, or in society as a whole’ (Connell, 2014, p. 8). It recognises that men’s and boys’ lives are differentiated, and relations of power are embedded within such differentiations. According to Connell (2014, p. 8),

*“Hegemonic masculinity means the pattern of masculinity which is most honoured, which occupies the position of centrality in a structure of gender relations, and whose privileged position helps to stabilise the gender order as a whole, especially the social subordination of women. Hegemonic masculinity is not only contrasted with femininity, but also with subordinated or marginalised masculinities that exist in the same society. The concept of hegemonic masculinity thus relies on the research evidence that there are multiple masculinities, and on the evidence of the overall privileging of men and masculinity over women and femininity”.*

The complexity of (and within) gender is best understood through an approach that acknowledges and recognises difference. Lingard, Martino and Mills (2008) suggest an anti-feminist backlash borne out of a perceived threat to boys’ education can be avoided through an appreciation of the plurality of the inequities embedded in differences. Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli (1999; 2000; 2005; 2007; Pallotta-Chiarolli & Martino, 2001) attempt to achieve this by deploying student voices to disrupt rhetoric informing populist debate, taking into account the different masculinities (and femininities) being performed at the intersections of gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity and body. Haywood and Mac an Ghail (1997; 2012; 2013; 2006) similarly argue that schooling involves a fluid, fragmented and uncertain formation of gender identities influenced by class, age, race and ethnicity. Furthermore, Renold (2009) claims that boys can ‘do gender’ by subverting hegemonic gender relations in a similar way to which the tomboy subject position is at the same time radical, in disrupting heteronormative gender discourses and practices, *and* conventional, in reinforcing rigid and constraining gender norms. Importantly for this study, Burke’s (2011) autoethnographic work in an American Catholic boys’ school examined the different masculine identities that are shaped and reshaped within discourses of school, religion, gender and sexuality. As is the case in my own setting, Burke’s study observed the school he was researching privileged certain

masculinities. He refers to this hegemonic masculinity as ‘Monicamen’. Burke brings into focus the ‘fag discourse’ (which lends itself to the regulation not only of possible masculine lives, but also to provide limits to particular situations); ‘squishes’ (boys positioned against the abjectified feminine: the *girlish*, and those who were ‘whipped’ by girls), and the Catholic discourse of the school, and how boys understood themselves within this religious discourse. Burke (p. 153) notes the Monicamen he focused on ‘could be the undoing of a gendered system – and a school – through the same process that they became its reification embodied, dialogued, remembered.’ He calls for further research ‘into the complexities of the formulation of genders as affected and effected by single gendered schooling’ (Burke, 2011, p. 154), and expresses hope that his work ‘will make masculinities as unstable and perpetually reconstitutive in theory as I think they were on a moment-to-moment basis in and around the school’ (p. 156). Taking up a similar theme, my study seeks to understand the un/making of student masculinities in a Catholic boys’ school, but through the notion of the assemblage, rather than discourse. As foreshadowed by Burke, I explore how at times these specific identities can disrupt some of the masculinities of the Saint-Benet affective assemblage.

## IDENTITY AND GENDER

Gender is an aspect of identity, one component among others making up an individual’s identity. To understand how identity is un/made in boys’ schooling, it is important to consider identity itself. Developmental approaches see identity as a process of maturation from youth to adulthood, viewing young people as subjects in the making. Identity formation is equated with physical maturation, and viewed as inherently unstable until adulthood is reached. Deriving from the work of the psychoanalyst Erikson (1946) and his theory of psychosocial development, this approach considers identity to be a property of the individual that is constant and singular. A modern analysis of gender evolved along similar developmental lines, demonstrating that adult character was constructed through emotional attachments to others in a turbulent process of growth. Freud (1932) is the most well known gender theorist from this period, formulating the Oedipus complex in which young children (at around 2 or 3 years of age) start to gain awareness of biological sex differences, followed by a sexual attachment to their opposite sex parent, and acquire gender identity through identification with the same sex parent. Developmental theory has been criticised due to its conceptualisation of identity development as ‘unidirectional’, and having a ‘fixed end point’ (Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999, p. 420). It fails to take account of how

circumstances can affect identity, or how identity can be enacted differently within different contexts.

Anthropological approaches draw attention to context in emphasising the importance of cultural differences within social structures and norms. From these, the notion of internalised 'sex roles' emerges by the mid twentieth century, reflecting a particular culture's norms or values, into which individuals were socialised through family, school and mass media. Parsons and Bales (1956) view women as taking a secondary role to men in the nuclear family (concerning themselves with relations internal to the family); for them the notion of a career-woman was considered dysfunctional. Bandura (1977) and Mischel (1973) posited that children learn early on how to discriminate between 'boy things' and 'girl things', and later generalise this knowledge to new situations. Chodorow (1978) challenged the traditional view that females were biologically predisposed to nurturing infants. Yet even liberal approaches to gender identity were later found to be limited in their minimisation of the importance of other macropolitical considerations such as class, race and ethnicity, sexuality, and disability, and the reduction into binary notions of man and woman (Kessler, Ashenden, Connell, & Dowsett, 1985). Since the rise of second-wave feminism in the 1960s, 'feminism' fractured into 'feminisms' to recognise the plurality and diversity of the perspectives embraced by the concept. Butler (1999) argues that feminism had erred in asserting that women were a single group with common characteristics and interests, preferring to understand gender as a relation among socially constituted objects in specifiable contexts. Gardiner (2005) argues that it is from this progressive development of feminist theory that the study of masculinities emerged. Connell (2014, p. 6) cautions that without a historical framing of relations between women and men, and how and why women's experiences have been marginalised, the idea of 'men's studies' can become 'a vehicle for masculine backlash against women and feminism'.

Poststructuralist conceptualisations of identity developed along the lines preferred by Butler, as fluid and changing, 'not prefigured by action, but constituted through action' (David, Coffey, Connolly, Nayak, & Reay, 2006, p. 422). For White and Wyn (2013), identity is a summary label, or set of complex and multiple social meanings that may be actively communicated, recognised, and negotiated, or performed. Gender theory has also progressed away from essentialist ideas that understand gender as a biological, fixed and inherent state or condition of bodies, to an understanding of gender as an 'ongoing, lived, social process that is fluid and negotiable, created through repeated performances' (Nayak & Kehily, 2008, p. 5). For Connell (2000), gender is a dynamic social process of configuring gender practices at specific times within specific spaces.

Discursive approaches see identity as made possible through subjectification, the process through which one becomes a subject, through repeated performances (see, for example, Butler, 1993, p. xii; Davies, 2006, p. 425; Hey, 2006, p. 440). Inspired by Foucauldian theory (see Foucault, 1980), in this approach subjectivities are shaped by discourses, or systems of ordered procedures for the production, regulation and distribution of power. Within discourses, certain subject positions are available for specific contexts; the process of taking up and repeating performances of these subject positions brings about identity. Such an understanding of identity makes it possible to recognise that individuals perform identities differently in different contextual settings, such as the home, the workplace, or at school. It also facilitates recognition of silenced voices from displaced identities, providing ‘assertive attempts to bring them into the centre from the margins’ (Nayak & Kehily, 2006, pp. 459-460).

The work of Ringrose (2011) and Hickey-Moody (2007) draws attention to the limitations of discursive approaches, in that individuals cannot move beyond the categories that name them. One approach taken up by educational researchers to attempt to explain connections that extend beyond race, class and gender has been intersectionality, taking into account implications of sexuality, disability, religion and nationality. Emerging from feminist theory, the work of Crenshaw (1989) highlights the interconnectedness of gender, race and class as ‘intersecting oppressions’. Rasmussen (2012) argues that an intersectionalist approach to identity, though recognising the multiple, is still a collection of categories underscored by tropes of essentialism and constructivism. Similarly, Youdell (2011) notes that ‘*identities*’ suggests a person made up of identity categories, but does not address the nature of the connections *between* categories. Tamboukou (2015, p. 3) suggests that to unsettle linear analyses about the traditional objects of sociology, ‘social facts and social orders’, it is important to include in sociological analysis ‘possibilities that have not been actualised but can be considered within a plane of radical futurity’.

### **Identity as a materially given and socially constructed assemblage**

According to Coole and Frost (2010), though identity politics may address the body and its imbrications in power relationships, they have not always paid sufficient attention to the material efficacy of bodies. Similarly, Coffey and Watson (2015) observe the physicality and materiality of the body has largely been taken for granted, remaining implicit. Coole and Frost (2010) draw attention to the focus that discursive work has placed on subjectivity and the immaterial, for example language, consciousness, and agency. Yet the world itself is material,

composed of matter, and occupying space. Humanist, dualist educational research has traditionally understood space as passive, a backdrop or setting for educational practices. Hickey-Moody and Malins (2007, p. 11) observe that to understand space as inert in this way is to ‘ignore the aesthetic, social and political aspects of space and the material affects that different spaces have on bodies.’ Arguably, it is the notion of Cartesian dualism, the split between mind and body, which has led to this status quo. Originating in the early seventeenth century work of Descartes, dualist thinking viewed the mind as the seat of identity, the body excluded from consideration. It also meant the distinction was set up dualistically; bodies have generally been seen as ‘passive, set in motion by human agents with subjective meanings imposed onto them’ (Coole, 2010, p. 92).

Acknowledging that in much theoretical work the body remains a site upon which societal inequities are played out, Coffey and Watson (2015) call for contemporary body theory to recognise the complex interactions among race, ability, sexuality, class and gender in bodily experience, noting the embodied ways in which structural factors and discourses that surround young people often elude attention. The emergence of novel ways of conceptualising and investigating material reality in the social sciences suggests discursive approaches are increasingly being seen as inadequate for understanding contemporary society and thinking differently about ways of making lives better (see, for example, Bright, Manchester, & Allendyke, 2013; Christie, 2013; Coole & Frost, 2010; Gulson & Symes, 2007).

Increasingly, the work of Deleuze and Guattari is being used to both critique and strategically move ‘beyond a politics of identity towards a politics of becoming that dismantles social stratifications, opening onto an unknown field of differentiation’ (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007, p. 6). Though this work has not always been taken up within educational research, considered ‘high theory’ with little relevance for ‘doing research’ (Coleman & Ringrose, 2013), Ringrose (2011) posits that Deleuzist theories on affect and assemblages enable sociological thinking beyond the limits of discursive determinism. Such an approach is particularly useful in troubling singular notions of masculinity in an all boys’ school, allowing masculinity to be messy, and multiple. Honan (2004) suggests a Deleuzist approach is useful for social critique, as it can enable a disruption of everyday understandings of relationships. Grosz (2010) suggests that through a Deleuzist approach, the female body, rather than a site of patriarchal oppression, joins with other bodies through affective intensities, or forces, to become something else. Similarly, the bodies of teenage boys join with other body-assemblages to engage in new becomings of masculinity, no longer mere sites inscribed with patterns of manhood. With a focus on becomings that emerge from assemblages, I suggest

Deleuze's notion of the assemblage provides a means for contemplating possibilities for identity, possibilities as called for by Tamboukou that have not yet been actualised, but instead, are potential.

