

# **Reframing Black or Ethnic Minority Teachers as Role Models**

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## **Declaration of Authenticity**

I, Patricia H. Alexander, declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Reframing Black or Ethnic Minority Teachers as Role models**

This thesis examines how Black or Ethnic Minority (B.E.M.) teachers understand themselves to be, and position themselves as, role models to pupils with whom they share cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Most research concerns the appropriateness of male/female role models and few studies investigate teachers' perspectives. A feminist poststructural lens is applied to problematise the 'role model' concept and considers how role model relations are formed and sustained. B.E.M. teachers' identity positioning's are contextualised within macro (socio-political/historical) and micro (pedagogical) power relations. The empirical data derive from in-depth semi-structured interviews with seven established B.E.M. (male and female) teachers who self-identify as role models. These data are analysed as constitutive work revealing a range of discursive regimes. I develop the idea of shared discursive history to understand B.E.M. teachers' identifications as role models and how these become part of their pedagogy. Shared discursive history has three inter-related dimensions: teachers' understanding of their shared marginalised position; their performance of the 'role model' construct; and their deployment of cultural resources. This framework makes visible how B.E.M. teachers' enactment of their role is entangled in culture and is gendered. The findings suggest that hegemonic role model discourses based on mimicry are contested and reconfigured in practice by B.E.M. teachers. Their knowledge of B.E.M. pupils is predicated on the view that, for B.E.M. pupils to self-identify as achievers, they need to be schooled in resistance strategies. The teachers' pedagogical work as role models promotes pupils' criticality regarding themselves as learners and hegemonic representations of B.E.M. people.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

**How do Black or Ethnic Minority teachers position themselves as role models to Black or Ethnic Minority pupils?**

## Why Black OR Ethnic Minority?

In *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1972) invites the masses to reflect on the process of their identification to consider when, and whether, they mimic their oppressors. Processes of identification are always linked to power because it is about both what we are labelled as, and importantly, who decides. By assigning collective labels to groups of people, distinctions are made between dominant and marginalised groups. In the UK, BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) is the rubric label assigned to ethnic groups of people (e.g. Turkish, African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, African-Caribbean, Black British). The BAME categories are deployed in official documents, censuses and referred to in institutional data collection practices and often accepted uncritically. BAME is at times synonymous with essentialised cultural homogeneity. However, it can be justified as necessary in order to inform policy decisions focused on promoting equity. Aspinall (2002, p804) argues for sub-categories as the basis of objective criteria stating: ‘the absence of precisely defined nomenclature around segments of the population results in confusion and ambiguity’. Uncritical policy approaches arising from this perspective often assume BAME contain static entity groups, internally homogeneous, with the tendency for intra-variability be discounted.

For me, as a black researcher, perpetuating the BAME terminology in this thesis would give it credence as an acceptable externally imposed mode of classification. Using the label BAME invokes compliance to ‘normative speech acts’. Put differently, BAME becomes our *natural* way of talking about, and categorising ourselves or Others. I prefer the term Black OR Ethnic Minority’ (B.E.M.) because it serves as a reminder of my own culpabilities, and to avoid mimicking the officially given (BAME). I acknowledge that B.E.M. could arguably be dismissed as a ‘myopia of the text’ or an over-evaluating of the representational powers of language (Hook, 2001, p537). However, one can look to history for examples where (unacceptable or derogatory) descriptors are redefined and replace populist vernacular. For the remainder of the thesis I invite the reader to be mindful of how the term B.E.M. sometimes produces ‘jarring effects’.

The B.E.M. teacher identity is taken as fluid, and the processes of their self-



identification mediated through the lenses of race and ethnicity. With this regard, the term B.E.M. is used to highlight how the *particularity* of each participant's experience works to create complex social interactions. Although, the participants' school and social arena may differ, there are generic circumstances that contribute to how they understand their lives. Put differently, B.E.M. is used to emphasise the refracted nature of a race-ethnicity lens through which the participants filter and interpret their social worldview and of themselves in it.

Before elaborating on how the concepts – race and ethnicity - are understood in this thesis, I preface with a discussion about the problematic nature of terminology for critical scholars.

There is a wealth studies in social sciences, (e.g. critical studies, social justice or equity) and those informed by anti-racist practices who consistently critique terminology surrounding race and ethnicity (c.f. Gillborn, 2008; Back & Solomos, 2013; Winant, 2015). To define the terms raises analytical dilemmas, the most salient of which is that race is not a tenable scientific concept for analysis (Troyna & Williams, 1986). However, the biological basis of the concept, although discredited, continues as part of accepted wisdom (e.g. in eugenics). Endorsing the term is contestable and as Angela Davis pointed out long ago:

'Race' has always been difficult to talk about in terms not tainted by ideologies of racism, with which the notion of 'race' shares a common historical evolution ... yet we continue to use the term 'race', even though many of us are very careful to set it off in quotation marks to indicate that while we do not take seriously the notion of 'race' as biologically grounded, neither are we able to think about racist power structures and marginalisation processes without invoking the socially constructed concept of 'race'. (Davis, 1996, cited in Darder & Torres, 1999, p183)

Similarly, Gilroy (2000) summarises the researchers' dilemma caught between denouncing the use of the word 'race' as a justifiable categorisation of human beings and using the political argument arising from racialisation in our pursuit of justice. He contemplates:

I think that our perilous predicament, in the midst of a political and technological sea-change that somehow strengthens ethnic absolutism and primordialism, demands a radical and dramatic response. This must step away from the pious ritual in which we always agree that 'race' is invented

but are then required to defer to its embeddedness in the world and to accept that the demand for justice nevertheless requires us to enter the political arenas it helps to mark out. (Gilroy, 2000, p52)

In *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology*, Colette Guillaumin convincingly argues that the construction of the idea of 'race' is embodied in racist ideology that supports the practice of racism. History attests to the religious and economic imperatives used to rationalise inferiority, enslavement, acts of violence and genocide on oppressed people. It is not the existence of 'races' that produces racism, but rather it is racism as an ideology that produces the notion of race (Guillaumin, 2002).

In this thesis, race is conceptualised as a political, social and economic construct aimed at maintaining hierarchical systems. Race ideology is regarded as a permanent feature that constitutes the participants' subjectification in school and elsewhere. I use the umbrella term Black to denote a political oppositional stance towards systemic social inequality. Historically linked to the civil rights movement, Black power is synonymous with questioning oppression and mechanisms that support the inequitable status quo. Black is taken as denoting self-identification premised on the expression of values, a belief system or activated by experiences that may interpret as racial politics. Thus, using B.E.M. necessarily considers the historically constituted social relations of power and domination.

Ethnicity is not reducible to race but may on occasions deployed as a euphemism for racist appellations. As with race, ethnicity as a concept poses dilemmas for some critical scholars (c.f. Bhattacharyya, 2016; Gillborn & Gipps, 1996). Sivanandan (1991), for example, argues the term 'ethnic minority' is divisive. Referring to the prevalence of its adoption in the UK, Sivanandan asks why do we allow labels to be imposed on ourselves? Sivanandan (1991) posits that the ethnic divide was a concerted effort by the state to negate the popularity of a collective political movement by peoples who identified themselves under the rubric of Black. I concur with Hall's (1997, p34, original emphasis) view:

ethnicity is the only terminology we have to describe cultural specificity, so one has to go back to it, if one doesn't want to land up with an empty cosmopolitanism - 'citizens of the world' as the only identity ... The diaspora has a line through it too: in the era of globalisation, we are *all* becoming diasporic.

Ethnicity serves to distinguish between sub-categories of people (e.g. religious, ancestry or national heritage). These demarcations are commonly understood in terms of differences in cultural background and practices. Ethnic groupings are complex, at times seemingly arbitrary (Anthias, 1996; Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992; Hall, 1990, 1992). As Archer (2008) points out ‘the boundaries of ethnic collectives are porous, shifting and contestable’ (Archer, 2008, p8). In a review of the literature, Brubaker (2009) comments that scholarship around ethnicity is fragmented and compartmentalised across disciplinary lines as well as racial politics. He suggests rather than looking at what an ethnic group is, it is more useful to specify ‘*how* ethnicity and race *work*’ (Brubaker, 2009, p29). I use ethnicity to illustrate each of the participants’ self-defining categorisation. However, B.E.M. is used describe the participants’ identity construction work in terms of unique diasporic or marginalised perspectives. Cole’s (2003, p967) reference to a ‘racialised ethnicity’ is useful here to denote the particularity of the socialisation process necessary to survive racist societies.

Thus, while I agree the term ethnicity minority signals arbitrary divide, Black OR Ethnic Minority (B.E.M.) is a preferable terminology to ‘nominate into existence’ (Goldberg, 1997, p29) the participants in this thesis. Although Goldberg is referring to state categorisation practices, I use B.E.M. because I am cognisant about who is involved in naming another human being, and for what purpose.

## CHAPTER ONE: AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines how Black or Ethnic Minority (B.E.M.) teachers position themselves as ‘role models’ to pupils in secondary schools. It considers the tensions and challenges that role model relationships present for teachers in their particular social locations. The empirical data used to address the research question are drawn from interviews with seven established B.E.M. (male and female) teachers who self-identify as role models. These data are read as constitutive work and analysed in terms of a range of discursive regimes in play (Davies & Gannon, 2005), with a particular focus on masculinity and femininity. In this introductory chapter, I begin with an account of some personal experiences in order to position my subjectivity in relation to this study. I reflect on events, which I characterise as attempts to resist assigned labels while yet unsure of what I *should* or *could* be. These events draw attention to processes that contribute to the ways that B.E.M. teachers (and pupils) construct their identities. While my own accounts of my alienation from and dissatisfaction with aspects of the UK education system are not unique, these formative critical incidences connect with broader ideas about B.E.M. resistances as well as B.E.M. people’s positioning within hegemonic discourses. I discuss the ways in which these experiences influenced my pedagogy and my philosophies of teaching. I then proceed to describe the background to the study and the emergence of my research interest in role modelling among B.E.M. teachers. Here two issues relevant to the teacher role model debate are discussed, namely, ‘underachievement’ and the construction of B.E.M. pupils within teacher role model discourses. I then move on to discuss factors determining whether B.E.M. teachers can be agents of change. I argue that a multi-layered account of such teachers’ multiple subject positions is required, where these teachers’ subjectivities are contextualised within wider political, and cultural processes. I argue that seldom has research considered the notion of role model from B.E.M. *teachers’* perspectives, or located their views within wider, historical and political discourses. I seek a radical reframing of understandings of role modelling processes and of role models. The final section offers an outline of the remaining thesis chapters.

## ***Autobiography***

A person's knowing can only exist by virtue of a vast range of past experiences, which have been lived through, often with the most intense feeling. These experiences, including textual experiences ... we have been taught to disguise so that our utterances are made to seem as though they emerge from no particular place or time or person but from the fount of knowledge itself. (Rosen, 1998, p30)

Rosen's interest in writing his autobiography arose out of the recognition that it derived from a conjunction of events, which include a personal history and a response to the cultural forces within which it is embedded. Parallels can be made with the research process where the writer engages in reflective analysis. The purpose is to become cognisant of their positionality within their area of study. The challenge for the researcher is to discern those aspects of the self that impact on the research process while remaining aware of Walford's (1998, p4) warning against 'navel gazing'. With this in mind, I present a brief *her-story*, knowing that my account of lived experiences is partial, biased and highly selective. For me, the process of peeling back the layers of experience revealed some 'critical moments' or crossroads that have had the effect of changing my worldview and of my position within it.

I begin when the British government actively sought to recruit labour from its colonies to help rebuild the country's economy after the war (Akpeneye, 2004). My parents' experiences of migration mirrored those of many Caribbean people during the early fifties. They included: the securing and improving of wealth; strong kinship (social and symbolic) ties; economic and employment differentials; and immigrant nostalgia for their homeland (Akpeneye, 2004). In her review, Akpeneye also points out that the UK labour market recruitment drives did not assume the existence of, or cater for, white-collar workers from the colonies. Along with many of his countrymen my father expected to be welcomed to 'streets lined with gold', metaphorically speaking. He had graduated from one of the top private schools in Jamaica, modelled on the UK grammar school. Being regarded as a second-class citizen in the UK was difficult given his previous status. This is particularly poignant since most of his counterparts who remained 'at home' became part of Jamaica's social elite. He assumed that his qualifications, which were comparable to those offered in the UK, would make him employable. The stark reality upon arrival was the cold (weather) and an induction into racist practices (for example, in housing and

employment) and to 'racism'.