Coming to understand identity through the notion of the assemblage enables engagement with the multiple, with difference. Taking a Deleuzist perspective, I perceive identity as a continual social process shaped at the point of action, made possible within relationships among people, institutions, communities and material practices. It is dependent on time, and space. For my students, identity may be enacted in one way at school, another at home, and a completely different way at a sports club. They are always caught up in and are constituted by, multiple identity-assemblages. To understand identity in this way involves mapping complex micropolitical shifts in affective relations (Ringrose, 2011). A Deleuzist approach suggests that the body, here, is an element of the identity-assemblage. In this sense the body is more than just our physical selves, it is an assemblage of corporeal entities that can engage in new becomings, new possibilities, new identities. The subject is displaced by a focus on 'the entangled assemblages of all manner of bodies, objects, things and spaces, and other minute affective relations that make up identity' (Taylor & Ivinson, 2013). All components of an assemblage have the capacity to affect and be affected within the assemblages they form. It is an assemblage that is 'neither a biological nor sociological category, but a point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic, and the sociological' (Rosi Braidotti, interviewed in Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, p. 33). According to Frost (2011), a new materialist framework seeks to shift feminist critical analysis from an understanding where the agency of bodies and material objects is understood largely as an effect of power, to one which attends to both the agency of the cultural upon the material, and the agency of the material upon the cultural. Within an assemblage, the body and the material are viewed as *formed* by the forces of language, culture and politics, but also as *formative* in effecting power. The notion of the assemblage emphasises the active, self-transformative, practical aspects of corporeality as it participates in relationships of power, without privileging human bodies. Constantly changing affective flows, and movement from and between assemblages, create multiple opportunities for different identities (including gender) to coalesce in the moment. Identity, then, is not the beginning or the end; it is a becoming. It is less about who we are, and more about the possibilities of what we can do. It is in these becomings that we might learn what a body can do.

### **The body as an assemblage: what can a body do?**

Affect circulates in relationships, rather than individuals (Mulcahy, 2012). Affects are not the property of the subject, but constitute a body and its capacities. When the body is understood in this way, the question is no longer about how social relations imprint themselves on the body, but becomes *'what can a body do?'*

In conceptualising the body as an assemblage in and through which affect plays out, it is necessary to discuss the concept of affect. Importantly, affect means different things across psychology, philosophy and social research. Wetherell (2012) notes that for psychologists, affect relates to emotional states and the disturbances they create in the body and mind, whilst for social research, it has been taken to mean influence, intensity and impact. In Deleuzist philosophy, affects are becomings, the passage from one state to another, intensities characterised by an increase or decrease in power (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Buchanan (1997) sees affect as the capacity of the body to form specific relations. For Thrift (2004, 2009), affect provides a means for merging 'the social' and 'the biological', focusing on the singularity of the moment and for what might come into being. Clough (2010) contends that 'affect, that which is felt before it is thought, makes visceral impact, it is what moves us; it is the very indication of bodies forming in the transmission of force or intensity'. For Wetherell (2012), these interpretations are problematic in their attempts to sever links between affect and meaning making, for their relegation of the discursive. Instead, Wetherell takes affect to mean 'embodied meaning-making', a situated affective activity 'which requires formative background conditions that are social, material and spatial, as well as collectivities who recognise, endorse and pass on the affective practice'. I take affect to be an intensity that is characterised by an increase or decrease in power, and which enables a body to form specific relations among the social, material and spatial. Affect refers to changes in what bodies are and are not capable of, power flowing between bodies and other assemblages in complex ways across the subtlest of intensities, 'the minuscule events of the unnoticed' (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p. 2). It is this attention to the specific and the miniscule that provides a capacity to understand identity at its most nuanced.

### **How assemblages join together**

When an assemblage becomes stabilised, or crystallised through repetition, it is a territory. Territorialising processes organise and categorise. Albrecht-Crane (2011) highlights that in most Western societies this manifests in how culture 'reads' individuals in terms of race,

gender, nationality, religion, and physical ability. She notes that ‘territorialisations provide us with social identities, with a social face’ (ibid, p. 143). Within the context of a Catholic boys’ school,<sup>2</sup> boys learn there are a number of different, and often competing, ways of ‘doing boy’ and that some of these, the hegemonic masculinities, are ‘more cherished and prestigious, and therefore more powerful, than others’ (Swain, 2005, p. 214). Yet where territorialising forces create order, there are simultaneously deterritorialising forces that escape it. Deterritorialisation is ‘the movement by which territories are eroded as new assemblages are formed’ (Dovey & Fisher, 2014, p. 50). One means to accomplish deterritorialisation is through joining with another assemblage.

Affects are needed for a body to become other than it already is through joining with other assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). To understand the body as composed of affects is to understand the body as part of a machinic assemblage. Malins (2004) suggests that a body’s function, potential or meaning becomes entirely dependent on context, and which other bodies, or machines, it forms an assemblage with. According to Hickey-Moody (2007), becomings of identity take place when a body connects to another body and in doing so, begins to perceive, move, think and feel in new ways. Following the work of Ringrose (2011) on affective assemblages which are taken to be “multiplicitous” “social entities” constituted through interactions among the various parts, with various affective capacities’, I contemplate the affective relations among students within school spaces. The events I consider in Chapter 4 are composed not only of the human bodies involved: the locations, spaces, time, contexts, uniforms (or uniform breaches) and even rubber balls come together quite specifically to create (as well as unmake) different masculinities in those particular moments.

Within assemblages, everything is political; both a macropolitics and a micropolitics are in play. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), micropolitics takes into account finer details in perceptions, affections and conversations transpiring within and across the minute events of the unnoticed. Micropolitically, society is defined by its deterritorialising lines of flight, allowing for an understanding of difference not always perceptible at the macropolitical level of social politics. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 249) are clear that ‘both micropolitics and macropolitics occur simultaneously; any assemblage is a multiplicity, necessarily containing both rigid macropolitical lines of segmentarity that cut across, collide with and confront one another, and micropolitical lines of flux and becomings’. It is within the micropolitical that

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<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, I name the hegemonic-masculinity-assemblage of the school ‘Benet-Boy’, which is at times represented by an individual character called ‘Dominic’. This is as an assemblage that has crystallised within the school into a territory, encouraged by school micropolitics into a privileged status amongst other masculinities.

affective flows and relationships are found, and it is from these interactions that territorialising, macropolitical social structures (such as gender, and masculinity) emerge. According to Houle (2011), an analysis of affective micropolitics makes possible an understanding of political struggle as decentred, multiple, and diversified.

### **A feminist new materialism conceptualisation of student masculinities**

Gender is ‘not a given, but something that is constantly demonstrated, performed’ (Paechter, 2007, p. 14). Everyday affective intensities among bodies, space, objects and ideas can give rise to effects such as gender. Taylor (2013) demonstrates gendered performatives of masculinity within a classroom space, analysing, among other things, the affective relations among bodies, the teacher’s chair, a flipchart stand, and a student’s t-shirt. This is possible as gender is made up of a multiplicity of affective combinations occurring at micro level. Understanding gender as an assemblage enables us to see how it is ‘summoned into life’ under particular circumstances. Feminist new materialist theory offers some excellent models for mapping the affective intensities of gendered practices. For example, Renold (2009) explores nuances in gender, such as girls ‘doing boy’ as tomboys; Ivinson and Renold (2013a) explore the gendered space, labour and history of ‘pit-pony-girl’ assemblages, and Ringrose and Renold (2014) map the affective intensities embodied both physically, and online, around the reclaimed insult ‘slut’.

Here, I understand student masculinities to be socially constructed and materially given assemblages. The ways in which individuals enact boy through constantly shifting configurations of gendered practices determine what it means to be male in certain times and places. These masculine becomings manifest in the affective intensities within and between bodies, things, ideas and space. I take hegemonic masculinity to be a territorialised assemblage brought about through the repeated affective intensities of a particular masculinity in a particular location; it can be a smooth space for some but striated for others through its privileging of a certain type of masculinity. I use the term ‘masculinities’ (in the plural) to highlight the diversity of meanings behind the term, and the diversity of the experiences of men and boys.

## ASSEMBLAGE AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

### **Introducing post-qualitative approaches to research**

The possibility for research to progress beyond established theoretical thought is significantly impacted by choice of methodology. A neoliberal push has been noted by Lather (2013), moving researchers towards positivist methods via standards and rubrics that promote objectivity and verification. This in turn has led some qualitative researchers into a ‘post-qualitative’ space, ushering in the development of new practices that reconceptualise and experiment with standard practices of inquiry. Informed by postmodern, poststructural, posthumanist, feminist and psychosocial perspectives, within social science research there is a longstanding critique of positivism, recognising the need for thinking creatively with and about data. For Mazzei, such creative thinking about data ‘attends to how affect and the researcher permeate the research process at every stage’ (2013, p. 777).

Deleuze’s (2007, p. 2) ontology of becoming where ‘to become is never to imitate, nor to “do like”, nor to conform to a model’ can be used to disrupt, think and do research in new ways. Mazzei (2010) argues that thinking about qualitative research in a Deleuzist manner encourages researchers to enact research practices that are in flux, unpredictable, undisciplined and anti-disciplinary, rather than fixed and discrete. As theories join together, they intensify and deterritorialise existing research paradigms. St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) suggest that working within a Deleuzist philosophy allows an understanding of the world (and research) as unstable and becoming, rather than attempting to impose structure, patterns and codes upon data. This perspective means that the world is no longer separated into positivist notions of ‘knowing’ and ‘being’, but is understood as being made up of multiple assemblages at any point in time that constantly shift states.

## Ethnography

Ethnography is a branch of anthropology that traditionally places the human at the centre of the knowledge narrative. Youdell (2011) suggests that ethnography, those data generated through this method, and the sorts of analyses it makes possible, provides a means for understanding how identity, power and politics work, and for whom they work, at the everyday level inside school. Engaging Deleuze in a post-qualitative space through ‘assemblage ethnography’, Youdell (2014) employs an assemblage analytic to map and understand disparate factors or components that come together to produce an assemblage, as well as its disassembly and reassembly. In this thesis, I take up and adapt Youdell’s assemblage ethnography to analyse how various affects come together to un/make student masculinities through both territorialisation and deterritorialisation. This methodology can offer detailed representations of real life events that enable an understanding of how affects flow, and assemblages come together (and move apart). Some of the disparate components making up masculine student identities in my own research include various school-assemblages (such as Saint-Benet, Benet-Boy); space (such as Paris, school oval); ideas/feelings (Anzac, respect, anger) and objects (school uniforms-fluffy purple jumper, rubber ball). Without these elements, these specific masculinities would not be possible.

Ball (1990, p. 167) notes that qualitative research cannot be made ‘researcher-proof’, due to its inferential nature. According to Ball (*ibid*, p. 157), ethnography ‘carries implications about theory, epistemology and ontology’. He calls for ethnographers to take up reflexivity, a ‘self-conscious engagement with the world’ to take account of the role the researcher (and their epistemological perspective/s) plays in how data is collected, interpreted and analysed (1990, p. 167). Accounting for epistemological implications, MacLure (2011) comments on the difficulty poststructural feminist ethnographers have in creating research that ‘recognises its truths are always partial and provisional, and that it can never fully know or rescue the other’. She calls for qualitative research to attempt more ‘engagements with the opaque complexities of lives and things’ in recognising and giving voice to idiom, diversity, affect and conflict (*ibid*, p. 998). Similarly, Mazzei (2013, p. 776) engages with data ‘with and through new materialism’, drawing on Barad’s notion of agential realism (see Barad, 2007) in accounting for the ways in which not only the discursive and material intra-act, but also how the researcher is constituted in the production of knowledge through this intra-action. Following this thinking, I am aware that I cannot play the detached disembodied researcher. In taking an embodied approach, it is not enough to merely think through the body, my own affective

intensities as researcher connect me to the research, the data and the participants. Accordingly, this must be made explicit.

I employ an autoethnographic approach to data collection, combined with Youdell's assemblage ethnography to undertake data analysis – an 'assemblage *autoethnography*'. Emerging as a post-qualitative method in its ability to encompass an embodied researcher subjectivity, autoethnography allows me to take lines of flight from traditional research-assemblages, and to explore how student masculine identities work through my own experiences of affective flows, affective practices and becomings. A constitutive part of this research-assemblage, my own affective capacities as teacher and researcher must be taken into account in the production of knowledge. To this end, I attend to how affects, and my own self as researcher, permeate the research process at every stage.

### **Autoethnography**

Disruptive and undisciplined, autoethnography is a highly personalised account that draws upon the experiences of the researcher to create knowledge. It searches for 'encounters that promote new understandings' (Davies et al., 2013, p. 680). Autoethnography provides a means for researchers to analyse how they are situated in relation to the social setting they are studying, as well as the knowledge produced from it. An autoethnographer retrospectively and selectively writes about experiences that flow from, or are made possible by, being part of a social group, which they then analyse using methodological tools and research literature. Experiences are usually not lived through solely to publish, but rather, these are 'assembled through hindsight' (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010, para. 5). Having experienced numerous potential data events, as autoethnographer I have selected three I consider to be the most insightful in understanding difference in student masculinities. In traditional qualitative inquiry, this selection might be called a purposive sample.

Ellis (2010) claims that autoethnography can be rigorous, theoretical, analytical and emotional. It is however, a method that is difficult to reach consensus on, with no set definitions (de Vries, 2012; Delamont, 2009; Ellis et al., 2010). Autoethnography has attracted criticism for not being analytical enough (Anderson, 2006; Delamont, 2009); for self-obsessively focusing on the author (Delamont, 2007, 2009), and for its difficulty in protecting the privacy of others (Ellis et al., 2010; Tolich, 2010). It has also been lauded as a means for engaging the reader with personal stories, connecting them to the experiences (Carless, 2011; Ellis & Bochner, 2006); challenging canonical ways of doing research and

being subversive of traditionally oppressive academic paradigms (DeLeon, 2010; Ellis et al., 2010); allowing researchers to examine culturally and emotionally sensitive topics (Carless, 2011; Guzik, 2013), and as a rhizomatic assemblage, in the Deleuzist sense (Denshire & Lee, 2013). In seeking to write a post-qualitative feminist new materialist account of student masculinities, autoethnography allows me to be specific, subjective, and creative.

Autoethnographic approaches have been divided along two lines of thought: evocative and analytical. Evocative autoethnography seeks to evoke an experience so the reader can ‘feel it, taste it, sense it, live in it... to dwell in the flux of lived experience’; as a mode of inquiry it was designed to reject privileged traditional analysis, and to be ‘unruly, dangerous, vulnerable, rebellious, and creative’ (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, pp. 431-433). Analytical autoethnography seeks to redress autoethnography’s shift away from traditional ethnographic practices where a sense of objectivity is valued. Anderson (2006) claims that autoethnography should consist of complete member researcher status, analytic reflexivity, narrative visibility of the researcher’s self, dialogue with informants beyond the self, and a commitment to theoretical analysis.

## INTRODUCING ASSEMBLAGE AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

In working assemblage autoethnography, I use Deleuze’s notion of the assemblage to understand how students enact different masculinities in different school contexts. I explore three data events as student-masculinity-assemblages, set within the context of my school (and its own affective assemblage). I present these events as ‘data stories’, drawing on Lather’s (1991, p. 123) approach to ‘write science differently’. Although my data, observations, experiences and events may appear disparate, Honan and Sellars (2006) argue these can be understood rhizomatically to find connections within and between them. Throughout each of the three data stories it is possible to follow connecting lines of hegemonic masculinity, other masculinities, myself as teacher/researcher, and disruption. Though there are multiple elements to these identity-assemblages worthy of following, for the purposes of this (short) thesis, I focus on affects that lead to boy-becomings of student masculinities. Following Deleuze’s (1995, p. 22) statement, ‘*[w]hat matters is whether it works, and how it works, and who it works for*’, St. Pierre (2004) suggests that instead of asking ‘what does it mean’, Deleuzist researchers should ask ‘*what does it do, how does it work, who does it work for*’. In bringing a Deleuzist philosophic approach to bear, I account for the specific differences that come about in a particular assemblage at a particular point in time. I ask ‘*what does a body do*’, and ‘*what are a body’s affective capacities*’, with consideration given to the specific time, place

and actions within each data event (and identity-assemblage). This approach enables me to illuminate the specifics of students' masculine identities as they come into being in specific events.

Adapting Youdell's (2015) assemblage ethnography, I follow affective flows within and between different assemblages, considering the capacity of micropolitical acts to both affect, and be affected. I explore the territories that emerge in assemblages when they become 'densely knotted with interweaving affects and connected social practices, reinforcing affects and making them resistant and durable, at times creating striated spaces when it becomes unbearably so' (Wetherell, 2012, p. 14). I look for disruption of territories through lines of flight, the 'infinitesimal possibility of escape, the elusive moment when change happens, when a threshold between two paradigms is crossed' (Fournier, 2014, p. 121). In particular, I follow lines of flight that result in deterritorialisation, exploring the new becomings of masculinity that emerge in the coalescence of these specific affects. Here, I do not find masculinity through its binary opposition to femininity. Rather, I perceive masculine becomings through following the different affects that come together/move apart at different points in time and space. In following affective flows I am able to account for the partiality of my autoethnographic method by highlighting the ways in which I am located within the different assemblages.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Lather (2013, p. 638), thinking differently about data in a post-qualitative sense 'means to work within and beyond the reflexive turn, to problematize inquiry, to redefine objects as more in networks (or assemblages) than in single sites, to trouble identity and experience, and what it means to know and to tell'. In taking a post-qualitative approach to data, I attempt to 'think differently'. I problematize inquiry with autoethnography – I am both researcher and participant. My data is 'collected' from, and analysed by, myself. Thus, I work within the reflexive turn in analysing my role in knowledge production, *and* beyond it, redefining myself as a component of an assemblage (both in the creation of data, as well as its interpretation), which also addresses the issue of 'what it means to know and to tell'. In this section, I discuss how I have approached data collection and analysis.

## Data ‘collection’

### *Why this data?*

As discussed in Chapter 1, I aim to trouble the notion of masculine student identity, particularly within the hegemonic-masculinity-assemblage of the school I work in. Elements that make up this assemblage include ‘white-ness’, athleticism, heterosexuality, Australian nationalism, and middle-class values. Each of the data stories I have selected for inclusion involves a disruption of identity through de/reterritorialisation, resulting in new becomings. These events have also disrupted my own teacher territory in some way, some leading to my own, feminine, teacher-becoming. Students, through lines of flight, have disrupted my traditional position of power within the school, perhaps as this space had become ‘unbearably resistant and durable’, or striated for them. I have been forced to think as an element within the assemblage with the capacity not just *to affect*, but also to *be affected*. I contemplate the ways in which different assemblages come together to produce de/territorialising effects, including spaces that are smooth and striated. It is the possibilities offered by lines of flight I am interested in, to better understand how student masculine becomings are enacted.

Besides the specific encounters included for analysis, there have been many events which have throughout the production of this thesis made their way into the writing, and out again. As both teacher and researcher, I have accumulated too much data for the scope of this work. I constantly see and experience things that prompt me to think, ‘yes, that has to go into the thesis!’ Unfortunately, I have had to be brutally attentive to what is included. I left out a study of passive acts of defiance at Mass where boys remained in their seats, refusing to venerate the Cross; this was less about masculinity and more about religion; though a matter worthy of further study, beyond the limits of this thesis. I excluded YouTube videos created by graduating year twelve boys. While these provided interesting insights into sexuality, they did not fit the autoethnographic nature of my data collection. I left out an entry made about me on the website Rate My Teacher. This entry provided an example of a boy engaged in a new becoming somewhere between the hegemonic masculinity and geek: his aggressive and violent sexual comment made about me revealed a boy from outside the hegemonic masculinity attempting to ‘out-macho’ other boys’ comments, yet also referenced his geek identity by mentioning the Lovecraftian monster Cthulu, a niche gothic horror creation that would not (generally) be known to Benet-Boys. Though it affected me deeply, and provided an excellent example of the messiness of assemblages and the notion of ‘spaces in-between’, this was cut. Online rather than embodied, it did not fit with the other spatial data. I also dropped a deeper

exploration of Benet-Boys taking up space in Paris on the Metro. In this, large, athletic Benet-Boys took up physical and aural space as they disturbed passengers in the Metro, dominating seats with open legs, and carriage space by loudly discussing Australian Rules football results (in English, in a quiet, French speaking space). This was excluded as the Eiffel Tower event addresses the same issues of taking up space and disruption, but in a more interesting and clearer way.

### *Why this way?*

Dyson (2007) suggests autoethnography can provide an ‘insider’ account and analysis of school-assemblages inaccessible to outsiders. As their teacher, I am in a position that has allowed me to bear witness to (and participate in) many experiences of student masculinities over the years. Turner (2013) notes that autoethnography provides a means of discussing experiences that may not usually be spoken of publicly, and for sharing thoughts and feelings that require an intimacy only available within the private world of my own relationships with the students. Additionally, the need for more practitioner research is recognised; Andersen and Herr (2010) claim that in many applied fields knowledge is generated by university researchers rather than practitioners. My close relationship to the research setting allows me a deep understanding for, and appreciation of, the school’s micropolitics; my critical ‘outsider’s’ eye enables me to think differently about them. This enables me to challenge and ‘initiate positive change’, rather than maintain the status quo (Starr, 2010, p. 2). Iverson and Renold (2013a) note the difficulty in researching the micro practices of the everyday lives of young people due to the creative ethnographic approaches and participatory methods required. Autoethnography affords me a degree of creativity in the approach I adopt in this thesis, enabling me to explore topics that would be difficult to approach using traditional interview methods. As a teacher within the school, I am in position of power in relation to the boys. I may have taught them in the past, or be yet to in the future. If utilising traditional data collection approaches, they may be concerned that if they said the ‘wrong’ thing I could take it in such a way that could have unfavourable consequences for them. I also have a relationship with them that makes it difficult for me to actively seek their accounts of performing masculine identity. If boys seek me out to discuss these issues it means they are comfortable in doing this, it would be different if I were to approach them first. They might be uncomfortable with my choice to ask them these questions, they may not understand their own masculine identity practices in the same way that I do, and could feel that I think there is something wrong with *them* if I am asking

them about masculinity, and not other boys. Instead, the events I write of detail school-assemblages and affective practices I have ‘collected’ from my own experiences as a teacher in a Catholic boys’ school.