An early memory of my mother's life in England that she often retold to us was the story about a group of Teddy boys tormenting and goading her on her way home from her evening shift-work. She recounts placing me (at three months old) down on the ground in the snow and turning to challenge the largest boy to fight her. Although her tormentors ran off, she instilled in us the belief that we should never run away but make a stand whenever bigotry and ignorance try to defeat or demoralise us. This account resonates with and echoes the sentiments in Patricia Hill Collins' work (1990) which recognises 'strategic mothering' as a feature of childrearing for black women. It entails encouraging their children to move beyond racial stereotypes that seek to constrain them and to envision alternative possibilities for their future lives. My mother, orphaned at a very early age, nurtured within us the idea of self-reliance. Relatives funded her education and, as such, she always felt privileged. She believed that education was the vehicle through which her children would have choices, and could gain a sense of independence.

During my primary schooling, we moved closer to our network of extended family (moving from inner West London to the city's northern outskirts). The transition also marked a loss of a sense of community of belonging. There were very few Caribbean families living in the area; we were a very visible, distinct cultural group and shared the knowledge of our exclusion. However, within the family structure I thrived; I had my cousins and siblings as friends to play with, and initially we were the only 'coloured children' in the school. We were a novelty, for most of our peers. Slowly I began to realise that I was living in two distinct worlds, particularly in terms of language, culture and class. Discourses of *difference* permeated playground talk; positioned as 'other', a conglomeration of essentialised characteristics were assigned to us. I recall classroom playground incidents where the white children (and adults) were fascinated by skin; they candidly and openly expressed their intrigue. I, on the other hand, could not understand why skin colour was of any significance. By the end of my primary school years it became apparent that we would not be 'going back home' and that England would now be where I would live until I was old enough to make my own choices. I had spent all my life up until that point hearing and dreaming about the 'island in the sun' and I felt slightly betrayed that I would remain in limbo for the unforeseeable future. It was about that time I began to question who

I was and where I was positioned in society. ‘A major aspect of adolescence is the process of working out what sort of person one is, and is not. This can involve the performance of and experimentation with possible selves, as part of the trying on of identity’ (Paechter, 2007, p135).

My adolescent years were devoted to learning and understanding black history, slavery and the effects of imperialism and colonialism on people of colour. The writings and speeches of black icons<sup>1</sup> were inspirational to me; I wore my Afro with a new-found sense of pride. It was a period of generative reflexive questioning as I struggled to articulate what it meant to be ‘black’ and ‘female’ in this country. Also I began to disassemble my understandings from other prevailing (negative) dominant discourses and forms of representation about black women. As with many of my contemporaries, I had an ‘insider/outsider’ position in terms of a place to call home. My parents decided to acquire British passports and for the first time we travelled ‘home’ to meet my grandparents. My parents were strangers in their own country; the culture they had tried so hard to inculcate in us was out-dated, irrelevant for the times. The questions were always the same: Why endure the hardship of England, the devaluation of our culture when we could live comfortably back home? Was I bi-cultural? Where did I belong? My roots straddled two distinct cultures, a hybrid of the best and worst of both worlds, yet at the same time belonging (I believed) nowhere.

I realised that certain normative truths and discourses that I had previously accepted uncritically were encoded in a complex mix of other contradictory and conflicting ideologies. Bakhtin (1994) coined the term ‘heteroglossia’ to describe how one discourse contains many voices or the remnants of other voices in continual dialogue with other discourses. The West Indies made me think about different ways of thinking about how our world could be organised, premised upon a markedly different set of normative assumptions. At the same time, myths held about the ‘dark

1 Angela Davis (1974). *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*. New York: Random House Press; Malcolm X (1970). *By any means necessary: Malcolm X*. New York: Betty Shebazz & Pathfinders Press; Martin Luther King (1963) ‘*I have a dream*’. This classic speech originally delivered at Lincoln Memorial, USA has been broadcast many times.

continent' that filled the school curriculum (in history, geography and so on) were demystified. There were remnants of other shared discourses about the West Indies/black people that were in dialogue with these. I had a romantic attachment to the idea that there were places (albeit limited) where black people had greater control over their destiny. Other discourses dominated my thinking about the economic and political situations of working-class and black people in the UK. These oppositional or reverse discourses were in a dialectical relationship to the dominant discourses. Together, idealistic and naïve voices collide and attempt to co-exist. With its many contradictions the Caribbean came to signify a 'private sanctuary for my mind', a place where I could be, where I knew I belonged, and a place I always regard as home.

From an early age we were taught always to question – religion was a highly charged and controversial topic of conversation and family debate. There were members of my immediate family who were devout Catholics, Evangelists and Atheists, and a devoted uncle who had converted to Judaism. Thus, I was presented with significantly different philosophies about our journey through life, and how we could relate to the world and each other. Such differing ways of knowing instilled in me a tolerance toward the differing positions of others. In order to co-exist in this world, a crucial pre-condition was to engage in the 'fusing of horizons' (Gadamer, 1979) whenever possible. Also, this led me to be fascinated by the ways in which we can choose the extent to which we are *shaped* by our environment and experiences.

The adolescent years are often associated with ideas about one's identities. For me it was a time I knew my teachers could not and did not understand my bicultural life-world. Also I felt alienated from the processes of schooling because I knew it was not relevant; I knew I could not make meaningful connections with many of the topics taught. Learning became synonymous with remembering and reproducing prescribed knowledge, which was not particularly useful to me. Furthermore, learning had come to signify accepting the knowledge given, unquestioningly. I was no longer prepared to accept the knowledge and authority of my teachers, who I considered inserted their own biased interpretations on the rare occasions we had class discussion. I chose to voice my 'concerns' in school. Asking why Jesus was depicted as a Caucasian with blue eyes landed me in detention. Asking why so many wars derived from religion ensured that I was no longer in the 'top' set for history,



religious education, English and geography. Despite pleas by my parents, I did not want to be a 'good student', rather there was a growing sense of estrangement, and my aim was to be a rebel, but 'without a cause'.

In contrast, to school there were other more important arenas to experiment and develop other aspects of my identity. The distinctiveness of black contemporary music such as Ska, Blue Beat and Reggae provided, by its exclusivity, spaces for teenage social bonding. These genres of music had not yet gained 'popular' appeal, since such sounds would normally only be heard in private house parties (shabeens). Collective knowledge of this underground music served as a uniting force for diaspora Black youth because it signified a musical sub-culture distinct from the dominant mainstream. Later, the lyrics of songs by emergent reggae artists, such as Bob Marley, who commented on social issues in both UK and the Caribbean, served to galvanise some of my contemporaries to 'stand up for your rights'. This experience of youth subculture provided black communities with an 'organising category of a new politics of resistance' (Hall, 1992, cited in Bakare-Yusuf, 1997, p252). These events occurred during a period in British history where political debates around immigration, repatriation and cultural differences functioned to further marginalise British-born black youths. Unsurprisingly, immigration discourses continue to operate as galvanising 'apartheid' propaganda into the present day. With the benefit of hindsight, my adolescent years of resistance could be viewed as the survival strategies of a disaffected pupil. Mac an Ghail's (1994, p147) work is useful here to recognise the sub-culture of African-Caribbean pupils as a 'legitimate mechanism opposed to the school's institutional authoritarianism and racism'.

The teacher-pupil relationship and the quality of pedagogy engendered are critical to a learner's identity. Fortunately, I was placed in a mathematics set taught by a teacher who only wanted us to seek answers to mathematical paradoxes. In such an environment I thrived, partly due to my obsessive fascination with numbers. To this day, the joy of number remains since you are always invited to pose the 'what if' questions, to explore alternatives to problems and to convince others of your reasoning or have it disproved. I developed a confidence and self-reliance that I thought would remain with me. I emerged as a statistical anomaly in terms of my academic achievements, partly due to my rebellious decision to 'self-teach'. I recall my first black teacher (who also taught me Mathematics 'A' level) reminding me:

'you're black and you're a woman never forget that you start at the bottom of the ladder'. My resolve was that even if race (and now gender) served to structure my conditioning, how my future actions reshaped my 'predicament' would be mine to decide. This incident is pertinent to this study because this teacher understood the impact of axes of difference on my subjectivity as B.E.M, while advising me on how I perceived my agency. This event resonates with ideas in this study about the long-term unpredictable impact on B.E.M. pupils' agency made by B.E.M. teachers.

I was to be the first of my school cohort (and family) to venture into higher education, which further compounded my sense of alienation. However, this time it would be inter-cultural and intra-community. The abstract world of higher mathematics became a solitary experience; I no longer had common frames of reference with my friends, family and peers. No one in my family was able to offer more than salutatory support nor did they share an understanding of the demands of the course. Attending university had, to some extent, alienated me from my roots. I was regarded as a mathematical 'odddity' even by those closest to me; during my visits home I increasingly felt like an outsider. This was, I suppose, a condition of maturity to compare my on-going identity with earlier identities constituted out of discourses linked to previous lifestyles/cultures/worldviews. My 'newer' identity was continually being re-configured and reconstructed, while I developed other ways of reconciling my sense of alienation. Fortunately, there were fellow students who, like me, took delight in learning about proof by induction, group theory and fluid mechanics. My experience is not uncommon. Many research studies on working-class people and their transition to higher education institutions echo similar sentiments around displacement (Reay et al, 2010). Similarly, for many first and second-generation children of 'post-colonial communities' the question of identity is acute; what values, beliefs and practices do you adopt and which do you discard? According to Hall, (1996, p4):

the resources of history, language and culture [feature] in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.

By my mid-twenties, I had finally begun to develop a more informed political voice and became actively involved in protests which sought to raise the profile of issues

relating to the experiences of minority pupils in some of the local schools. Many communities began to realise there was a need to take a more active role in the education of their children. The growth of supplementary schools (for example, Greek, Chinese and faith schools) during this period was indicative of communities' attempts to compensate for (what they perceived as) an absence of cultural awareness in mainstream schooling. As with one of the teachers in this thesis, my early induction into teaching was in a supplementary Saturday school for African-Caribbean and African pupils, teaching mathematics and black history part-time. The school's primary function was to support pupils with their school and homework. A notable recurring theme, some of the children relayed, related to experiences in mainstream schooling of discriminatory practices or negative expectations from their teachers. According to hooks (1994, p174), to 'heal the splitting of the mind and body, we marginalised and oppressed people attempt to recover ourselves and our experiences in language'. After graduating in mathematics, I enrolled onto a PGCE course with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the education system which seemed to me to be designed to fail pupils of African heritage. This act was a watershed moment. I had embarked on what would become a thoroughly productive and fulfilling school teaching career spanning sixteen years.

As with many new teachers, I had pre-conceived ideas about the type of teacher I wanted to become. In addition to learning the 'craft of teaching', I believed that an empathetic understanding of some of the reasons why some pupils felt so disaffected would enhance the quality of my subsequent interactions with them. Galindo and Olguin's (1996) qualitative biographical study showed that teachers' experiences of being a minority influenced their self-perception and comportment. The scholars assert that 'the manner in which minority teachers sort out and interpret their cultural identity is critical to their role identity as educators' (Galindo & Olguin, 1996, p51). The scholars use the term 'bridging identity' to explain the influence of the sociocultural and political context on minority teachers' identity formation. I regarded my 'lived experience' as central to the type of teacher I would become, and something that could be utilised to gain acceptance in my relationships with pupils. 'Ways of knowing are how we see the world and ourselves as participants in it' (Belenky et al, 1986, p3).