## Data analysis

### *What does it do?*

Working in a post-qualitative feminist, posthuman, Deleuzist space, I have not broken my data down into coded patterns for analysis. I employ a messier method to understand how specific student masculinities come into being, as this process is itself a messy one that takes into account my own part in the assemblages, both in how identity is composed, and how identity is understood. Adapting Youdell’s (2014) methodology of ‘assemblage ethnography’, I employ ‘assemblage *autoethnography*’, in order to understand my own role in identity-making within assemblages. Noting the difficulty in writing the multiplicity of the components of an assemblage, Youdell (ibid. p. 119) uses ‘lines’ to avoid producing lists of separate, static elements. Similarly, in analysing multiple elements of student-masculinity-assemblages, I follow specific affective capacities (hegemonic masculinity, other masculinities, and disruption) and their micropolitics as instantiated in three identity-assemblages that formed within the research setting of my workplace. Within these assemblages, I analyse how different affects interplay to shape student masculinities, considering what these affects do, and how they work, to un/make student masculinities. This is assemblage *autoethnography*, as my own affective capacity must also be considered an element of the assemblage, as an actor in the events detailed, and in producing an assemblage in writing this research.

### *How does it work?*

Attending to affect, I consider what bodies do, and the affective capacities of those bodies. I follow lines of flight and how this results in de/re/territorialisation through an increase or decrease in power, in both broader terms and through specific experiences. In particular, I focus on de/re/territorialising affects, and becomings. In working in a post-qualitative space, my work addresses my own role as feminine teacher-researcher within these assemblages, and how this works in the composition of identities through increases/decreases in power, and in the production of knowledge about student masculinities.

Some affective flows are common to all encounters, such as masculinity, which affects all performances of student identity, as is my own affective flow, a teacher-researcher-femininity. Though I seek performances of masculinity in the micropolitical, inescapable macropolitical lines of segmentation cross into these identities, such as *student*, *sexuality*, *class* and *ethnicity*. The affects of these lines contribute to the particular masculinities enacted in each assemblage. Affective flows that come together and are specific to particular assemblages include Paris-Squares, Fluffy-Purple-Anzac and Saint-Jacques-Stairwell. These are the names I have given to the assemblages I detail in chapter 4. The various repeated affects that create territories in these assemblages are acknowledged, as are affective lines of flight taken by boys to deterritorialise and create new masculine becomings. It is these affects that are produced in specific contexts, at specific moments in time, that reveal much about masculine identities, for it is in these moments that new becomings emerge.

## **Ethics**

All research involves a consideration of ethics. Ethical approval was not required for this research as my data were generated from my own experiences. It did not involve gathering data from other people. Autoethnographical research explores the experiences of other people through the experience of the autoethnographer, bringing with it magnification, distortion, and specificity as it is recounted through the writer's narrative lens. Delamont (2007) argues that autoethnography can never be ethical as it 'leaks' other people's experiences. Though the data originates with the autoethnographer, the experiences it has grown from are made up of interactions or observations involving other individuals. Thus, the question of consent and ethics approval for autoethnographic researchers comes down to whether consent is required to convey their own experiences of others' words and actions, beyond their joint existence. Turner (2013) argues that if the originator/s of the words/actions is not made explicit, nor is their authenticity or context, permission need not be sought; this is different, however, if an actor is identifiable. In its creative form, autoethnography allows me to protect the identities of individuals involved in the experiences that form the basis of my narratives. In attempting to tell a truthful account while protecting the identities of some of those included in her own autoethnographic work, Ellis (2007, p. 16) engages techniques commonly associated with ethnographic storytelling and memoirs, such as changing details, omitting things, and inventing composite characters. By changing names, identities and locations, and blending and blurring individuals and events into a representative character or occasion, I have attempted to

maintain the confidences of those whose stories stray into my own, while still presenting the issues themselves in a faithful way. Turner (2013) notes an autoethnographer can only describe their own experience of other actors' words, actions or presence, filtered through their own experiences and interpretations. I acknowledge this, and would add that such interpretations are real, and worthy of attention.

As I have mentioned, as a teacher who must maintain ongoing relationships with these students (and colleagues), it could be unethical for me to interview them in a meaningful way about masculinity, or to problematise with them some of their actions or comments. Portelli (2008) found from his own experience in a Catholic boys' secondary school in Malta that research can bring to light the formerly hidden, which can be unwelcome, creating tension with both students and staff. In my writing, I have not discussed anything that was hidden, avoiding this problem. Smyth and Holian (2008) suggest insider research presents easy access to data compared to more traditional 'outsider' approaches that require entry and acceptance into the research setting, and then might rely on sampling techniques, such as snowballing, to access data. They claim that insider researchers have increased credibility within the setting, and knowledge of the history and culture of the people and institution involved in the research. While this is true for me, it brings other potential ethical concerns surrounding such research. Portelli (2008) notes that the sensitive nature of masculinities in Catholic boys' schools presents problems where someone does not want to be the subject of gender/sexual identity speculation or attribution. Additionally, the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct sets out to protect student dignity (principle 1.2). Even if I employed more traditional research techniques, such as using pseudonyms for students, it is possible that in even asking about their masculinity I may embarrass them. As a teacher, the Code restricts me in a way that an outside researcher would not be. I have a pre-existing relationship with the boys as a teacher in the school, and I am in a dependent, or unequal relationship with them. Such considerations have influenced my decision to present my data autoethnographically, in part to avoid creating unnecessary tension within the school community from my questioning. This may be different if I were an external researcher and not a member of this community, where there may be less feeling of (perceived) judgement. Yet if this were the case it would be unlikely I would be able to observe the school's micropolitics in an authentic, insider fashion. As it is, I have lived alongside these boys in some cases for many years, and have a deep understanding of the contexts surrounding the masculinity practices that I document.

All research has an ethical obligation to initiate or contribute to positive change based on evidence generated, and be articulated in such a way that both the evidence and its subsequent

value have genuine application; it is what defines an evocative, personalized piece of autoethnographic writing ‘as scholarly research, as opposed to simply interesting text’ (Starr, 2010, p. 3). St. Pierre (2004) claims Deleuzist concepts provide a means for thinking about, and living education differently. Deleuze’s positive ontology affirms the ‘possibilities of becoming something else; of affirming difference itself’ (Sotirin, 2011, p. 117). Upholding the singularity of each moment or state, Deleuze’s concepts of difference enable an understanding of identity, in schools and otherwise, through a highly specific, contextualised and subjective point of view. Gender becomes less about macropolitical theories imposed onto events, and is viewed instead in terms of when, and where, it is assembled, through the everyday. Drawing on the work of Butler (2004) on liveable lives, Paechter (2012, p. 230) comments:

*‘We need to ensure that the ways in which we think about gender and how it operates within schools support the living of liveable lives for all children, and do not undermine the possibilities of a liveable life for some’.*

Ferfolja (2007) claims that as social institutions within a democratic society such as Australia, schools have a duty of care to provide a supportive and safe environment for all members of their communities through a teaching and learning framework that promotes respect for, and recognition of diversity and difference. I suggest that approaching educational research through an understanding of affective assemblages makes this possible.

Additionally, the use of post-qualitative methods provide opportunities for deterritorialisation of the status quo, enabling those in the educational community to think differently about what current micropractices do in order to bring about new, and possibly more liveable, affective practices and new becomings in education. Denzin (2014) argues that autoethnographic work must always be interventionist, providing a voice for those unable to tell their story, or who are denied a voice to speak. This research allows me to discuss things that would normally be kept to myself, in a way that extends scholarly understanding of masculine identities in Catholic boys’ schools. Some of what I say is provocative in seeking to disrupt dominant discourses and territories in my school in the interests of equity. Some of what I say may not have occurred to people in this way before, and could be confronting. In this case it can, and should be, troubling. According to Starr (2010), it is this capacity for social change, and the opening up of dialogue that is arguably one of the most valuable aspects of autoethnography. It affords me an opportunity to highlight the diverse masculinities enacted by boys in the school, and the limited recognition the school provides these by upholding the territorialised hegemonic masculinity that has traditionally reigned there.

Though the data presented are fictionalised for ethical reasons, the issues and analyses that flow from the data are authentic, drawing on experiences that provided the impetus for this research. I am a teacher with an academic inclination and a social justice bent. Analysing my own school-assemblage through autoethnography enables me to not only protect the people whose practices I document, but also to critically observe and consider my own engagement in these practices, towards deepening an understanding of these young men. I seek to illuminate, not judge, the different masculine identities that come into being. Such analysis may prompt others in the education community to do the same. In bringing these experiences to scholarly attention, I hope it will prompt schools into making lives liveable for many, rather than just for a privileged few. Though these events are long past, making these encounters known may hopefully provoke a re-thinking of identity in Catholic boys' schooling.

## MASCULINE BECOMINGS

In this chapter I present the experiences of everyday life in a Catholic boys' school, followed by three data story/events. In contextualising the school-assemblage, I illustrate the hegemonic masculinity practices of the school, and provide a backdrop to the masculinity performances that coalesce in the affective encounters within this setting. I attempt to analyse these data events by mapping how the different assemblages work; I follow affects through micropolitical acts considering both the capacity to affect, and be affected in turn. I consider how these interactions have the capacity to change, shape and influence student masculinities through the affects that flow through assemblages, and the resulting increases and decreases in power. I contemplate how affect works in these instances, how student masculinities are un/made, and consider the boy-becomings that form in these events. In doing this I also recognise my own incorporation as teacher, and as female, in these stories, and attempt to unpack my own role in the knowledge production.

Ringrose's (2011) work established schools as affective assemblages constituted through interactions among their various parts, with various affective capacities. School-assemblages have an active role in the embodiment of gendered identities. Paechter (2007) argues the bodily regulation of young people in school supports and encourages the development of particular forms of masculinity. Youdell (2011) sees the school-assemblage as made up of policies; curriculum; systems, techniques and technologies; pedagogies; relationships, and everyday cultures that inform the smallest interactions and ideas. For the purposes of this thesis, it is on the everyday cultures and smallest interactions that I focus my attention. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the micropolitics of the school to contextualise my data,

before focusing more specifically on events where I have experienced (and participated in) masculinising affective identity practices first hand.

### **Saint-Benet-school-assemblage**

My research setting is an all boys' Catholic school that I will refer to throughout as 'Saint-Benet'. It is largely middle-class, and Anglo-Saxon, though this changes in VCE when there is an influx of new students from nearby year 7-10 feeder school, Saint-Jacques. The staff consists of around 29% females. Occasionally, female students come from local girls' schools to take VCE subjects not offered at their own schools. Recognition practices privilege sport over other cultural activities such as debating, music and art, with sport contributing more towards the annual Benet Cup.

Territorialising affects of control flow through and between school spaces in which practices are organised and largely repetitive, and the way the school manages bodies, activities and time. Saint-Benet uses uniform to fashion and regulate student bodies based on normalisation, conformity and rigidity. The winter uniform consists of a long-sleeved shirt worn with the school tie, long pants, and a jumper and blazer; the summer uniform is shorts and a short-sleeved monogrammed shirt. Both are worn with black leather lace up school shoes, and the shirts are not to be mixed between seasons. Failure to wear correct uniform may result in a one minute Saturday detention, where boys must come to school in full, correct school uniform for one minute on a Saturday morning. Uniformed young bodies take up classroom spaces during regularly timetabled periods throughout the day, each period marked by the school bell. This signals to boys to be at a certain location depending on the specific time and day, their bodies occupying spaces according to timetables and the rhythm of the bell. Outside class times, students are not permitted to remain indoors, unless a teacher is supervising. At school assemblies, bodies are lined up in rows of seats, and instructed when to stand, to clap, and to cheer. They are made to sing the school song, and the national anthem. Sporting achievements are venerated, past pennants lining the walls of the hall.