My induction into the profession coincided with the 1980s uprisings in London (for

example, in Tottenham and Brixton) and other parts of the UK, such as Bristol and Liverpool. Having been assigned a teaching placement at a school whose catchment area was within one of these places, I realised the impact of discourses about ‘problem pupils’ on the school’s learning culture. For some people in the community local to the school, the events were shocking though not unexpected. However, what is under-estimated is the extent to which the media portrayal of a small section of a community functioned to construct all the black pupils as a homogeneous group. All were ‘tainted with the same brush’. The classic work of Gilroy (1981) *There ain’t no Black in the Union Jack* exposed a long-standing climate of mistrust between the police and black youths. This was partly due to their mistreatment of black youths in local communities. A notable contributory factor highlighted was the continued ‘random’ application of sus laws, which Gilroy (1981) argued were a deliberate attempt to ‘criminalise’ young men. While such harassment was a commonplace occurrence for some sections of the school community, many of my colleagues were unaware of these policing practices. B.E.M. pupils’ experiences of targeted profiling were outside these teachers’ knowledge. Informal (or formal) discussions with B.E.M. pupils about their ‘out-of-school’ experiences were rarely considered relevant to their teacher-pupil relations. The form of knowledge generated about a particular pupil inside school may be information about their disaffection, while outside she or he is already constructed as a criminal. One needs to consider how perceptions of black working-class children impact on pupil-teacher interaction (Connolly 1991; Gillborn, 1995; Sewell, 1997). Another case in point is the report *Murder in the Playground* (MacDonald, 1989), conducted to investigate the circumstances contributing to the death of Ahmed Iqbal Ullah. The report examined how some pupils were constructed negatively inside school. It documented how endemic racist attitudes permeating a school, and left unchallenged, had fatal consequences. I needed to re-examine the ways that knowledge is produced about B.E.M. pupils in order to avoid a repeat of such an occurrence. The point I want to emphasise about my induction into the profession, is the realisation about how differently my own ways of knowing about B.E.M. pupils’ life-worlds had currency, and underpinned the development of my pedagogical approach.

Teaching is challenging, a case in point is the suggestion to ‘apprentice students into disciplinary identities that do not diminish existing identities that pupils bring both

individually and as members of different cultural communities' (Lee, 2004, p130). The suggestion of discipline was synonymous with the idea of obedience, which to me was not the aim, rather it was to value pupils' creative expressions. Teaching typically involves situations where there are competing values and complex interactions between different pupils. In some situations, cultural incongruence can have the effect of creating misunderstandings between pupils and teachers in their interpretation of incidents and the types of responses permissible. Teaching challenges human beings to innovatively establish conducive learning environments within a climate of trust and supportive learning relationships.

Teaching can also be a subversive act, opening spaces of possibility to allow learners to envision themselves and their potential differently. The classic work of Paulo Freire (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, inspired me to re-examine models of learning and teaching, and my contribution to the process. If, as was being suggested, pupils were positioned as passive recipients of knowledge, then a traditional authoritarian approach to teaching effectively reproduced the status quo. My reading of work by Bowles and Gintis (1976) illustrated the extent to which we as teachers collude in the reproduction of pupils' compliant behaviour. The authors refer to the 'correspondence principle' arguing that by structuring social interactions through the application of systems of rewards, schools replicate the environment in the capitalist work-place. From such a Marxist perspective, schooling can be constituted as a site for filtering pupils' life chances and future economic success. However, *knowing* that schooling contributes to the maintenance of intergenerational inequality is insufficient. Rather one needs to engage in on-going dialogues about the aims of education, and where these are in conflict with our personal philosophies and values.

### ***Self-positioning***

I argue that whether at the level of society, institution, community or the individual, B.E.M. teachers and pupils share the generic experience of racism (covert or overt, intentional or unintentional) that operates within schools and the wider society. One criticism of teaching/schooling is that it does not offer young B.E.M. pupils 'strategies of survival' in a racist society. The safety of some classrooms can also be said to be illusory, as they do not reflect their inhabitants' everyday reality of cultural incongruence. Pupils also have, and draw upon, a wide range of their own strategies of resistance (justified and unjustified, intentional and unintentional) in school. There

are instances where pupils re-enact stereotypical (positive and negative) behaviour – they imitate and mimic a range of dispositions which ultimately affect the quality of their learning experience. Young people are managing complexities and paradoxes as they struggle to forge their own sense of place in society. McNerney (2009) advocates using critical pedagogy as part of an approach to helping pupils develop an awareness of the systemic nature of alienation through the liberating potential of education. Drawing on the insights of Freire, he argues that the phenomenon of pupil alienation can be partially understood in terms of the dehumanising forces operating within schools and society at large. It is within the context of these social issues that I became more aware of how teachers, through their discursive practices, can help pupils learn how to challenge systems in schools, which to them seem unjust.

To this day, I strongly believe that teaching requires an on-going sense of notions of justice, fairness and equality to be at the centre of one's thinking. For me, teaching is a political endeavour, and *potentially* has a crucial role in advancing a more equitable society. Teaching has the potential to help pupils deconstruct the dynamic nature of their racial/cultural identity formation. However, there are clearly limitations on a teacher's capacity to adequately challenge the structural and cultural barriers experienced by some pupils. Berenice Fisher alerts us, as black feminists, to critique the importance of role models since there is the implication that one should 'embody a moral faith that certain social and historical contradictions can be resolved' (Fisher, 1988, p230). She points to the burden of responsibility this places on the individual, arguing that a 'distinction needs to be made between ideals of action and the conditions that make action possible' (Fisher, 1988, p230). The role model relationship, as I will show, is complex, both as a strategy and as a pedagogy for equity. However, my research aims to provide an arena for the voices of B.E.M. teachers who purport to be role models to be heard:

Autobiographical discourse embraces all those verbal acts, whether they be whole or parts of texts, whether they be spoken or written, ... [it] attempts to represent their lives through a construction of past events and experiences. (Rosen, 1998, p12)

The significance of writing a short autobiography, although cathartic, did not initially appear to me to be of relevance to this thesis. The task itself seemed daunting,

coming from a tradition of oral history where speaking is valued over writing, finding my voice within the text is hard. According to Rosen (1998), autobiography is the rendering of memory into discourse, yet the act of recollection is itself beset with doubt, possibly (un)intentional untruths, and is highly selective. Memories are fallible. He goes on to write that 'it is memories which repeatedly rescue us and make it possible to speak with a comprehensible voice' (Rosen, 1998, p17). The selected moments together convey a culmination of 'critical moments' that have shaped my desire to be an advocate for learners in schools. These moments have alerted me to how discourses about pupils can influence a teacher's belief systems. These moments have made me realise how teachers' assumptions about pupils' potential may become self-fulfilling prophecies (Rist, 1970). This reflexive act has re-ignited a perennial issue that has troubled me throughout my teaching: What messages do we as B.E.M. teachers promulgate? And how are they then interpreted by pupils?

An autobiographical account should help to discern salient aspects of one's history, which have brought one to this place of knowing. It is often difficult to recognise, over the course of a lifetime, recurring patterns. How does one filter, what is to be discarded and what is to be kept? Rosen (1998, p17) asserts that we should seek to 'remove the disguise' in order to make visible the position from which knowledge is produced. In the context of research, it is incumbent on the researcher to acknowledge the self behind the mask. The rebel pupil and the desire to be a radical teacher constitute parts of my subjectivation. As is the self that empathises with the B.E.M. pupils and teachers who struggle to overcome the effects of discriminatory practices; the self who does not always challenge, yet 'chooses' their moments wisely and for effect; and the self that is aware (hopefully) of its many contradictions.

### ***Background to the study***

In recent times the 'underachievement' of boys has received extensive attention from education stakeholders and the media. The terms of the debate centre on moral concerns about the absence of male teachers to act as role models for boys (Martino, 2008). A popular reason cited for boys' disaffection from schooling is the absence of significant male figures in their lives (Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Skelton, 2001). Viewed, as future 'breadwinners' there is a concern that boys' underachievement has the potential to restrict their entry into the workforce. In response to this perceived 'crisis of underachievement', there has been a concerted effort to recruit male and



B.E.M. teachers into schools.

My interest in this developed because of how differently the two groups of underachievers, white boys and B.E.M. boys, were constructed. The rationale for recruiting male role model teachers for each group differed along the axis of race. The former required role models to offset potential feminisation, while the later needed them to avoid becoming criminals or gang members. The moral panic around boys' potentiality differs and so too do the associated discourses championing 'male teachers as role models'. It was this dichotomy between the potentially 'effeminate' white boys and the potentially 'deviant' black boys that led to the research question.

The research inquiry emerged out of my practice as a teacher educator of seventeen years. I have often interviewed potential B.E.M. student teachers that express their desire to be a 'role model' to B.E.M. pupils. I found the notion of teacher role models troubling. The idea of a teacher role model posed questions along the lines of: What is it you want pupils to achieve or aspire to? Why would you want someone to mimic or emulate you? What do you intend to do to alleviate B.E.M. underachievement? What have you achieved? These applicants' views seemed to concur with a populist education agenda and for me warranted further investigation. My initial interest was in the understandings B.E.M. teachers have about B.E.M. pupils' subjectivities vis-à-vis underachievement. However, before moving to the research question, I first foreground two related and central considerations: 'underachievement' and the construction of B.E.M. pupils.

### The crisis of 'underachieving boys'

The call for male teachers to be role models to boys has gained momentum in Western societies and OECD countries (Foster & Newman, 2005; Martino & Berrill, 2003; Mills et al, 2004). There is a growing body of studies, which support the view that schooling has now become a site for the 'feminisation' of boys. The assumption is that boys' underachievement is due to the 'excessive' influence of female teachers (Driessen, 2007; Easton, 2007; Sternod, 2009). The earlier awareness of girls' under-performance gained through feminist studies (Epstein et al 1998; Walkerdine, 1990) has been replaced by reports that they are now 'achieving' better than boys in some subjects. The shift in achievement, that some consider a positive and welcome



realignment, is within the role model debate, a cause for alarm (Leving & Sacks, 2006; Mahony, 1998). Notwithstanding, schools reinforce normative conceptions of masculinity through their structure, pedagogy and curriculum (Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). This shift in focus is arguably a legacy of liberal feminist influences in the public sphere on how researchers conceptualise gender. The usual approach is to treat gender as a stand-alone 'variable' organised around a male/female binary (Boydston, 2008). One consequence is the development of narrow measures of performance based on gender difference, which are presently being used to 'prove' girls' high achievement (Francis & Skelton, 2005; Hey & Maw, 1998). However, the backlash against feminist interventions in education through, for example, anti-sexist pedagogy increases in momentum.

The recruitment drive for male teachers as role models (Burkard, 2008; DfEE, 2000; DCSF, 1998) directs attention towards the re-establishment of 'male' authority in the classroom. These sentiments are espoused in the media campaigns (BBC, 2010a, 2010b, 2009, 2008, 2007) thereby reinforcing dominant constructs of masculinity (Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Dermott, 2011; Francis, 2006). A case in point are the proposals in the UK government's 2010 White Paper on education – *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010) – and the Troops to Teachers programme written by the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) (Burkard, 2008). Lord Guthrie writes in the foreword of the CPS document that the introduction of Troops to Teachers 'will provide youths with role models who understand discipline and self-restraint at a time when they need it most'. The discourse of both policy initiatives centre on the links made between poverty (the disadvantaged inner-city working class) and underachieving boys. In her critique of initiatives like Troops to Teachers, Dermott (2011, p13) points out that rather than:

the pattern of positioning education as the mechanism to achieve meritocracy in the modern sense of the word. ... it treats 'problem' children as a class apart requiring particular educational approaches. It is this demarcation which sets up a conflict with the professed aim that education should offer an opportunity for all children, whatever their socio-economic background, to achieve high levels of educational qualifications.

In other words, different solutions to the problem of underachievement draw attention to the significance of gender and class, and for every 'problem' group particular aims and approaches.

### So, what's the problem?

Turning to the 'underachievement' of black boys, the moral panic and associated assumptions differ. Discourses about the 'potential for femininity' for white boys are replaced with discourses where black boys are constructed as potential deviants requiring teachers to regulate their potential misconduct. A case in point comes from the then Mayor of London Boris Johnson at his launch of a scheme promoting role models. He is reported to have said: 'through no fault of their own there are some black young boys in our city in desperate need of a strong role model ... to reach out to those who may fall prey to the lure of gangs and violence' (cited in BBC, 2011). Implicit in the attempt to control the behaviour of young black men, their teachers are proffered as an extreme authoritative response. In a speech '*On the Underclass*' (2011) delivered in Stockwell, London, an area where there is a high proportion of ethnic minority communities (then Minister for Education) Michael Gove said that he intended 'scrapping the requirement for teachers to record instances when they use physical force, as part of a wider move to restore adult authority in the wake of recent riots in the UK'. He made the distinction between what he called the hard working majority and the 'vicious, lawless, immoral minority' (cited in Cooper, 2012 p9). Gove echoes the views expressed in media reports that black boys are in need of a firmer style of discipline in order to curb male violence. (Helderman, 2002) A similar sentiment is expressed by Beauvais-Godwin and Godwin (2005) in their guidance-booklet for everyone wishing to adopt a black boy. It is both interesting and disturbing that violence is seen to have the potential to stop violence. Pedagogic control is thus redefined as the establishment of male authority in the classroom where the need for excessive control is legitimised by way of media panic about 'feral' youths (Sternod, 2011). Furthermore, the issue of underachievement is subsumed within wider representations of black boys. Black masculinity is conflated with violent attributes, and this serves to promote and legitimise demonic representations of black masculinity.