### **Boy-school-assemblages: masculinities, hegemonic and otherwise**

The identity practices of Catholic school boys can be understood through their embodied affective relations within and between assemblages. To enter an assemblage is to take up its possibilities in a process of becoming; something new emerges from this relationship with the assemblage. How boys feel in relation to their school-assemblage affects the ways in which they might take it up, or instead take a line of flight. Within the Saint-Benet-school-assemblage, boys are positioned as ‘student’, subordinate to teachers. The uniform’s blazers, shirts and ties prepare boys for the suits that many (but not all) will one day wear to work in the office, and school hours mimic traditional working hours. Youdell (2011) notes how such disciplinary micropolitical practices are entangled with white heteronormative middle-class social values and practices. Similarly, Gottschall (2010) maintains that school uniforms and disciplined everyday routines are strategies to articulate and materialise the pedagogical, social, economic and political goals of Catholic private school governmentality; in this case, middle-class professional life. In its recognitional practices, the school is complicit in maintaining inequitable and territorialising practices in the way public space is allocated to certain awards and recognition, privileging sport over other cultural pursuits. How boys choose to relate to these elements of the school-assemblage can result in new becomings emerging from the connection to, or creation of, new assemblages.

Martino’s (2003) study found that school can become a place where boys are morally and socially regulated in ways that they find restricting. Some were unhappy with the way certain versions of masculinity and competition were endorsed, such as not affirming student achievements outside the realms of dominant sports. Others felt out of touch with the sense of nationalism and community imbued in the national anthem. Reichert (2009) made similar findings. In his study boys pointed to favouritism towards elite athletes where elite sports occupied a special position in the school, and the best athletes became team leaders, school leaders, and leaders of the hegemonic group. In Reichert’s study, the school’s ideal boy is elite and athletic. The situation is similar at Saint-Benet; repeated affective intensities of white, athletic, heteronormative, middle-class, Catholic values have created the Saint-Benet territory. This is the hegemonic masculinity of the school, an identity-assemblage that may be taken up when boys wish to perform a culturally acceptable masculinity within the Saint-Benet context. School life is suited to this particular identity, and those boys best able to fit themselves to it. Within this hegemonic masculinity, I name these boys the ‘Benet-Boys’.<sup>3</sup> The school’s 2013

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<sup>3</sup> This is a pseudonym.

annual report concludes by stating that student survey results indicated *“the young men had a real sense of belonging to a community and were very proud to be ‘Benet-Boys’.”*

Not all boys take up this assemblage all of the time. Such boys find the Benet-Boy assemblage offers limited choices to them. While many boys’ behaviours are shaped by and fall into the repeated territorialising practices of the school, some find this space striated. Not all boys are ethnically white, come from middle-class families, are heterosexual, or like sport. For some of these boys, the school’s masculinity is jarring, so they take lines of flight from this assemblage. Some wear their uniforms incorrectly, visibly rejecting the school-assemblage, while others occupy ‘forbidden’ spaces around the school, taking up space in the school in a way that signifies they do not wish to be part of it. In this way, they are part of Saint-Benet’s affective assemblage, but they are not Benet-Boys, they are engaging in different assemblages and becomings.

School uniform is a disciplinary technology of governmentality, a part of the school-assemblage that makes a striated territory for some. Bodies are squeezed into blazers, shirts and ties in the winter irrespective of how warm the weather is. Students must decide between overheating, or taking lines of flight into a rule-breaking-assemblage, if they are too hot. Here, it is the uniforms themselves and the ways in which they clothe young bodies that relate various affects of compliance or non-compliance to others. The way the uniform is worn can reveal different social markers of status and masculinity, leading to recognition and an increase in power with others in the same, or sympathetic student-assemblages. When joined with a teacher-assemblage, uniform non-compliance is more likely to lead to a decrease in power. The territorialising repetition that school uniform policies enact spotlights those who transgress this normalising practice. Such boys might grow their hair long, cultivate dreadlocks, slip hoodies under their blazers, or wear black skate shoes instead of black leather school shoes. Some attempt facial piercings, or more subtly, wear t-shirts hidden underneath their clothing, safe from the disciplinary gaze of teachers. The Saint-Jacques boys I focus on later in this chapter wear their uniforms in such a way that both transgresses school uniform policy, and signifies their flight from the middle-class aspects of the Saint-Benet-assemblage by highlighting their working bodies.

The ways in which they take up and interact with physical space and objects reveals much about how students feel within a traditional Catholic boys’ school environment. Many enthusiastically take up the Benet-Boy-assemblage of the school, and can be found immaculately presented in their uniforms, occupying student leadership roles, playing

‘Squares’ in the courtyards, or representing the school proudly on the oval through various sports. They are overtly heterosexual, and play Australian Rules football, or cricket. Historically, the school has been successful in sport. These boys describe each other as ‘good blokes’, and loudly proclaim their support for Australia in major international sporting events. By taking up this assemblage Benet-Boys open up possibilities available to those in a privileged space. Arguably, the school territory is mostly a smooth space for them – though at times it can become striated too, as occurred in Paris, as I elaborate later in this chapter.

Where boys are *not* can also be revealing in their absence from certain spaces. Some may choose to study or read in the library, sit under a tree to chat with friends, hide in forbidden corridors or stairwells (during recess and lunchtimes, anyway) to privately chat or play games on their iPads, providing them with smooth spaces in preference to venturing into the striated Squares and sporting spaces of the outdoors. Rather than joining Saint-Benet’s sports teams, these boys might be found at the art rooms working on their folio pieces, in the theatrette rehearsing performances, in the public speaking or debating teams developing their speeches, with the political interest group discussing policy and socio-political theories, among the student run philosophy club learning about thought experiments, or with the digital technology student enthusiast group acquiring new computer skills, each creating different assemblages of identity through establishing practices specific to these groups. I name no generic territory or assemblage for these boys, as they have taken different lines of flight in order to create smooth spaces for themselves to engage in new and different becomings, away from the striated space of the Benet-Boy-assemblage territorialised by the school, and from those boys who have chosen to take it up as a part of their identity. Later in this chapter, I name a group of such boys ‘the Philosophes’, for their love of Voltaire and Rousseau. I discuss their preference for books over Squares. Though I have outlined different ways of becoming boy within Saint-Benet, this is not to say students cannot, and do not shift identities among these assemblages. There are debaters who love representative sport, and school leaders with long hair.

### **Me in different assemblages**

Teachers can also take lines of flight, actively using their positions to deterritorialise and reterritorialise striated spaces. Martino (2003) shares an example of his approach to uniform putting him at odds with official school policy. Like Martino, I find myself taking lines of flight from the school-teacher-student-assemblage, such as claiming to students that because I was

not wearing my glasses, my short-sightedness prevented me from disciplining them as I could not be certain that a uniform breach was indeed occurring, but affirming at the same time that they understood uniform policy.

Different teachers have stronger affective flows, intensities, with different students. As both feminine and feminist, I have myself been so affected by the micropolitics of masculinity in my school, and the inequities suffered by some because of this, that I have written a thesis on the matter. Different boys' experiences and frustrations over the years have found their way into my research. The affective capacity of the injustices of these boys' experiences not only resulted in significant change to the History curriculum, but also a considerable piece of writing.

Affect works the other way too. Frequently, students view me as 'alternative'. To provide a sense of this 'alternative' identity-assemblage, students seem to focus particularly on these elements: I am petite, young, well-educated and feminine. I teach Politics and Revolutions, wear short dresses with stockings and Doc Martens boots, snowboard and play video games, and am considered an 'anarchist' due to my political views. I have mixed Anglo and Asian background, rendering my ethnicity difficult to pinpoint, but outside the realm of 'white'. In what is perceived as my deviation from the mainstream culture of Saint-Benet, the positive affective flows between students who take up different (or alternative) masculinities and myself are strong. They come to me seeking understanding, appreciative that though I am part of Saint-Benet, I am not part of the hegemonic masculinity (some teachers – both male and female – are). Many come to my office for advice, to vent, or for a chat. They use my Politics classroom as a safe space, its posterred walls a protective bubble for student political and philosophical meetings where lively discussions that cross the boundaries of what are considered acceptable in a middle-class, white, Catholic school environment are frequently held. Over the years, some of them have had adolescent crushes. Many have stayed in contact with me after they have graduated, seeking advice even as adults. Like many students, I attempt to create smooth spaces out of what is for me, at times, a striated school territory. In a space where under a third of the population is female, the hyper-masculinity of the place can be stifling. In this situation I am aware of what it means to be different, and to feel different. I take lines of flight, in ways similar to those of some students; in this shared escape we forge an empathetic connection.

My relationship with boys taking up the more mainstream Benet-Boy masculinity is less smooth, though the affective intensities flowing between different Benet-Boys and myself can be just as intense, as I come to discuss later. In the interests of conveying the affective

intensities of the events in a confidential manner, at times I have blended multiple individual students, as well as events, into one. Generally, boys taking up the hegemonic masculinity territorialised assemblage of the school are represented as an individual named ‘Dominic’, whilst boys taking up lines of flight are represented by names characterised by the particular affects of the masculinity they are un/making, such as ‘Purple Fluffy Anzac’ (a purple fluffy jumper at an Anzac service and disruption of hegemonic masculinity), ‘Parisian Squares’ (a Saint-Benet game played in Paris with a rubber ball that disrupts my teacher authority and a new Parisian identity-assemblage) and ‘Saint-Jacques Stairwell’ (a joint line of flight taken by muscular, intimidating Saint-Jacques students and me, in an isolated stairwell). My own feminine identity is present throughout each of these assemblages, as they are based on my own experiences. The affective capacity of this identity manifests in actions I take as female teacher and feminist researcher, and at times as both. In responding to the acts of students, these result in an increase/decrease in power, and a destabilisation of striated territories. Each results in becomings of boy, and sometimes in becomings of my own.

School is made up of many multiple assemblages. Ivinson and Renold (2013b) are clear that practices undertaken by young people in such locales must be viewed within their specific contexts. Understanding students’ affective capacity through these assemblages, and their possibilities for becoming, allows us to perceive students in the manner in which they are performing different identities, and through this reflect upon how we might improve the micropractices of schools surrounding recognition of these. I have shared my understanding of existing school-assemblages and affects; I now provide three affective events: events understood in the Deleuzist sense are a product of space and time, ever-changing, and have potential to open up the future and make things happen. According to Deleuze (2006, p. 88), an event is simultaneously ‘potential and real, participating in the becoming of another event and the subject of its own becoming’. I have experienced these events as a female teacher within the school, allowing me as feminist researcher to consider these events as elements of the identity-assemblages taken up by boys. They have remained with me, provoking me into writing about the affective intensities I have experienced, felt and read into the events, and how I have since started to think otherwise about boys’ identity (and act otherwise, in my own day-to-day classroom practice). These are events where strong affective intensities have remained with me well beyond the confines of the school day, some of these occurring several years ago, others months ago. Perhaps they have become territorialised in my memory. Each encounter is viewed as an affective assemblage, and considered among other assemblages. Attending to affect, I consider what the assemblages do, and their affective capacities. To this

end, I follow these affective lines of force as they wend themselves around the assemblages: rules and disciplinary techniques, cultural norms, bodies, space, objects, as well as the affective capacity for and by my own research.