Stuart Hall has so often exposed the media promotion of racist ideology where there is the tendency to dramatise crime committed by black youth (for example, Hall, 2000). A disproportionate amount of attention is given to certain forms of crime while there is a lack of attention to black males as *casualties* of crime. Cushion et al (2011) similarly conclude that black youth are regularly associated with negative news

values. I concur with Sternod's (2011) assertion that with regard to black boys the discourse of empowerment is marginalised. In his extensive, genealogical analysis in the USA of popular media discourses about African American young men and boys and their need for male teachers, he asserts:

It is clear that the intent of these articles is not to empower minority males as the dominant 'boy's crisis' and 'gender gap' articles attempt to do for white males. Instead they serve as examples of an implicit attempt to control the social behaviour of young black men through mentorship and schooling. (Sternod, 2011, p286)

Essentialist beliefs about black masculinity can also be seen to extend beyond education stakeholders, reinforcing stereotypical assumptions. Within sections of the UK black community, a concerted effort was being made to attract positive role models from a variety of professions. One example is the REACH role model programme focused on the causes and possible solutions of B.E.M. boys' underachievement. Their aims were to appeal for a National network of role models to enable 'black boys to internalise, imitate and aspire to be successful' (REACH, 2007, p5). The report considered the discursive construction of black boys by the media particularly as it pertains to crime and violence. While on initial inspection one can see this as a worthwhile cause, further scrutiny alerts caution. As with other media discourses (Ojumu, 2007), the REACH initiative argues that role models could counteract the prevalence of black boys seeking negative role models in rappers, gang culture and so on. They posit that the scarcity of B.E.M. role model teachers in schools limits the ways that boys are able to access the curriculum. Contributors to the REACH programme point to the irrelevance of the UK school curriculum to the needs of black boys. My main criticism is that the view documented in the report uncritically essentialises black youth culture and behaviour (REACH, 2007). The report comments on a disjuncture between black boys' nature and the school's pedagogy, however the related chasms are as yet unknown. While the report recommends external regulatory bodies (notably Ofsted) monitor schools' compliance with race-relations legislation, the key recommendations focus on developing home-school resources and the positive portrayal of 'images' of success in media. The report refers to the gap between the present curriculum on offer in schools and the nature of B.E.M. as a possible cause of disaffection. Thus intertwined with essentialist arguments about black boys (and their deficit home life)

is the justification for them to have merely inspirational messages about how to achieve success.

### Measuring and labelling achievers

Underachievement is based in contested assumptions (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). There are differences in underlying curricular, pedagogical and social experiences, as well as different orientations to learning that affect the educational outcomes of pupils (Gipps, 2003). There has been very little consensus about how to define or measure 'underachievement' (Reed, 1999; Smith, 2003; Weiner et al, 1997) since it has the proclivity to be culturally biased and encourage erroneous generalisations (Haque, 2000). In addition, what constitutes achievement has become narrowly defined through results in external examinations. We have an education system where only certain kinds of knowledge are promoted. A narrow focus on academic qualifications lacks a holistic view of pupils' progress, and of their other attributes and skills. Haque (2000) questions claims made about the low attainment of Bangladeshi pupils. The supposedly poor performances of Bangladeshi pupils found in many of the studies she reviewed were based on the collection of skewed social class samples. She argued that the results from inner city Tower Hamlets (where there is a high proportion of Bangladeshis) significantly biased the statistics. There were between school differences in various parts of Britain making it difficult to generalise. Haque (2000) argues that factors such as students' fluency in English and parents' educational levels or their familiarity with English schooling, are distinctive features of their culture and contribute to their poor attainment. Furthermore, these suggested factors, which adversely influence the educational performance of Bangladeshi pupils, were not accounted for in the studies reviewed. Haque (2000, p148) posits that insufficient attention is given in research to the 'processes and dynamics in pupils' lives as well as [to] identifying correlational relationships'. She concluded that given our present situation where anti-Muslim prejudice is in on the increase, it is important to be aware of discourses which link underperformance with pupils' religion, distinctive features of their culture and concomitant parental expectations.

In contrast, a traditionally popular reason given for black pupils' underachievement is low self-esteem arising out of a cultural deficit, inadequacy or innate delinquency.

Arguably all of these reasons are located within pathologising discourses (Crozier, 2005). However, the point is that pathologising discourses about B.E.M. pupils continue to be linked with discourses about underachievement.

In schools as elsewhere, discourses circulate and reproduce to become powerful truth claims (Foucault, 1997a). This is particularly evident in knowledge construction about African-Caribbean pupils, and ability is a case in point. Discourses about the potential of learners inform how they are assessed. Such information is often inevitably internalised by pupils and teachers alike. Archer (2008, p89) argues the 'dominant educational discourses of the ideal pupil exclude minority ethnic pupils and prevent them from inhabiting a position of success. In Youdell's (2003) study of African-Caribbean identities within student subcultures, she asserts that there is a politics of performative re-signification. She points to various constructions of learner identities in a racialised school context and argues the girls in the school recognise their 'blackness' as a cause for differential treatment. Youdell argues the girls internalise the schools' dominant discourse as 'evident and it becomes acceptable to them to [have] undesirable, or even intolerable, identities as learners' (Youdell, 2003, p5). Not only are these pupils discursively positioned as failures, but within classroom interaction greater emphasis is placed on controlling their behaviour. For example, Gillborn (1995) found that black pupils were disproportionately criticised and controlled because they were perceived as a threat. He found that while other pupils exhibited similar behaviour, black pupils were more likely to be punished and reprimanded than their peers.

The bulk of research from the USA on teachers' negative perceptions and low expectations of pupils is limited and inconclusive. For example, Irvine (1989) found that black teachers are less likely to hold negative expectations and perceptions of black pupils' abilities. In contrast, Fergusson (1998) argues that culture-matching is a simplistic prescription. She points to, for example, social markers of representation impacting on how learners' identities are constructed. In Dee's (2005, p4) longitudinal study, he presents a mixed set of findings to indicate the 'sizeable achievement gains associated with students being assigned to teachers who share their race'. Whilst acknowledging the limitations of the study (that it is localised to Tennessee with its history of racial segregation, and uses data where the white: black teacher ratio was about 10:1), he suggests that the racial dynamic within the

classroom may contribute to the persistent racial gap in pupils' performance. Dee (2005, p5, original emphasis) warns however 'the most important caveat is that the study tells us little about *why* the racial match between students and teachers seems to matter'. The London, UK, context may offer other explanations linked to Dee's (2005) findings because the 'underachievement' of B.E.M. boys should be considered as part of larger discursive formations which extend beyond the classroom. There is a myriad of contingent events which may or may not have contributed to the ways in which black boys' identities as 'achievers' are socially constructed. Furthermore, as Hatcher (1997, p123) asserts 'ethnic differences in achievement are assimilated into a universal discourse of raising standards, in which the curriculum is seen as unproblematic and pupils' cultures as irrelevant'.

In summary, the role model debate centres on addressing boys' underachievement, however the assumption that a role model's capacity is reducible to a 'race' or gender is highly problematic. This is because implicit in the reductionist argument are essentialist views of 'masculinity', 'femininity' and ethnicity. The logic of the role model argument sets up a binary between white and black boys. In highlighting this, I not only raise questions about the assumed linkage between achievement and behaviour, but argue that these are among many factors which play a role in how B.E.M. pupils are assessed.

#### Pupils' identification with exemplars of success

The preceding analysis takes us to a second concern around B.E.M. pupils' identification with the notion of success. One suggestion might be that an articulation of their achievement is how far they are able to avoid becoming *victims* of racism. Some B.E.M. pupils' avoidance strategies can be read as responses to imperialist and patriarchal discourses. Archer and Yamashita's (2003) report on B.E.M. boys' identity formation suggests that researchers should avoid applying popular theorisations that assume cultural homogeneity. The scholars introduce the notion of 'entangled identities' to be applied to analytic work. They found that the black boys in their study draw on their peers for support in order to develop an identity, rather than imitating white middle-class men. They also suggest that pupils' resistance to school/work may be partially due to diasporic discourses of masculinity that are grounded *outside* of the education context. They comment on a Jamaican

teacher's attempts to illustrate to the boys the symbolism of dress code. For the boys, wearing a suit (representative of a 'professional identity') as opposed to 'streetwear' is incompatible with their notions of black masculinity. This work is useful for my research because it is emblematic of some B.E.M. pupils' views about achievement. Success is not solely interpreted in 'academic' terms but rather in relation to other (worthwhile) survival strategies. Channer (1995), similarly, points out that non-conformity to school norms is a rational counter-strategy that B.E.M. pupils adopt to maintain self-belief:

For black pupils who seek academic success in a racially hostile school environment, deviance could be a well-measured stance which permits self-esteem to remain intact while students aim to secure an educational foundation for their future. (Channer, 1995, p18)

In other words, success is not necessarily synonymous with the 'standards' of the dominant school culture, since this must be acquired *in spite of* the structural inequalities that pupils encounter in their everyday life. This overcoming might be a reaction to forms of discriminatory treatment, micro-aggression (for example, racist insinuation) or symbolic violence (for example, curriculum). The demands of academic study and the need for black boys to act out their masculinity in the school context (Francis, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1989) in some cases are irreconcilable.

So far, I have discussed the differing ways that discourses around achievement are used to construct white and B.E.M. boys. I suggest there may be implications of this for B.E.M. pupils' learner identity construction and what they construe as success. I have shown that, in relation to 'underachievement' discourses, white and black boys are additionally re-cast in terms of normality or pathology. The concomitant pathological discourses about B.E.M. pupils function to incite moral panic and increased control of B.E.M. boys as a necessary disciplinary response. My key point is that notions of achievement/underachievement are always contested. I do not reject academic achievement as success criteria rather I am suggesting that one should not disappear other markers of success. Role modelling debates need to encompass a wider range of boys and of B.E.M. pupils' needs. Furthermore, one needs to be alert to the power of discourse to 'legitimate' solutions to the problem of boys' underachievement that are premised on (unrecorded) violence. I now turn to the research question, and specifically to B.E.M. teachers as role models.



### B.E.M. teachers as role models

It is clearly naïve to suggest that structural inequalities can be addressed simply by the recruitment of more male or more B.E.M. teachers. Odih (2002) points out the insertion of black boys' underachievement into the debate facilitates the silencing of arguments around structural inequalities. She contends that these recruitment remedies are enacted within a context where 'educational discourse, gender and racial inequality are redefined as problems of ineffectiveness, standards and performance' (Odih, 2002, p91). She questions the increased 'assimilation of male educational underachievement into technicist discourses and the unproblematic application of technicist models of mentoring' (p91). She asserts the increased move towards mentoring or coaching programs as a way of 'facilitating the increased surveillance and regulation of Afro-Caribbean males' (p93). Odih concludes one should question the appropriateness of men-only mentoring since the discourses generated provide the conditions for legitimating hegemonic forms of black masculine identities. In this thesis, I make the distinction between mentoring (which is externally funded and has formal monitoring requirements attached) and teacher role modelling at the pupils' school with pupils having agency over their choice of engagement. There are different accountability considerations and practical support that B.E.M teachers offer to pupils, not necessarily in male-only scenarios. My central aim is to examine the *quality* of the dialogue between B.E.M. teachers and pupils while highlighting salient structural inequalities in their schools.

The research question for this study builds on the idea that B.E.M. teachers are re-signified as normalising agents within role model discourses (Sternod, 2011). Sternod conducted a genealogical analysis of popular news media discourses regarding the 'boy crisis'. He argued that such discourses reveal how:

common sense beliefs operate to perpetuate unjust systems of patriarchal power by maintaining the socially superior status of White, middle-to-upper-class, heterosexual men. The discourse of male teachers as role models in particular exposes the popular desire to have such men demonstrate for their male students what 'proper' masculinity looks like, to reassert male authority in the classroom and beyond, and to control the behaviors of African American males as well as boys and young men from fatherless homes. (Sternod, 2011, p267)

The assertion that B.E.M. male teachers as role models serve as normalising agents



for B.E.M. boys warrants further inspection. Despite the rhetoric, there is no real understanding of what is expected of a 'male role model'. 'Empirical research on role models is scant and little is known of what contributes to an individual being perceived and accepted as a successful role model' (Javidan et al, 1995, p331). In addition, as Cushman (2008, p124) points, out there has seldom been any attempt to define 'what the job description is and how these are or should be manifested in the classroom and wider environment'. There is, to some extent, the expectation that *all* teachers conform to and piously reflect social standards and conventions of success authored by the dominant group (Martino, 2008).