## THE PURPLE FLUFFY-ANZAC-ASSEMBLAGE

### *What does a body do?*

One cold and windy April morning, close to 1500 people congregated on the oval to commemorate Anzac Day<sup>4</sup>, facing the flagpoles where the ceremony was to be conducted. Biting winds from the adjacent beach violently lashed boys' freezing, uniformed bodies. The occasion was marked with a familiar solemnity; traditionally this annual ritual is a commemoration of sacrifice, and for some, symbolises the birth of the Australian nation. Reverence for Anzac has become a cultural norm for Benet-Boys, who patriotically pay tribute.

Under a grey, cloudy sky, junior students lined up in neat rows. Their teachers watched them closely, ready to issue discipline as required. Senior students assembled themselves in a more disorderly way, gravitating toward friends, though roughly remaining in house groups. Senior teachers stood scattered among the students. I was one of these, standing among boys from my senior homeroom. I could hear students catching up with one another, quietly. They paid respect by keeping their voices low, but still speaking as opposed to complete silence. They pushed boundaries, but not too far. During the service, students became agitated, the quiet conversation more frantic. Students looked pointedly over at two senior boys, heads shaking in disapproval, backs turned but throwing glares over their tense shoulders. I turned to see what the commotion was. I saw the two senior boys at the centre of attention, eyes forward; outwardly oblivious to the reaction they had created. One was wearing a fluffy purple jumper, instead of his blazer. His purple fluffiness stood out in the sea of blue blazers. Another student had his arms wrapped around him from behind, his head resting on his shoulder. They embraced in a loving way, cheeks touching, smiling joyously. An affronted Dominic came up to me and angrily demanded what I was going to do about this, as it was disrespectful to the Anzacs and I needed to stop it. I honestly had no idea what I was going to do; I did not want to dictate the terms of these young men's sexuality. While wrestling, pushing, punching and play-fighting saw boys frequently in close physical contact in the yard, a loving boy/boy embrace was not a behavioural norm in this Catholic boys' school. There were no clear

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<sup>4</sup> Anzac Day marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs) during the First World War.

policies in place that came to mind for how to address it. I chose not to do anything, and explained to Dominic that they were not hurting anybody. My decision disturbed him as he continued to protest how disrespectful the behaviour was, and he continued to argue with me, his teacher, even after receiving a response. I authoritatively told Dominic to be quiet and leave it alone, and to pay attention to the service. As the teacher and responsible adult present, this was a difficult situation to handle. With different masculine identities coming into conflict, the event itself disturbed aspects of my own sense of self as a person who values diversity, clashing with my role as a teacher in a Catholic school.

Higate (2005) posits that the nexus linking war, militarism, and masculinities has remained an enduring and consistent feature of societies and their cultures across time. Martino (2003) suggests school assemblies are sites of public performance of dominant and subordinate masculinities: sites to uphold hegemonic masculinity and perform authoritarian methods of domination. On the oval, assembled at the front of the school to celebrate Anzac Day, the dominant and only acceptable masculinity, loaded with nationalism and militarism, was taken up by Benet-Boys. An event is a product of space and time – perhaps a loving embrace between boys at the lockers would have been met with less hostility; a boys-locker-embrace-assembly is (mostly) free from the affective force of the Anzac-assembly. According to Lake (2010), the ‘Anzac spirit’ is said to animate all of Australia’s greatest achievements, and represents the sacred myth of the Australian story, the birth of a nation through battle. Lake (ibid.) argues that the commemoration of war and understanding of Australian history has become confused and conflated. Anzac seems to have become a component of the Australian-assembly, a *de facto* creation myth. The boys’ understanding of Anzac seems to be that the ‘Anzac spirit’ is shorthand for expressing admiration for ‘mateship’. They envision mateship between Anzacs in the trenches: mateship provides an attractive ideal of belonging and community to young people working out their own senses of identity. But what does this mean for young people who are not patriotic, or want more than mateship? The territory created by the repeated, militaristic, nationalistic and masculine affects of Anzac’s spirit every year on the school oval in this instance became a striated space for at least two of these boys. For them, that space could only be smoothed through taking a line of flight to a new becoming, a more comfortable space wrapped up in a purple, fluffy entwined body.

*What are a body's affective capacities?*

On the oval that day, embracing boys took a line of flight from the striated Anzac space to engage in a new becoming of masculinity, one in which relationships between boys were not forged in the trenches or in mateship, but in a non-heterosexual space. This deterritorialising act was matched by an intense hegemonic masculine reterritorialising force that sought to shut down this act through the invocation of Anzac, disapproving looks, murmuring, and demands for teacher intervention. It is this type of peer policing that Reichert (2009) notes ensures boys stay within acceptable norms of masculinity; censorship can be used as a potent weapon for enforcing this. Dominic wanted me to censor this different masculinity, this non-heterosexual line of flight; I was to be his weapon for enforcing acceptable norms of masculinity as per the Anzac-assemblage. This was not something I was prepared to do, not in this time, and not in this space. Martino (2003) argues that certain pedagogical practices model a masculinist style based on authoritarian 'discipline and punish' performances. Dominic looked to me to enact hegemonic masculinity as a teacher, and nearest embodiment of the school-assemblage. Perhaps his reluctance to accept my decision was also an attempt to assert heteronormativity from a hegemonically masculine space, over a female who had refused to enact an approach that to him, was acceptable. Perhaps, for Dominic, my authority as a female was uncertain. Like the boys materially transgressing cultural norms through their entwining purple embrace, I too, pushed back against the invocation of Anzac and Dominic's attempted dominance of hegemonic masculine practices, through my teacher position in the school-assemblage.

Surveillance and regulation of non-heterosexual identities prevail in education, which overtly and covertly silences and marginalizes 'Other' sexualities. Ferfolja (2007) argues that schools privilege certain groups and identities in society while marginalizing others, legitimising this social order by couching it in the language of 'normalcy' and 'common sense'. Perhaps, if we were in an enclosed space such as the school stadium, neatly seated in rows, I might have put an end to the embrace under the surveilling gaze of other teachers watching me, disciplining my actions. There, it would have been much harder to resist the affective intensities of duty and control, binding me within the rigid school-assemblage. Yet in the messiness of the school oval, where boys were not seated, or lined up, where teachers stood scattered amongst the boys, where the winds blew cold and noisily between bodies, I chose to ignore what was happening. In the absence of any clear policy on students hugging, I was free of the disciplining gaze of the school-assemblage, allowing me in that moment to judge this situation on its own merits; I considered it to be more harmful to intervene. I took a line of flight from the normalised heteronormativity of the school; as a teacher and feminist researcher, I believe

it more important to recognise and value diversity. In this moment, there was a collision between school/non-hetero/Anzac/Dominic/teacher/feminist assemblages, and the school-assemblage was deterritorialised. Lines of flight took us to a place in between, no longer the heteronormative, nationalistic school-assemblage, though not yet a place of sexual equality. In that moment, a non-heterosexual becoming was made as boys crossed a cultural boundary and a teacher sanctioned the behaviour. The lack of policy around students embracing each other (as opposed to hurting one another) highlights the fact that non-heterosexual bodies are largely invisible in schools, as are their harassment experiences. Ferfolja (2007, p. 147) points to such 'practices of invisibility' as increasing perceptions of irrelevancy that silence sexual minority identities, and normalise heterosexuality as the dominant and only legitimate sexuality. It is only when schools (and teachers) value diversity, that different identities and their different experiences are given recognition.

Dominic's smooth territory of hegemonic masculinity was momentarily deterritorialised by a fluffy purple embrace. Stark against the mass of uniformed blue bodies, a purple fluffy boyish body joined with another boyish body, together reinforcing difference from the other separated, blue, boyish bodies. As the freezing salty wind lashed cold blue bodies, one purple-blue body took comfort in its combined warmth. Here, a smooth space was created to become-other, and in this act, Dominic's militarised masculine ceremony had shifted from a smooth space to a striated one, disrupted by affects of difference generated by these boys' bodies enacting non-heterosexual masculinities. Dominic looked to me as an authority figure, part of the school-assemblage to reterritorialise this space, to return it to the heteronormative space where he was comfortable. In my refusal to comply with his demand, this space was not only destabilised (by the purple embrace), but also deterritorialised (by my own feminine teacher's denial of power).

The Anzac-Benet-Boy-assemblage was disrupted that day by a fluffy purple entanglement of non-heterosexual masculinity, strengthened by joining with teacher approval. Militarised nationalistic masculinity became destratified (albeit momentarily), via an embrace, the rigidity of the masculine school-assemblage thwarted by a line of flight taken by a sympathetic feminist teacher caught in the resulting interactions. For a moment, in the affective assemblage of bodies at this particular space, place and time, hegemonic masculinity was deterritorialised, and a diverse masculinity was allowed to come into being.

## THE PARIS-SQUARES-ASSEMBLAGE

### *What does a body do?*

We were in Paris for 5 days before moving on to Geneva; time was precious. Though crisp, the sun was shining, and the boys had an hour free for lunch. Many took this time to roam the surrounding streets of Paris, while Dominic and his friends drew up a Squares court (for six players) in the gravelly dirt of the forecourt of Paris' famed Eiffel Tower. The boys were positioned around the court, their rubber ball (brought with them from Australia) bouncing across the squares.

Upon discovering this scene towards the end of lunch, all four staff were caught by surprise. We expected students to venture far and wide in their free time, embracing freedom from the rushed itinerary we were frenetically living. Yet here they were, at our designated meeting place, well before time. This typical scene from the schoolyard of home was not something any of us had expected to see on the other side of the globe, let alone in one of the most visited spaces in the world. I worried about the impact they were having on other people in this crowded tourist location. In Australia, we have the privilege of smaller populations and larger spaces; this is not so in Paris. Experience so far had led me to frequently chastising this group for taking up too much space and making too much noise in the crowded narrow Parisian streets and packed Metro carriages. One staff member showed the same initial surprised reaction as the rest of the staff, but was then welcomed into the game by Dominic. It seemed as though he wasn't really sure of what to do, also being concerned about the way this space had been appropriated. Within a matter of seconds, though, he was also drawn onto the squares court, taking up space and bouncing the ball with the rest of them. I was confused, and reeling. Any authority I may have had to rein in this behaviour had been swept away the instant my colleague joined in. His complicity in the game sanctioned this behaviour.<sup>6</sup> This was something they would do day in, day out at school in the suburbs of Melbourne. As with other experiences to this point on the tour, I was frustrated they weren't being perfect history students, and embracing their time in Paris. While many of the boys on this tour were passionate history students, Dominic and his friends had found themselves in a striated space, far from the smooth spaces of home. In the Parisian setting, the hegemonic masculinity of the Benet-Boys was no longer so hegemonic, perhaps just another form of masculinity. I deem that Dominic and his friends struggled with this. They were attempting to reassert themselves

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<sup>6</sup> This caused problems later, as Dominic and his friends continued to play on the narrow streets of Paris, eventually blocking footpaths in the Marais, forcing pedestrians onto the road. At this point, the teacher rescinded his approval for the game, albeit rather awkwardly.

with a display of Squares, taking a line of flight from the history-Paris-school-me-assemblage, to perform a characteristic act of Benet-ness. In so doing, the space of Paris' most recognisable landmark was reterritorialised. At the Eiffel Tower, they recreated Saint-Benet.