My interest was in whether B.E.M. teachers conformed to 'normative assumptions'. Mimesis refers to the deliberate imitation of the behaviour of one group of people by another as a factor of social change. Taken together, the recruitment of male teachers can be said to perpetuate 'unjust systems of patriarchal power by maintaining the socially superior status of white, middle to upper class, heterosexual men' (Sternod, 2011, p267). There is, implicit in the notion of role models, what Martino (2008) p204) refers to as the 'impulse to normalise'. From such a perspective, 'B.E.M. teachers as role models' are expected to imitate or to become 'normalising agents' (Sternod, 2011). The notion of imitation or mimicry coupled with the idea of change agents led me to include female B.E.M. teachers in my research.

Finally, Sewell (2000) recommends that researchers deconstruct teachers' attitudes to learners in relation to underachievement. However, teachers' understandings of B.E.M. pupils' subjectivities vis-à-vis racism are rarely explored. Furthermore, research should give salience to the school contexts, and changes within black youth culture as contributory factors in levels of motivation, and behaviour (Sewell, 2001). I posit that B.E.M. teachers' previous experiences might be influential on how they interpret their pupils' subjectivities. The points raised in the previous section have several implications for the terms under which role-modelling relationships are developed. This is because B.E.M. teachers are positioned at the interface between restricting and enabling points of reference. B.E.M. teachers are both representative of a system that oppresses B.E.M. pupils *and* representative of someone who in some way has acquired strategies to challenge stereotypical expectations we still being subject to them.

B.E.M. teachers as role models are the focus of my study. I will argue that B.E.M. teachers' empathetic understanding of B.E.M. pupils' subjectivities are pivotal to their discursive practices. Moreover, 'underachievement' discourses serve to divert attention away from the 'source of the problem'. In a sense, rather than locating the problem in the boys, we should acknowledge in our research accounts the systemic factors that reproduce inequality in schools. The abdication of social responsibility for the 'boys' problem' places the onus of responsibility to alleviate underachievement onto role model teachers.

This transfer of responsibility has implications for all teachers, and for B.E.M. teachers in particular. Moreover, although teachers can come to invest a lot of themselves in teaching, since it can be a source of self-esteem or fulfilment, teaching can also expose areas of vulnerability. As will be later shown, the emotional investment made by teachers is regulated in unanticipated ways. In this study I seek a radical re-conceptualisation of the role model teacher concept. Crucial to this re-conceptualisation is B.E.M. teachers' understanding of how their pupils' identity constructions are influenced by the dynamics of social spaces. My argument is that their sense of collective identity and forged alliances set the conditions of the role model relationship. This requires analysis which contextualises B.E.M. teachers' subjectivities with respect to the prevailing political and educational imperatives and the discourses about B.E.M. pupils. While, as I have shown, there have been extensive calls for black teachers to serve as role models for black pupils, how this is interpreted by the teachers involved – who self-define as role models – is an under-researched area. In the UK, with a few exceptions (such as, Maylor, 2009), empirical studies that locate B.E.M. *teachers'* views within wider historical and political discourses are markedly rare.

### ***Problem statement and research question***

As elaborated above, this research inquiry seeks to examine how B.E.M. teachers come to understand themselves as role models. This research is significant because it addresses a lacuna in literature concerning the discursive multiple positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990) of B.E.M. teachers as role models. In contrast to much of the research debates about role models that critique the binaries of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' (Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Francis et al, 2008; Martin & Marsh, 2005; Martino, 2008), this inquiry examines B.E.M. teachers' discursive work. The enquiry

is an examination of B.E.M. teachers who identify as role models and what this identity means to them. This research offers an alternative epistemological perspective, informed by a poststructural theoretical framework, to understand B.E.M. teachers' multiple positioning in role modelling processes.

### ***Research Question***

#### **How do B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models to pupils?**

In order to address the research question I will examine:

- B.E.M. teachers' understandings of the ways in which pupils' identities are constructed, negotiated and performed in schools.
- B.E.M. teachers' understandings of themselves as role models, and how their discursive framing of this operates to constrain and enable their work,
- How B.E.M. teachers' subjectivities have been produced by these framings in the context of contemporary political, cultural, education and socio-economic conditions.

## ***Outline of the remaining chapters***

In the remaining chapters I move towards a more radical conception of role model processes, developing the themes discussed in this introduction.

In Chapter 2, I describe the theoretical framework and rationale for the research inquiry. The key theoretical ideas are drawn predominantly from the work of Michel Foucault. In addition, feminist poststructural and Black feminist theorists provide an analytical frame for the research. I argue that the critical utility of poststructural theory lies in its analytical capacity to explore the relationship between discourse, knowledge and power. A Foucauldian interpretation of power relations is a useful tool to understand the interplay between various groups – for example, pupils, community members, colleagues – when B.E.M. teachers engage in their discursive work, including pedagogy. I discuss the role model concept and role modelling processes in relation to my key ideas and definitions.

The literature review in Chapter 3 consists of three sections. First I examine various interpretations of the role model concept, specifically within the fields of management studies, organisational studies and education theory. I review literature on the ‘teacher as role model’ debate. Most of the studies critique the binary of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ but with limited suggestions for how these issues might be addressed in schools and without giving attention to what the implications might be for B.E.M. teachers. The second section is a review of research studies on B.E.M. teachers’ experiences in school, with specific reference to the UK context. The main areas reviewed relate to institutional racism, career development and acculturation processes. In the third section, I argue for an alternative conceptualisation of the ‘B.E.M. teacher role model’ that considers social conditions and their enabling and constraining features.

In Chapter 4, I outline my methodological journey and positioning within the research design. An overarching goal of the research is to understand the construction of ‘B.E.M. role model’ teachers as social texts (or discursive formations). A methodological approach guided by poststructural principles is developed to understand how discourses produce different speaking positions through talk, constituting the teachers’ identities. The teachers’ accounts are read as text; the analytic units are critical events describing their role model relationships.

The empirical data are obtained from in-depth semi-structured interviews (and follow-up interviews) with seven teachers. I include details of the selection process, information about the participants, ethical protocols, and pertinent issues affecting the research design. I conclude with an explanation of how I applied Foucauldian Discourse Analysis to the data.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are the empirical chapters. In Chapter 5, I introduce my conceptual framework of ‘shared discursive history’ to describe the dynamic social interactions that characterise the role model relationships between B.E.M. teachers and pupils. Shared discursive history describes both the types of power relations formed and the factors that support and inhibit their maintenance. I elaborate on how the three dimensions of shared discursive history are applied to interpret the teachers’ narratives. Sharing marginality refers to the empathetic relations the teachers form, which I argue are premised on an understanding of their shared marginalised positioning and experiences of epistemic crises. Identification refers to teachers’ notions of role models and how they signify these to B.E.M. pupils. In subsequent chapters I examine how the teachers perform their role, and the counter-narratives they generate. The third dimension is the teachers’ deployment as a pedagogical resource. Within this, I examine the impact of a performance culture in schools and how they reconcile educational and professional imperatives. In this chapter, I discuss generic themes arising from the teachers’ narratives. In the subsequent empirical chapters, I develop ‘shared discursive history’ by analysing differences between the male and female teachers’ enactment of their roles.

Chapter 6 begins with the three male participants’ ‘his-stories’; their narratives are predominantly focused on cultural belonging. I argue that the male teachers attach greater significance to cultural expectations and the concomitant behaviours than their female counterparts. Forms exclusionary practice describes how they relate with B.E.M. pupils, however at times such organising principles of engagement produce unexpected conflict. I argue the male teachers perform as role models in ways premised on developing pupils’ criticality and discernment about the cultural representation of B.E.M. people. The male teachers perform their role by alerting pupils to ingrained assumptions and questioning the beliefs they hold about what in their culture constitutes acting ‘manly’. The final section on the deployment of cultural resources examines how one teacher’s understanding of youth culture is

deployed to enable inter-textual readings of masculinity.

Chapter 7 explores the female teachers' narratives. A notable difference is that the women draw closely on critical events in their 'her-stories' to illustrate the influence of these incidents. A common theme in their narratives is their individualised resilience to regulatory forces. They promote self-reliant learner identities rather than adherence to the collectivist perspectives of belonging that influence the male teachers. The female teachers perform their role based on an 'ethic of care' (Collins, 1990) where they focus on pupils' potential and promoting their self-determination. The female teachers' deployment as a cultural resource is examined in terms of shared language registers, which I argue promote informal teacher-pupil bonding. The final section is a summation of the analysis chapters, here I draw together the key findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Finally, Chapter 8 is the conclusion. In this I draw out the study's original contribution, calling for a reframing of the debate around role models. The teachers' resistance to disciplinary power is revisited to argue that the teachers prepare pupils' resistance in several ways. Role model teachers create moments for pupils to engage in critical reflection on dominant discourses about B.E.M. people. They understand that this role requires them to be strategic. Following this reframing, I look at the limitations of the research and areas for further development.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAME**

### ***Introduction***

The aim of this thesis is to address the question of how B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models to B.E.M. pupils. In this chapter I explain my theoretical framework which is situated within the larger context of critical education research. Although the theoretical structure for this thesis utilises ideas from within the general field of poststructuralism, it is predominantly guided by concepts drawn from the work of Michel Foucault, so I offer extensive explanation of his key ideas throughout the chapter. The chapter begins by defining the main parameters of poststructuralism where, as Davies & Gannon (2005) maintain, the analytic focus is on discourse and discursive regulatory practices.

### ***Discourse***

A discourse is a 'group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment' (Hall, 2001, p72). In this thesis, the assumption of a correspondence between language and reality is rejected in favour of a critical questioning of what constitutes truth and knowledge. Foucault's interpretation of discourse extends beyond the textuality of signs, and refers to practices, rule and procedures that exhibit a systematic regularity. Here my use of discourse emphasises the 'materiality of language at every dimension' (Young, 1981 p339). In other words, role model discourses have constitutive (real) effects on teachers' bodies, practices (and spaces). I discuss Foucault's work in four main areas: discourse (in relation to the generation of knowledges and truths), power, subjectivity and bio-power. The ideas of the material effects of the discursive *and* the discursive effects of the material are developed throughout the chapter. I argue that to understand B.E.M. teachers' discursive work, one needs to theorise both about what is said, as well as about the effects of saying a particular statement. To make this argument, I move from discourse to an explication of Foucault's radical interpretation of power as acting through the capillaries of all social relations. Here Foucauldian power (as a relational phenomenon) is shown as inextricably linked to all forms of knowledge production, as well as to resistance. In addition, I develop the idea of a body as a target of power and as an object of knowledge, to suggest how it can be understood in terms of resistance strategies. In the final section on bio-power, I continue with the notion of

materiality; here I consider how a body is constituted by the workings of disciplinary power on its psyche (or mind). The aim here is to reveal the ways that the body is corporeal, the site of local, intimate complex power relations and enmeshed within wider social and political discourses and narratives.

What poststructuralism has done is to begin to ... open the cracks, to expose those gaps and silences that undermine the claims of modernist philosophy to impartiality and universality. Above all, it deconstructs the boundaries between categories, be they ontological, epistemological, ethical or material; and it demonstrates the inescapability of the leaks and flows across all such bodies of knowledge and bodies of matter. (Shildrick, 1997, p4)

Poststructuralism is a broad umbrella term for a form of critical scholarship that examines the relationship between human beings, the social world and the practice of producing and reproducing meaning (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; St. Pierre, 2005). A wealth of studies exist that apply poststructural theories to education issues (Ball, 1990; Peters & Burbules, 2004) ranging from analysis of policy (Ball, 2015) to learners' identities (Youdell, 2003). In this thesis, the idea of poststructuralism is applied to create a framework from which to interpret and theorise about B.E.M. teachers as role models and the subjectification processes attached to role modelling. A poststructural approach is concerned to question our taken-for-granted meanings and assumptions; the aim is to explore how we come to know ourselves (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Given the centrality of the social meanings and values B.E.M. teachers attach to their notion of 'role model', the adoption of a poststructural approach is appropriate for this thesis. An aim of this enquiry is to problematise the 'role model' concept, and explore 'how and why certain things, behaviour, phenomena, processes become a problem' (Foucault, 1983, p.115). In short, I will explore understandings of the concept and how others appropriate these. To do this, the enquiry needs to make visible the social conditions that allow some meanings attached to B.E.M. teachers' notions of 'role model' to have salience or greater legitimacy than others. The conditions, while varied, locate B.E.M. teachers within socially, culturally and historically specific contexts. The application of a poststructural frame is a useful approach to examining the plurality of meanings attached to this social text. Through this process, I will theorise how this social text is adopted by B.E.M. teachers and can be understood as embedded within culturally-constituted ideas about shared



histories of marginality and affinity with B.E.M. pupils.

### History and Foucault's Genealogy

In addition to its critique of meaning, poststructuralism has an antipathy to traditional notions of history and epistemology. Poststructural theorists generally hold the view that 'our ideas of truth, knowledge, rationality and all canonical or organising principles are products of social and cultural development' (Prado, 2000, p18). Such perspectives reject the idea of meta-narratives or totalising theories which can analyse past or present events. Instead historical interpretations are viewed as inherently contingent. The premise is that interpretations can be assigned to an innumerable set of contestable meanings. This assumption should not be construed as relativism, (which is rejected) as not all interpretations are *equally* valid. In this regard, a Foucauldian historicist perspective is adopted in this thesis, to see knowledge as meaning-making where 'forms of rationality are created endlessly' (Prado, 2000, p19). Viewed in this way, there is no form of intellectual inquiry which has access to objective external correctness. For example, the particularity of a person's circumstances or their dilemmas may cause them to reinterpret, modify or transform their customs or habits. The argument made is that within every epoch there are rules, ideas, procedures and structures that govern the production of knowledge; these overlap with those in other historical epochs (Foucault, 1971). Foucault uses the term genealogy to describe enquiry based on critical analyses of past events in relation to the present. The genesis of genealogy, is to: 'identify the accidents, the minute deviations ... the reversals ... the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that have value for us' (Foucault, 1971, p81).

Foucault posits that doing genealogy requires the assumption that nothing is constant, and the conception of any phenomena as a state of becoming. His notion of genealogy is always oppositional, anti-essentialist, and rooted in discontinuity as its central organising principle. Adopting such an approach is useful in this thesis in order to examine B.E.M. teachers' identifications with the role model concept, for example, how they negotiate the disjunctions between their private and public roles. The approach considers different moments in B.E.M. teachers' stories and organises, juxtaposes, and locates their unique 'critical' events. In this way, I understand their

stories, or *performances* of critical events, as epitomising particular experiences of being or becoming role model teachers. Thus my theoretical frame is underpinned by Foucauldian notions of genealogy. In this regard B.E.M. teachers' narratives about the role model concept are examined to expose the manner in which this concept 'disturbs what was considered immobile: it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself' (Foucault, 1997, p147).

Prado (2000) argues Foucault's genealogy can be understood as an alternate form of narrative, one which opposes traditional notions of history and how its knowledge is generated. Foucault adopts an anti-foundationalist stance on the production of historical knowledge. He argues that it is flawed to conduct history as a search for 'origins' that can explain an already fabricated event. There is no underlying or originating cause, rather one needs to understand history in terms of the random and other unsystematic occurrences that congeal or co-exist to create an event. According to Rorty, genealogy maps the 'reinterpretation(s) of our predecessors' reinterpretation(s) of their predecessors' re-interpretations' (Rorty, 1982, cited in Prado, 2005, p34). I take such a historicist approach, creating a history of the present, that 'prefers to interrogate the present, *its* values, discourses and understandings with recourse to the past as a resource of destabilising critical knowledge' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, cited in Hook, 2001, p533, original emphasis). In other words, this involves examining the contradictions, and discontinuities within the discourses about role modelling, their nodal points of vulnerability, and discerning (if any) tactics of sabotage within the teachers' knowledge about their pupils. I problematise role model discourses by attempting to expose existing discourses or to introduce alternative or counter discourses about taken-for-granted actions or performances. These discontinuous 'unsystematic occurrences' support a genealogical approach that treats the teachers' stories as 'events' or atoms of discourse. I examine the contradictions in their stories, and juxtapose and make these contradictions stark in order to ask what incites B.E.M. teachers to understand themselves as role models. Given that the 'events' they perform are significant to these teachers, they must be read in conjunction with the other discourses, stories or language that B.E.M. teachers draw upon, and through which they constitute their notion of role model. I elaborate further on this at the

end of Chapter 4 in the section on Foucauldian Discourse Analysis).

### Language, Discourse and Discursive Practices

Language is neither transparent nor is it possible to obtain a final meaning (MacLure, 2003). While languages allow us to categorise, distinguish or discern entities, their usage is a product of the symbolising systems of the cultures in which we are located (MacLure, 2003).

Here I acknowledge that for any given language (in any particular culture) there may be different ways of representing the world. Poststructural theorists, assume a Saussurian perspective on language as working through relations of difference. The fundamental premise is that any linguistic sign is arbitrary, with the implication that without *difference* there can be no meaning. The poststructural analytic highlights the effects of dualistic constructions of difference. Applying such framing allows the effects of binary constructions to be explored in terms of, for example, the manner in which B.E.M. teachers include or exclude others through their practice. To examine binaries is to give attention to the logic of dichotomous thinking (Marshall & Rossman, 1995) and how this may manifest as action or in what teachers say about the 'other'. For example, there are ideas about 'positive' or 'negative' role models, or what constitutes a 'good' or a 'bad' teacher. In addition, B.E.M. teachers are themselves 'othered' (or not) within varied hierarchical arrangements in their classroom environment, school community, and elsewhere. 'In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures' (Foucault, 1981, p52). Discourses structure the way we perceive our social reality, Discourses constitute the world by bringing phenomena into being through the way in which they categorise and make sense of them (Hardy & Phillips, 2004). Foucault understands discourses as being rule-governed, giving legitimacy to some forms of knowledge over others in a manner inherently systematic. Rules govern the selection and inclusion of objects, concepts, theories and norms, governing, in totality, what can be thought or spoken. Discourses provide 'conditions of possibility' which define, and give legitimacy to some knowledges whilst discarding others. From this perspective, discourses are understood as embedded in social systems. Foucault explains that discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972,

p49). Discourses do not correspond to language rather they are an *effect* of language practices. Language choices determine the type of discourses a speaker (writer) draws upon, and how they position themselves in relation to others. There is here the notion of legitimacy and regulation: what is said and to whom. Discourses may combine with, or exclude, other statements and practices. Discourses are inherently circular and temporal and they produce an effect on both speaker and listener. Thus discourses function to both constrain and enable what is said. Foucault refers to discursive practices as operating in both inhibiting and productive ways, that allow certain statements to be made while preventing others. Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse makes it possible to consider its material effects. He argues that discourses are realised both in 'the textuality of representation and knowledge and in the regulating principles and actions of institutions, in forms of everyday practices' (Hook, 2007, p17).

I offer an example of role model discourses to elaborate the above. Managerial discourses refer to role modelling in terms of: leadership, following, managerialism, entrepreneurialism, superiority, subordinate acceptance and employee-organisation relations; these lexicons do not include human subjectivity. In contrast, educational discourses refer to role modelling in terms of: pedagogy, sex role theory, behaviour theory, imitation, stereotypes and the self-regulated learner. These different sets of naming practices subsequently combine with new types of knowledge to describe socialisation and how to manage the 'subject'. While both sets of discourses construct asymmetric relations between role models and their subjects, the rules governing their interactions differ.

In the previous chapter, I argued that 'role model teacher' discourses function to give legitimacy to hegemonic statements and practices that promote mimesis (for example, mimicry, emulation, admiration). Mimesis discourses, as with any discourses, can be understood as continually transforming through the application of new rules, procedures, practices or political hegemony; these create and re-configure our social realities. Moreover, this suggests, not only are hegemonic mimesis and role model discourses implicated in positioning B.E.M. teachers in their narrations, but they also constitute the knowledges they attach to themselves, and acceptance of these knowledges as true.

Since discourses are continually evolving, the rules governing discourses can also be reversed to create different meanings; they are not immune to forms of contestation (Butler, 2006). In this regard, Foucault's concept of discourse reveals the dialectics at work and invites the view that normality is dependent upon, whilst seeking to exclude and contain the category of the 'abnormal'. As Dollimore (1991) points out:

We know that the centre remains vulnerable to marginality because its identity is partly created and partly defined in opposition (and therefore also *at*) the margins. But the concept of reverse discourse suggests another dialectic sense that the outside may be said to be always already inside: a return from demonized other to challenging presence via containment, and one involving a simultaneous contradictory, yet equally necessary appropriation and negation of those dominant notions of sexual identity and human nature by which it was initially excluded and defined. (Dollimore, 1991, p225, emphasis added)

Although Dollimore (1991) is referring to how perversity discourses legitimate conventions of sexual behaviour, parallels can be drawn with regard to the ways that B.E.M. teachers' comportment and actions as role models are judged. I use reverse discourse to refer to the ways in which marginalised groups seek to contest their demonisation.

This thesis is concerned to understand the ways in which BEM role model teachers 'speak themselves into existence' (Davies & Harré, 1990, p8) within the terms of available discourses, cultural narratives and discursive practices. I take the view that B.E.M. teachers have agency, and are thus positioned to produce their own counter discourses about their practice.

### Linking Truth and Knowledge to Discourse

I am well aware that I have never written anything but fiction. I do not mean to say, however, that truth is therefore absent. It seems to me that the possibility exists for fiction to function in truth, for a fictional discourse to induce effects of truth. (Foucault, 1972, p193)

A poststructural approach resists closure; since all truths are partial, and contingent, there are no truths only interpretations (Prado, 2000). Foucault argues all forms of knowledge are constituted out of discourses. For Foucault, discourses *generate* 'truths' or 'truth effects' that have the power to convince others to accept a statement as true. Foucault (1978) locates discourse at the intersection of power and knowledge

production stating that:

discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (Foucault, 1978, p101)

Here, I understand discourses as inherently unpredictable, which suggests a need for mindfulness in attending to the generation and/or production of ‘truths’ and knowledges. Furthermore, Foucault argues discourses produce simultaneously the conditions of oppression *and* the conditions of resistance (Foucault, 1978). Taken together, discourses are implicated as *effects* of power. Given the centrality of Foucault’s ideation of power to this thesis, the next section outlines his theoretical concept of, and of its relevance to my thesis topic. This is followed by an explanation of how I conceptualise resistance and how the theoretical frame I adopt is used to understand role modelling relations. In his theorisation of the concept, Foucault sought to locate power within everyday relations between people and within institutions. His insistence that power should not be conceived of as belonging to, or residing in, an individual, group or institution, marks a radical break from traditional ideas. Thus, the next section begins with traditional understandings of power, and specifically the limitations of Marxist conceptualisations of power, and then introduces Foucault’s analytic of power. I then move on to explain its inter-related enabling and determining function in relation to Foucault’s idea of the power/knowledge nexus.

## ***Power***

### Limitations of Marxist Notions of Power

Power is usually understood as the capacity of an individual or group to impose their will over another individual or group, or to have the ability to force them to comply against their will. This traditional approach views power as fundamentally the possession of dominant human beings or of the state. This model of power understands it as generally operating in a ‘top-down’ manner within institutions and/or other hierarchical arrangements (Lemke, 2000). In this configuration, Marxist

theorising often concerns the means by which oppressed people accept the present fictive versions of the world, which serve the interests of those who dominate society (Clegg, 2013). Power, in Marxist terms, functions within capitalist systems as an oppressive tool for the (re)production of social class inequality and the perpetuation of the proletariat (Smart, 2013). For Foucault however, economic and class relations are a subsidiary of a more complex and pervasive system of power relations (Popekwitz & Brennan, 1998). Foucault discounts the Marxist idea of power as inherently repressive, in that it *simply* enforces obedience and compliance or total domination through the force of authority. A key criticism levelled at Marxist theorisations of the operation and distribution of power, is their limited account of how power permeates *all* relations within a society.