Far from finding Paris a striated space, other more passionate history students relished this time to venture further afield to the Panthéon to visit the tombs of philosophes Voltaire and Rousseau, and to soak up the history inside. Just as Dominic and the Benet-Boys on the tour no longer instantiated the hegemonic form of masculinity within the localised context of the Parisian-assemblage, here these history students – who I name 'Philosophes' for their love of Rousseau and Voltaire – occupied a privileged position, more comfortable and powerful than they had been back at school. The fact the Philosophes chose to visit the Panthéon of their own volition during their free time made me proud: they were performing perfectly the role of the history student, in stark contrast to the Squares playing boys, of whom I was less proud (rather, I was disappointed).

Venturing across the Seine to Shakespeare & Co booksellers, the Philosophes bought themselves hard copies of classic texts by Voltaire and Rousseau, a tangible memory of their time in Paris. Smartphones in hand, they took selfies in the park next to the store, gleefully geotagging their locations for all to see that they were physically in Paris. These were immediately distributed to the world for consumption via social media, digitally embodied proof they were actually there. One group photo revealed them all posing as if deep in thought in a Parisian garden, each reading his copy of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Meanwhile, Dominic's group played Squares at the Eiffel Tower. The Philosophes fitted comfortably enough into Paris such that they took their cues from the well-dressed locals, and donned warm stylish clothing in dark, neutral colours, as well as scarves. Dominic and the Benet Boys wore bright hoodies and t-shirts more suited to an Australian autumn (as it was back home) than the crisp Parisian weather of early spring. Here, in Paris, the Philosophes found themselves in a smooth space, far from the sometimes-striated space of the Saint-Benet territory. Though many of the Philosophes had never left Australia, they took up the Parisian-history-student-assemblage enthusiastically, at least two telling me that they never wanted to leave. The Philosophes were becoming-Parisian boy, a becoming somewhere in the space between history students from Australia and Parisian locals. On the other hand, Dominic had travelled extensively overseas, but brought with him familiar trappings from home. In making their preference for Australia clear through their Saint-Benet ball game and choices in clothing, Dominic and the Benet-Boys attempted to reassert their hegemonic position from school. Dominic was becoming-Benet, in Paris.

*What are a body's affective capacities?*<sup>7</sup>

*Prima facie*, a game of Squares is an innocent thing, a group of boys bouncing a ball to each other. The look on Dominic's face as I came upon the scene said it all: How could I even think about being upset, they do it all the time at Saint-Benet! Bringing the other teacher into the game was also carefully staged; Dominic knew that I occupied a lower position in the Saint-Benet hierarchy than the teacher who joined the game of Squares. Perhaps, as in the Purple-Fluffy-Anzac-assemblage, this was an attempt to assert a hegemonically masculine heteronormativity, my authority as female considered less than that of a male teacher. To Dominic, if the male teacher had no issue with his behaviour, then I would be overruled. In this way, he could attempt to reclaim the power I had taken from him, and the power that the Philosophes had somehow appropriated in this world that was so different from Saint-Benet.

Alone, the rubber ball is insignificant, a plaything brought from home to amuse its owner. Within this particular space, at this particular time however, the ball brought with it the Benet-Boy-assemblage. No longer part of the dominant, familiar, acceptable territories of the Saint-Benet space, in Paris, Dominic's behaviour saw him come into conflict with me, the tour-leader. I made the space a striated one for him with my frequent reprimands. This was different for Dominic, one of the golden children of Saint-Benet, constantly praised for his sporting successes. Recognising he had slipped into an assemblage where he was no longer in favour, he appealed to the other teacher to join the game of Squares. Although I led the tour, in this act Dominic sought a line of flight in Squares that would strengthen his own assemblage. Bringing the body of this man into his Paris-Squares-assemblage gave him legitimacy, where I had taken it away with my reprimands for his behaviour. In creating a smoother space, he would be able to engage in a new becoming to reassert himself in Paris, reterritorialising the privileged space the Philosophes had taken up. The rubber ball made this line of flight possible, circulating the affective flows of hegemonic power that Dominic and the Benet-Boys had accumulated back at school between the boys' bodies, the lines in the dirt at the Eiffel Tower, the other teachers, the Philosophes, and me. At this moment, unlike in the Anzac-assemblage, I was unable to reterritorialise the Parisian-assemblage.

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<sup>7</sup> In the interests of mapping my own affective capacity here, I acknowledge that at points in this analysis, I may risk making a psychological reading – the events this is based on set the tone for the rest of the tour, and as teacher (lacking any objectivity as researcher, at that point), I was furious. My own emotions, here, have shaped my writing, and have perhaps become territorialising (order-imposing) themselves. As a check, I showed this to another teacher who was also present; she assured me it is accurate.



**Figure 1.**

Photograph of Benet-Boys playing Squares in Paris.

Though the lines in the dirt are difficult to see, the disruption to regular activities in this space is clear – there are lots of people in the background. Of particular interest are the man in blue with a pram on the left, and the man with the sunglasses on the right, who are both looking at the game. Also, the man with his hands in his pockets on the right has stopped just short of the game.

Perhaps if this game of Squares had been played back at the hotel, in private, it may have been less significant. Yet the ball was taken out at the Eiffel Tower, a site heavy with cultural significance of its own, a symbol of France recognised internationally. By taking out their rubber ball and drawing up lines in the dirt at its base, the affective practice of Squares brought into being the Saint-Benet territory, deterritorialising my teacher-expectations regarding behaviour of foreign, Australian students in Paris on an international History tour, as well as the Philosophes' smooth space of becoming-Parisian boy. Rather than connecting with these different territorial assemblages, as the Philosophes had done, Dominic's group chose to attempt to deterritorialise them, selecting a powerfully significant Parisian site to enact this. I did not think of it this way at the time, I was pulled from my researcher-assemblage wholly into my teacher-authority-assemblage by my anger. Looking back with some distance it is clearer to me what happened; just as I had bristled back at school against the Benet-Boy proud culture, and how I perceived it provided only limited options for being boy, I had done the same thing to the Benet-Boys on the tour. We had all taken a line of flight together from Melbourne to Paris where I had created a territory in which the Philosophes were lauded, and

all boys were expected to take up this assemblage. Perhaps this was my own attempt to deterritorialise the Benet-Boy-school-assemblage. In this I had neglected to see that masculinity is nuanced, and that not all the boys on the tour would be quite the enthusiastic History students I was expecting them to be. These boys preferred the familiar Benet-Boy-assemblage of home, to the assemblages of Paris. For them, this was a holiday, not an opportunity to absorb as much history and culture as possible. In their reterritorialisation of our Parisian-assemblage, they chose to adapt the city to themselves, instead of adapt themselves to the city. In deviating from the norms of Paris, and from my expectations of appropriate touring History student behaviour, Dominic and the Benet-Boys took a line of flight to reclaim their lost position of power by becoming-Benet. In his carefully staged act of recruiting another staff member into his game, in that moment Dominic also managed to successfully deterritorialise my own female teacher-assemblage.

## THE SAINT-JACQUES-STAIRWELL-ASSEMBLAGE

### *What does a body do?*

Part of my 'duty' as a teacher, on yard duty, is to lock up corridors and ensure boys are outside during recess and lunch. One recess I went to lock up a stairwell as I would normally, but was confronted by a large group of boys from nearby multicultural, working-class Saint-Jacques, newly arrived at middle-class, white Saint-Benet. A couple of them appeared to be Anglo, the rest a mixture of Mediterranean and Asian boys. They were sprawled up and down the concrete stairwell, taking up a dark indoor space safely away from the gaze of Dominic and his friends, who occupied the schoolyards with their games of Squares. From the bottom of the stairs I took them in; large, and muscly, they defiantly wore their summer shirts with winter trousers. Their top buttons were undone, their bulging necks free of restrictive school ties. Their short sleeves revealed how much they had been working out with far more ease than the long shirts and ties of the correct winter uniform. These boys were more solidly built than the Benet-Boys, and they wanted everyone to see it. But now was not the time to be picky about uniforms; this was a challenge I was not looking forward to. Nevertheless, as a teacher it was something I had to do, so I walked over, projecting confidence but feeling none. As I approached they stood up. Looking up at them, I asked if they could please move outside so I could lock the doors. Immediately, these very large boys, who were head and shoulders taller than me, surrounded me in an isolated stairwell. A small female, my instinct was fear. They were visibly stronger than me, powerfully built. As they grimly looked down at me from their

higher positions, I was intimidated. It was therefore a surprise when they attempted to be polite, which I appreciated, even if not so much their very physically imposing way of speaking to me. Though they were much bigger than me, they were still boys. They pleaded with me not to kick them out, as they were comfortable, warm and settled on the stairwell. I told them I was sorry but I had to empty the corridor and secure it, including this stairwell. One of the Anglo boys challenged me, *"But Miss, it's 'cos we're ethnic, isn't it!"* The rest of the group groaned, turning away from him, some even covering their eyes! They were embarrassed by what their friend had said - perhaps because I am visibly of mixed European/Asian descent, perhaps because he was the least 'ethnic' looking member of the group. In such an Anglo culturally dominated school, I was not surprised to hear they felt this way, even if it wasn't true. I responded firmly, but with a smile, *"Look at my eyes, look at this hair; where do you think that comes from! Do you really think I'm asking you to move because you're ethnic?"* The other boys all cracked up laughing, as did their friend. And in this moment of awkwardness, I did too. We had connected. They left the stairwell in good spirits, having formed an understanding relationship in this new, and strange school.

#### *What are a body's affective capacities?*

I was a secondary school student in Melbourne in the late 1990s when Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli conducted their study for *So What's A Boy?* (2003, p. 103). I remember many of the issues of masculinity they discuss, such as 'Wog boys' attempting to undermine Anglo/ethnic dualisms through building a hierarchy of masculinities where Anglo boys appeared lower on the social scale through the fashioning of 'tough' grouped, violent, and muscular bodies. Yet at Saint-Benet, ethnicity and race are rarely explicitly mentioned, in contrast to the open 'Wog vs Aussie' battles of my own school days, where it felt as though they framed everything. The tensions between the Saint-Benet and Saint-Jacques assemblages are more layered than this, as can be seen in the ethnically diverse memberships of both assemblages. The Saint-Jacques-masculinity-assemblage is not only ethnic; it is also working-class, and far more physical. The incorrectly worn school uniform was not only a line of flight from Saint-Benet uniform rules, it enabled the boys to highlight their musculature, their working bodies. These bodies were not being assembled for middle-class office-based professions, as the suit-like winter uniform foreshadows, they were intended for working-class trades. Additionally, within the context of an isolated stairwell these muscular bodies were assembled to intimidate, to warn others away from coming into that space. I felt this clearly walking up the stairs into the dark; they were

elevated, they were numerous, and they were powerfully built and aggressive males. I was entering their domain. As a petite young female, my instinct was to absolutely avoid this space, to go somewhere else and avoid a confrontation. In Western culture, it has become normalised for females to adjust their behaviours to avoid such spaces. Women are told that if they want to avoid sexual assault, they should avoid certain spaces, and dressing in certain ways. Feminist movements such as *Reclaim the Night* and *Slutwalk* attempt to draw attention to and deterritorialise this practice, by removing blame from women who have been victims of sexual violence, to the offenders who perpetrate such acts. Yet at this moment, as a teacher, though I was instinctively scared, I knew I had to go in there and challenge them. My femininity and teacher assemblages collided, in an unpleasant way.