### Foucault's Analytic of Power

Power is not something that can be acquired, seized or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations. (Foucault, 1976, p93)

Foucault's radical view of power presents a paradigm shift from what he calls the juridico-discursive model where power is seen as possessed by the state and used to impose order on society (Clegg, 2013). For Foucault, power is the name he gives to 'a complex strategic situation in any given society' (Foucault, 1981, p94). He theorises that this strategic situation is how 'myriad relations of constraint on action' operate at any given time (Foucault, 1981, p94). Power exists within the dynamics of these relations, operating through these complex networks. Power is characterised as fluid; it flows through the capillaries of all relations in the social body. In other words, power relations are not in a position of exteriority to other relations. Power relations are multiple and shifting rather than fixed at any given era in our social reality. Power is understood as circular, encompassing and constituting the fabric of societal relations. Foucauldian power 'is diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them' (Gaventa 2003, p1).

Applying a poststructural framework to power then is to theorise, for example, the dynamics of relations in school settings or other educational contexts. In this way,

my analysis of role model relations and the associated pedagogical (power) relations can be conceptualised as a matrix of relational power fields (Foucault, 1980a). The Foucauldian concept of power is inherently neutral since it both constrains and, simultaneously, enables action. Power concerns human beings acting in independent ways so that ‘certain actions modify others’ (Foucault, 1980a, p93). He describes this as the ‘microphysics of power’ or ‘capillary power ... where power reaches into the very grain of human beings, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourse, learning processes and everyday lives’ (Foucault, 1980a, p93). In short, theorising power gives salience to *actions* rather than human beings. Foucauldian power has its own internal dynamism, which suggests pupil-teacher relations produce varied, and particular, coercive actions that occur with cumulative effects. He refers to this dynamic as the microphysics of power as it concerns the manner in which human beings, in our culture, society and institutions, are turned into subjects. Thus, the body is targeted as the site for the machinations of power. However, as discussed, Foucault argues that power is not solely negative but also productive. I will now turn to the issue of power’s subject-defining role, subjectivity, resistance and agency. I then discuss the productive, material and strategic effects of power in order to explain how my theoretical framework combines the conceptual ideas discussed so far with those of disciplinary power and bio-power to address my research question.

## ***Subjectivity***

### The Subject & Subjectivity revisited

In an article entitled *The Subject and Power*, Foucault (1982) states that the objective of his work ‘has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects’ (Foucault, 1982, p208). Elsewhere Foucault reiterates that the aim of his enquiry is to ask: ‘how has the concept of human nature functioned in society?’ (Foucault, 1982, cited in Rabinow, 1991, p4). Foucault’s philosophical thinking shifted significantly during his life’s work, moving from considerations of subjectivity and a way of life to the ‘critical work of thought upon itself’ (Foucault 1984, cited in O’Leary, 2002, p11). Subjectivity is often characterised by the dual experience of being human: as both objects and subjects of our social world (Coloma, 2008). Foucault’s shift towards modes of thought, I interpret as his attempt to rethink, for example, how it is that human beings (such as teachers) come



to a recognition of their own ethical obligations.

Central to Foucault's analysis is a focus on three modes of objectification of the subject (Foucault, 1982), or techniques by which human beings turn themselves into subjects. The first mode is objectification as a subject within scientific discourses or through other classification processes. For example, we can see this in the ways that the 'teacher' is re-classified as an 'enterprising subject' within neo-liberal discourses (Rose, 1990) as an effect of education policies and reforms (Ball, 2005). The second mode is objectification by the application of 'dividing practices' that function to separate human beings through processes of categorisation. For example, UK has an inspection regime namely Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) who are subject to accountability measures. Scholars point to the pressures placed on teachers through dividing practices that rank teachers (Ball et al, 2012; Ozga, 2009). In this section I discuss the third, mode which is subjectivation. Here I am referring to the 'way a human being turns himself [sic] into a subject' (Foucault, 1982, p208).

Foucault posits the subject is both: 'the starting point of agency *and* is subjected to the categories and power that constrain as much as enable action' (Mayo, 1997, p115, original emphasis). This view conceptualises the subject as 'in a state of constant dissolution and recreated in different configurations along with other forms of knowledge and social practices' (Foucault, 1977, p118). For Foucault, 'agency lies in the constant interplay between strategies of power and resistance, not in the self-consciousness of the subject' (Mayo, 1997, p21). This denotes a shift from earlier thinking to give an account for power which includes the notion of agency as self-regulation. Foucault's revision conceives of an active subject: a 'self-determining agent capable of challenging and resisting the structures of domination in modern society' (McNay, 1991, p4). I use subjectivity in this thesis, to describe a human being constituting themselves as the subject of their own actions, but within various disciplinary regimes. As Foucault states, these regimes are 'the models that he [sic] finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society and his social group' (Foucault, 1984, p291).

Foucault's theoretical understanding of power views the body as culturally constructed is further developed by feminist's thinkers who argue that body is always

gendered (Bordo 1993; Bartky, 1988; Deveaux, 1994; Sawicki, 1998). Some feminists have criticised Foucault's work for insufficiently acknowledging the way that disciplinary practices produce different modalities of embodiment of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. For example, Bartky (1988, p81) examines practices that contribute to the construction of femininity (such as exercise, diet, gestures and the use of cosmetics) to argue that they combine 'to produce a body which in gesture and appearance is recognisably feminine' thereby reinforcing a 'disciplinary project of bodily perfection'. Bordo (1989) in her examination of anorexia nervosa also takes issue with the 'docile bodies' paradigm and the social construction of femininity. She argues that the effects of feminine cultural practices are inscribed onto women's bodies because of the urge to 'appear normal' and that this is dominant in contemporary society. The hegemony of 'cosmetic' discourses in relation to how women's bodies are categorised, ranked and judged can also be found within the experiences of B.E.M. people. Feminist researchers refer to the 'bleaching syndrome' (Charles, 2003; Hall, 1995; Tate, 2016) where some B.E.M. women take measures to lighten their skin colour. Their argument is that the effect of bleaching is the 'internalization of light skin as a point of reference for attractiveness, marriage, and assimilation into dominant society' (Hall, 1995, p180). Foucault does not adequately theorise how the modality of gender, race and ethnicity, and other cultural norms transform the B.E.M. body.

So how do I take into account the normalising power of the dominant discourses that constitute B.E.M. teachers' understanding of themselves in this thesis, while simultaneously theorising them as agentic? First I argue for the need to discuss resistance in relation to B.E.M. teachers' subjectivities and then I explore this within the power/knowledge nexus. In the later section on bio-power, I revisit the hegemony of racism where I locate B.E.M. teachers' experiences within broader systemic and institutional axes of difference. Foucault introduces the notion of a 'matrix of experience' (Foucault, 1997, p204), where he suggests that it is within three intersecting constitutive axes that experience is made possible. B.E.M. teachers' experiences of 'resistance' are to be read within the overlapping axes of: a field of knowledge, a type of normativity and a form of subjectivity. I argue for the need to theorise B.E.M. teachers' agency and resistance in relation to their subjugated knowledge, the material effects of normalising judgements, and the context of their

‘role model’ subjectivity.

### ***Power: Subjectivity & Resistance***

Foucault’s concept of resistance is widely accepted as under-developed and there appears to be very limited application of his work on power to questions of race and racism (Feder, 2007; 2011; McWhorter, 2011; Rasmussen, 2011). Yet, his conception of power is, as Feder, (2011) suggests, a useful analytic tool for understanding and examining the racialised body. Later in this chapter I discuss the deployment of disciplinary power by considering the inward direction of power on the body of a human being. By this I mean the strategies teachers adopt given that there are ‘external forces operating to promote compliance to identifiable gender [and race] norms’ (Feder, 2011, p61). One example in the thesis of disciplinary power is given in Chapter 6 where I examine a teachers’ self-application through the prism of style and fashion.

However, for now, I start with the assertion that human beings in society are both the objects of power and the ‘locus where the power and the resistance to it are exerted’ (Mills, 2003, p35). Taken together, the theoretical framework needs to allow ‘a recourse to analyses in terms of the genealogy of relations of force, strategic developments, and tactics’ (Foucault, 1980b, p114). In this section I explain how I adapt Foucault’s strategic model of power which gives an account of the dynamic and accumulated force of relations to my theorisation of resistance. His infamous quote has relevance: ‘where there is power there is resistance, and yet this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power ... power depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance’ (Foucault, 1980a, p94-95). Following this line of thinking, resistance is always with respect to a specific constraint, which compels, inhibits, or enables the action of others. This suggests a strategic model for understanding resistance because there are material effects that manifest or arise from B.E.M. teachers’ role model relations. Rather than a cause-effect reading, I take role model discourses as instruments of both power *and* resistance. In this respect, I theorise the resistance strategies that B.E.M. teachers as role models deploy by considering Foster’s (1996, p212-216) three lines of enquiry.

First, ‘a regime of power also prepares its resistance, calls it into being, in ways that cannot always be recouped’ (Foster, 1996, p212). I understand this to mean that in

the institution of the school, 'practices of preparedness' exist in the form of, for example, structural and organisational arrangements, the (hidden) curriculum its mores or symbolic codes. Schools are structured, hierarchical, regulatory systems with practices that reward compliance. Schools have embedded procedures that function to identify modes of non-compliance. For example, by employing B.E.M. teachers a school avoids the charge of tokenism in its career structure. Thus, one could argue that B.E.M. teachers are a necessary, representative, and to some extent, symbolic signifier. How a B.E.M. teacher inscribes their 'social text' to be read by others is dependent on a multitude of factors. Resistance is the extent to which B.E.M. teachers choose to make it manifest, and while varied, is in some way ongoing. A case in point is a 'resistant event' where a B.E.M. teacher conducts an assembly on the insidiousness of Euro-centric thinking that have other unforeseen consequences which were not anticipated at the outset. Thus adopting a strategic model for understanding B.E.M. teachers' resistance practices, allows me to expect the unpredictable, the un-recouped forms of resistance and make them visible.

Second, resistance does not reside solely in B.E.M. teachers or pupils; rather resistance is inter-relational (Foster, 1996). There is a multiplicity of constant re-configurations of resisting actions, beliefs, and learning that occur within teacher-pupils' relations; this is a facet of what constitutes pedagogy. Although resistance is constant, my theoretical understanding of resistance develops by examining case-by-case inter-relationships, in order to understand its productive dynamism. Resistance exists in the moment; its realisation occurs in the specificity of an event. A case in point is the situational dynamics around B.E.M. pupils' interpretation of shame where a teacher promotes strategic thinking, and thereby reconfigures expected reactions into ones that would not be construed as 'losing face'. A strategic model gives attention to how B.E.M. teachers' 'everyday' events, can be understood as also containing the ever-present potential for 'critical resistant events'. Foucault's notion of 'discontinuity' is relevant as a nodal analytic tool by which to examine critical events in B.E.M. teachers' discourses about teacher-pupil relations. Rather than a cause-effect' reading of resistance, attention is given to strategies that evoke 'discontinuity' over the actions of another. Thus viewing resistance as strategic games, I foreground in the teachers' narratives the inter-relational subject-positions made possible between B.E.M. teachers and pupils.

Third, resistance is viewed inter-contextually, dependent upon and produced in tandem with other prevailing, local and constant constraints. Resistance inherently has the authority for particular forms of oppositional action to manifest (Foster, 1996). A strategic model of resistance allows me to consider the role of other dominant (for example, culture, patriarchy) forms of constraint acting on B.E.M. teacher-pupil relations.

To conclude, in order to theorise about B.E.M. teachers as agentic one needs to specify the conditions for the everyday appearance of resistance in their subjectivities. As Foucault (1978, p95) reminds us, ‘resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power’, rather resistance is necessarily contradictory since it simultaneously both subordinate and rebellious (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013). B.E.M. teachers and pupils are constantly negotiating a myriad of ‘resistant relations’ or constraints on the action of each other. There are cumulative ‘events’ and discontinuous ‘critical events’ that can be read as ‘resistant relations’ with forms of coercion that have their own historical specificities. Adopting a strategic model to resistance allows me to theorise instances where resistance functions within an intricate web of constrained B.E.M. teacher-pupil relations. The teachers’ relational stories can be analysed as non-compliant or critical events – which we can juxtapose with other contributory factors to offers a more dynamic account. In this thesis, a strategic model based on B.E.M. teachers’ forms of resistance is a method for understanding what is counter-narratives are produced, what positions are taken up, and what dispositions are possible.