It is not ethnicity, or class alone that concerns the Benet-Boys when the Saint-Jacques boys come into their school; it is the challenge for hegemonic masculinity. The Benet-Boys not only occupy a macropolitically privileged white middle-class space, but have also had the benefit of being students in the school from years seven to ten. They have built relationships; they know the teachers, as well as each other. This is their home ground, their territory; they have already established their own spaces within the school, in the classroom and in the schoolyard. Additionally, they tend to live much closer to the school than Saint-Jacques boys, who commute via bus from neighbouring, working-class suburbs. They territorialise local shops before and after school, meeting with girls from local girls' schools to establish and promote their own sexual desirability, an option unavailable to Saint-Jacques boys who must take their buses directly to their own, distant suburbs. The first few weeks of year eleven are chaotic as boys bring their existing Saint-Jacques hegemonic masculinities across to Saint-Benet. Some classrooms are divided down the middle, depending on how many Saint-Jacques boys appear on the roll; tellingly the classes most impacted are the vocationally oriented subjects. Divided by large groups of Saint-Jacques boys suddenly appearing, classrooms become the sites where turf wars play out, as I have learnt from experience. Benet Boys have attempted to empathise with me in class when I have had to discipline new Saint-Jacques boys by commenting knowingly, "*They are a different sort, aren't they*". Some boys who would ordinarily take up other diverse masculinities in preference to the Benet-Boy hegemonic masculinity position also become caught up in this turf war, adopting characteristics of the Benet-Boy-assemblage they would not usually take up (exaggeratedly emphasising their Australian patriotism, or fondness for Australian Rules football, for example).

Perhaps in me these Saint-Jacques boys initially saw a teacher, an embodiment of the school culture of the Saint-Benet-assemblage. It is possible they read my attempt to discipline them as

an extension of the hegemonic masculinity of Saint-Benet over them, the subordinate masculinity due to the fact that it is not the hegemonic masculinity. Perceiving me in this way, my entry into the stairwell was an intrusion into the territory they had carved out for themselves, and my request for them to take their bodies to another space a deterritorialising act. Perhaps this is what elicited such a physical, masculine, territorial response from them - they were issuing a challenge to the dominant masculinity of Saint-Benet with their own previously hegemonic masculinities from Saint-Jacques, the competing masculinities an issue due to their movement from the Saint-Jacques-assemblage, into the Saint-Benet one. Perhaps the challenge was more a heteronormative, masculine one, male dominance over a female. Alone, in the stairwell, I was one small female teacher surrounded by a group of large teenage boys. It may have seemed an easy victory for them to feel they had won the challenge they had issued by standing over me, defiantly. In this small victory, they could reterritorialise what little they had previously deterritorialised, creating a little Saint-Jacques-assemblage in the secluded stairwell of Saint-Benet. Thankfully, on this occasion, we were able to take a line of flight together from the usual student-teacher-school-assemblage, the boy in accusing a teacher of racial discrimination, and myself in presenting a more personal, empathetic side of my self to them. I transcended assemblages as Pallotta-Chiarolli (2003) did by affirming and supporting students' ethnic diversity in highlighting my own difference. The physical characteristics of my own body made this possible, my dark brown hair and dark, slightly almond eyes lending visible weight to my attempt at an empathetic understanding of what it means to be ethnically different. In leaving what was now known to be a striated space together, we created an empathetic smooth space of shared difference for these Saint-Jacques boys to become something else, not quite Saint-Jacques any more but definitely not Benet either.

## MASCULINE BECOMINGS

In each of these affective events there was a moment of disruption – in the student masculinity that was formed (or unformed) in that moment in time, or even my own identity. I was affected by the becomings that emerged from each of these events, in some way.

The hegemonic masculinity of the school-assemblage, Dominic and the Benet-Boys, was relevant to each event. Dominic was there expressing disgust on the oval at the embrace at the Anzac ceremony. He was there rejecting the Philosophe masculinity and my own female teacher authority to reclaim his former hegemonic status in Paris. Tellingly, he was not there in the stairwell as the Saint-Jacques boys were indoors, avoiding the Benet-Boy dominated yards.

Each event had a different outcome for this common affective thread; there was no predetermined outcome attached to Dominic/Benet-Boy affective capacity.

Similarly, though my own teacher-assemblage was also a common affective flow throughout all three assemblages, neither did it always have the same effect. On the school oval, it joined with a non-heterosexual masculinity to deterritorialise the hegemonic Benet-Boy masculinity. In Paris, it joined with the Philosophe masculinity to deterritorialise the hegemonic space occupied by the Benet-Boys, and was deterritorialised in turn by the Benet-Boys when they took a line of flight from my authority. Finally, in the stairwell, it was at first frightened by, and then joined with, the ethnic masculinity of the Saint-Jacques boys in our shared experience of difference. Each event was filled with affects that resulted in becomings specific to that event.

What these events reveal are becomings that are constantly in process. Bodies, locations, occasions, practices, actions, things, these are all components that can make up identity-assemblages. If any of the components or affective flows was changed, the result could be a different becoming – if the embrace happened at the lockers, or on a regular school day, it may not have elicited such a strong response from the other boys. If the Squares game had occurred at school, there would have been no problem. If I had been an Anglo teacher, or a man, I may have responded differently to the Saint-Jacques boys, potentially resulting in an escalated confrontation and a lot less laughter. Yet the events happened as they did, represented here as a snapshot of one moment in time. Understanding power as a complex flow of affects and desires empowers students, who are no longer passive, but in a state of becoming.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This study has been about how masculinities are continually un/made within a Catholic boys' school. I have argued this is an embodied process that occurs through the transmission of affective intensities within and among bodies, ideas, objects and space. I aimed to understand how boys enacted different masculinities by writing an autoethnographical account of my own experiences of different moments in the school. I developed an understanding of how boys are able to un/make different masculinities by entering an assemblage and enacting its possibilities, or by taking a line of flight, allowing them to engage in new becomings and enact disruptive, different masculinities in those specific moments. This approach to masculinity is an emergent one, taking its own line of flight from previous studies into masculinity in considering different masculinities as enacted affectively as a material practice.

In chapter one, I explained my reasons for conducting this particular research, in this particular setting. I outlined the need for research into masculinity that acknowledges the body is both socially constructed and materially given, and for increased social justice in Catholic education through gaining recognition of, and improving practices surrounding, student identity and diversity in schools.

In chapter two, I discussed the main theoretical influences that informed my analysis into how different masculinities are enacted through embodied affective intensities. Starting with gender and education in Australia, I considered the notion of 'recuperative masculinity politics' as well as the notion of hegemonic masculinity. Following with identity and gender, I considered how the question of identity has been conceived differently over time, from a developmental approach where humans mature in stages, to a poststructuralist one that views identity as assembled contextually. Similarly, I reviewed how gender has shifted from an essentialist

position to a poststructuralist one, where gender is not something one is born with, but rather comes into being through various affective events at different times and in different spaces. Leading with selected concepts of Deleuze and Guattari, I explored how affective capacity can be mapped in a posthumanist way to think in new ways about identity, which takes us to an understanding of masculine identities as coming together through assemblages, where the material, discursive and social interplay through affect to continually make and unmake identity.

In chapter three, I explained how research can move forward through the use of post-qualitative methods, moving beyond standard practices of inquiry to enable an engagement with the posthuman to understand how identity is assembled. I drew attention to the suitability of autoethnography as a post-qualitative method for collating data. I explained how as an unruly, emerging means of data collection, autoethnography suited my attempt to think rhizomatically about affect in this study, and to take lines of flight from more traditional methodological approaches to research such as ethnography. I then discussed how an 'affective methodology' allowed me to consider my own embodiment (and affective capacity) in the assemblages of the knowledge production process, both as teacher in the research setting, and as researcher producing knowledge. I discussed the ethical concerns surrounding this study, and how my position as a teacher within the school informed my ethical decisions regarding methods and data, and the need for anonymity for those whose actions informed the autoethnographical narratives.

In chapter four, I outlined the Saint-Benet affective assemblage and hegemonic masculinity, Benet-Boys. I then explored three material events that resulted in new masculine becomings, mapping the affective flows among bodies, time, space and objects in school spaces. The Anzac remembrance service on the school oval saw boys escaping the nationalistic, militaristic masculine assemblage by taking a line of flight to a new sexuality; the ball game at the Eiffel Tower enabled boys to reterritorialise a new Parisian masculinity that had emerged with the familiar hegemonic masculinity of home, and the encounter in a concrete stairwell saw a mutual line of flight taken by teacher and students in a shared experience of difference, and the creation of a new masculinity in this particular moment. In this chapter, I contemplated the specific masculine becomings that were made possible by lines of flight, hegemonic and otherwise. I also contemplated my own becomings, and how I too am caught up in multiple identity-assemblages in such a way as to both affect, and to be affected by these.

In writing this thesis I have taken a line of flight from what has become for me the striated space of being a teacher, to a new becoming as a researcher; in this I occupy the space in between teaching and academia. Joining with the existing body of work on masculinities, I have contributed in this study to debates about how masculinity is constructed, taking forward commonly accepted understandings of masculinity as structurally imposed, towards an understanding of masculinity as an ongoing process that is assembled and re-assembled through embodied affective intensities.

Though I have chosen to focus on masculine identities in this thesis, as I have touched on in my discussion of the affective flows of the assemblages, one can also find other macropolitical identities emerging in becomings from these micropolitical, everyday school events. With further elaboration, classed and ethnic identities could be found emerging in matters of uniform, in physical bodies, and in attitudes. Sexual identities could be found in non-heterosexual behaviours and also in the vehement rejection of these behaviours. There is potential in understanding identity as assemblage; at school level this can mean a better understanding of the multiple and micropolitical, leading to everyday changes that result in school being a more smooth space for all through understanding of nuance and difference among its student body. For general scholarship, the affective assemblage can provide a means for moving beyond the limitations of discursive approaches to identity, to an unknown field of differentiation. In its posthuman focus, it can enable the body and the material to be given attention in their roles in forming parts of different identity-assemblages. A renewed understanding of identity contributes to an understanding of identity as an ongoing process that takes into account its disparate components. Through understanding identity as a body-assemblage, we can move away from a politics of *who*, towards a politics of *what* (Mol, 2002, 2014). This movement enables matter to be brought into the process. Increased attention to how time and space specifically contribute to identity formation also provides for an understanding of identity as formed in the moment, opening up possibilities for becomings, boy or otherwise.

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