So far, the discussion’s focus has been the subject-defining role of power in a dialectic relation with resistance. My attention now moves away from experiencing subjectivity or self-awareness to understanding the subject as being subjected to external regulations. First, I do this by considering the way in which knowledge produces its own forms of regulatory power on the human body. I then elaborate on the relevance to this thesis of Foucault’s work on disciplinary power in terms of a resistance strategy model. The final section will discuss another technique of power – bio-power – with specific reference to racism and sexism.

## ***The Power-Knowledge nexus***

There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, 1978, p27)

In a collection of essays *Power/Knowledge*, Foucault explores the modes of existence of knowledge, the rules governing its formation and the conditions that enable facts (or truths) to develop. Foucault's main contention is the inter-dependency of power and knowledge. Foucault's work is an unconventional tracing of the working of power in the production of truth; an 'analysis of the distinction between fact and falsehood' (Mills, 2003, p67). This nexus, he argues, operates through the imbalance inherent in power relations in conjunction with information seeking processes. Power and knowledge are inter-connected, implying that we are 'subjected to the production of truths through power' (Prado, 2000, p110). Foucault posits that as a result of complex processes of exclusion and choice by those in positions of authority some statements/information are labelled as fact (Mills, 2003). Taking a poststructuralist perspective, schools are exemplary sites for power/knowledge machinations. Teachers are positioned to speak knowledgeably about members of the school community.

The examination process exemplifies the mechanisms operating that make human beings into objects of knowledge and power. Examinations and their associated dividing practices allows particular types of knowledge to be produced and generated about human beings, in terms of ability, or ranking against other attributes. These generated knowledge claims, based on a human being's variations against normative references, are subsequently accepted as facts. Examination serves to objectify human beings through processes of normalising judgement that include: establishing procedures; ranking or benchmarking against external criteria; and generating fields of knowledge. The human being is thus located within a field of documentation, objectified as 'a case' to be studied, observed and compared. The effects of these accepted truths is that they are both externally known, and are internalised by others. A consequence of knowledge dissemination for pupils is evident, for example in how they are organised into ability groups or judgements about whether they exhibit 'anti-social' behaviour. One also needs to bear in mind that while knowledge production works in the interest of particular groups (Mills, 2003), subjugated knowledge is also

produced.

Examination processes are evident in procedures in UK schools linked to how teachers are appraised. Teachers' access to career development is often based on appraisals that might enhance or stultify opportunities to advance their career or to develop pertinent skills. Senior teachers produce knowledge about colleagues according to their ability to plan for pupil progression, subject specialism, level of professionalism and so on, thus creating categories. To produce such information is to make a claim for power (Mills, 2003, p67). The assessment of teachers in UK against Teaching Standards (DfE, 2013) is another example of the interplay of power relations and information generating processes. Under the guise of appraisal, teachers are observed and data are generated about their competence, the aim is to transform a teacher's practice. The effect of these forms of appraisal or assessment is that teachers learn to self-identify with external standards of normalcy (Gray et al, 1999; Troman, 2000). The point made here is that such constructed truths are sustained through an array of strategies that re-affirm such facts as credible.

Teachers (and pupils) however, enter into strategising games where resistance to, or rejection of, accepted truths is negotiable. There are counter-versions of events or statements that can be constructed that are equally valid and which may be denied recourse to representation. B.E.M. teachers make judgements, and are judged, both are to some extent constituents of their self-perceptions as role models. Nor can one assume that pupils are ignorant of dominant ideas or representations about B.E.M. teachers given the power of knowledge to define human beings through normalising judgements and observations I now turn to consider discipline as a mode of regulation applied to behaviour. Here I consider management techniques or technologies deployed in schools (institutions and society), which engender self-surveillance and self-policing behaviours.

### ***Disciplinary Power***

Foucault's work *Discipline and Punish*, describes 'a history of the modern soul and a new power to judge' (Prado, 2000, p59). The modern soul is the mind 'reconceived as a surface inscription for power' (Foucault, 1979, p23). In other words, control of the mind (mental slavery) through technologies of power is realised as an efficient way of ensuring the submission of bodies. All schools have their own disciplinary



regimes and systems of punishment (for example, classroom rules and behaviour policies) with sanctions deployed to offset resistance. Discipline in schools is generally applied to control conduct in order to help improve pupils' performance, and thereby their usefulness to society. I am not suggesting that exercising discipline is either good or bad, because there is always the power (or not) for the teacher to guide how pupils conduct themselves. The distinction made here is that whereas disciplinary punishment is fundamentally corrective, the new power takes the form of normalising judgements. Processes of normalisation operate by binary divisions for example, labelling learners as disaffected/engaged and characterising learners' values, beliefs or dispositions as culturally deficient/enriched. Teachers, as agents of change are thus empowered to make judgements about pupils and disciplinary power is administered through surveillance as efficient means of social regulation. There is the implicit agreement that learners are mindful of their own and others' behaviour. Foucault theorised that disciplinary power is not a personal attribute received or given but rather 'it is a set of strategic correlations that produce social functions as well as collective and individual subjects' (Foucault, 1975, p31). Disciplinary power is a form of technology aimed at regulating the body; it concerns techniques that consider 'how to keep someone under surveillance, how to control his [sic] conduct, his behaviour, his aptitudes, how to improve his performance, multiply his capacities, how to put him where he is most useful' (Foucault, 1981, cited in O'Farrell, 2005, p102).

The purpose of disciplinary techniques is individuation, since the effectiveness of discipline is dependent on the imposition of notions of singularity. I interpret this objective to mean directing one's thoughts inwards towards actions that demonstrate obedience and subjugation to certain understandings about what constitutes appropriate beliefs or thinking. In this way, self-knowledge and the experiences attached engenders a re-definition of one's subjectivity (Prado, 2000). Disciplinary power efficiently makes human beings internalise ideas about normal behaviour patterns to the point where each is continually self-monitoring. Foucault deploys the metaphor of the Bentham panopticon to develop the idea that 'surveillance can turn submission to directives to conformity with norms' (Prado, 2000, p61). The effect of surveillance is such that the need for human gaze diminishes as 'occupants come to internalise its presence' (Prado, 2000, p61). Although monitoring and the constant



threat of the 'gaze' subjugate teachers and learners to vigilant self-auditing, there is alongside this, resistance (or variation) to any given 'norm'. Habitual compliance to normative ideals (for example, white middle class values and culture) or their reification is not always possible. In this thesis, disciplinary power allows me to theorise about B.E.M. teachers' construal of their bodies as representatives of their culture, or as 'visible markers' within their schools.

Disciplinary power acts on the general economy of school social spaces (staffrooms, corridors and so on). Here I conceptualise disciplinary power to understand how the body is inter-related to material arrangements, to show where power is both extended and enmeshed (Hook, 2007). The management of access to designated spaces operates by excluding entry and/or controlling movement within social spaces. The utilisation of these spaces denotes the level of restriction imposed and/or the expected modes of interaction between human beings while contained within the space. Different modes of compliance have legitimacy in various education settings for teachers and pupils. For example, there are distinctions made between talk permissible by pupils in the playground, on the sports field or at after-school clubs. While formal and informal spaces are, of course, not mutually exclusive, B.E.M. teachers' construal of the utility of these spaces (for example, for confessional talk between teacher and pupil) can, I suggest, be interpreted as effects of disciplinary power. The interest in this thesis concerns what B.E.M. teachers *do* when they cross this divide. The intention is to 'describe the way in which resistance operates as a part of power, not to seek or promote or oppose it' (Kendall & Wickham, 1998, p51). Disciplinary power governs B.E.M. teachers' conformity in a variety of ways, but one cannot assume mental slavery, nor that compliance with expected norms or beliefs about pupils is uncontested. Thus a theoretical frame acknowledging the role of disciplinary power allows me to examine B.E.M. teachers' personal spaces in school, how they are deployed, the forms of social interaction possible and the extent to which such agendas can be construed as empowering pupils.

So far, I have suggested the use of a theoretical frame that draws upon poststructural ideas that acknowledge the dynamics of B.E.M. teachers' positioning in school. The functioning of disciplinary power gives context to the complexity of B.E.M. teachers' discursive work. In the final section, I argue for the introduction of another layer of

contextualisation relevant to understanding role modelling since this locates the B.E.M. teacher within the wider social issues that permeate their work. Here I consider Foucault's notion of bio-power with specific reference to the effects of racism and sexism, because it is arguably a critical factor determining the quality of social interactions in all pedagogical relations in schools.

### ***Bio-Power***

The individual was of interest exactly insofar as he or she could contribute to the strength of the state. The lives, deaths, activities, work, joy of individuals were important to the extent that these everyday concerns became politically useful. (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1984, p139)

In this final section, I discuss the relevance of Foucault's concept of bio-power by drawing upon three key texts: *The Birth of Social Medicine (BSM)*, *Society Must be Defended (SMD)*, and *The History of Sexuality (HOS)*. Bio-power describes the 'increasing organisation of population and welfare for the sake of increased force and productivity' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1984, p8). Whereas we thought of the regulatory function of disciplinary power as training aimed at producing 'docile minds/bodies' at the institutional level, bio-power refers to how this process manifests within society's '*social body*'. Bio-power refers to techniques or technologies of population management that produce diverse forms of knowledge aiming to create in human beings the desire for normalcy. Foucault theorises that bio-power like all power, is not simply repressive, rather saliency lies in its potent dispersion of multiple discourses (Mayo, 1997).

The politicisation of the population through hegemonic discourses is not new. However, bio-power as a flexible technology of power can produce novel forms of governance. At times the technologies operate to highlight that conflict is intra-societal (for example, championing hetero-normativity and heterosexuality), while at other times the conflict is between society and outside groups (for example, race war discourses or Islamophobia). Foucault applies the bio-power concept to illustrate technologies of population management techniques to establish biological delineation demarcated by sexual preferences or along racial lines. In both cases bio-power is rationalised as a protection of the 'bloodline' of the population that requires managerial techniques aimed at normalising the sexual activities and/or proclivities of the population.

Foucault's thinking shifted throughout his life and he subsequently abandoned bio-power in favour of governmentality as a concept to understand technologies for management of populations. However, the genesis of his work around bio-power is relevant to this thesis in order to theorise about the influence of other knowledge forms that B.E.M. teachers may/may not adopt or that can influence their actions and the production of counter-narratives. The analytic usefulness is that bio-power allows me to link ideas about the working of power-knowledge in pupils' belief with B.E.M. teachers' understandings of how they counter-act them. I can assess the extent to which B.E.M. teachers and pupils' knowledge about racism and sexuality, once manufactured and/or reproduced, gain ascendancy within the school's *social* body.

### Bio-power & Sexuality

The deployment of sexuality defines the regimes of power, knowledge and pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality. (Foucault, 1978, p11)

*The History of Sexuality Vol. 1 (HOS)* is a study of how the modern subject's sexual nature and cultural interpretation of it, result from discourses that define sexuality. The work considers the manner within which human beings become obliged to recognise their sexual behaviour and judge themselves accordingly. Foucault (1975) argues that the control of and administration of knowledge about sexuality was a key factor in processes whereby the population could be morally disciplined (O'Farrell, 2005, p106). He uses the term the 'repressive hypothesis' to discuss the idea that through supposedly repressive discourses, things which were previously thought of as taboo or silenced became the subject of extensive production of knowledge. Foucault (1975) contends that the administrative mechanisms through which power operates arise out of the proliferation of 'experts', scientific and medical knowledge, as well as forms of discourse (moral, confessional and so on). New categories of knowledge are produced and other knowledge forms are reiteratively created; sexuality becomes a problem of truth. The instrumental effect of the deployment of bio-power is the 'implantation of perversion' into sexual discourses. As human beings create and collaborate in the manufacture of 'truths' about themselves they become implicated in their own control through confessional acts of disclosure. In addition to the impulse for confessional acts about one's sexuality, there is a

generation of knowledge and refinement in terms of normality and abnormality. The effect of iterative categorisation processes is to locate human beings into ever-decreasing subsets of deviancy. *HOS* highlights how sexuality, a natural private human activity, becomes objectified and thus subjected to unprecedented levels of control. Furthermore, the proliferation of sex discourses, together with other dominant discourses (for example, religious) leads the individual to morally self-judge. The relation of power to sex becomes optimal when it surfaces to intervene on the individual's practices.

Foucault argues that the deployment of these technologies of power can be applied to *any* human activity previously located in the private domain regardless of whether it is prohibitive or taboo. Manifestation of the repressive hypothesis is evident in our modern era when judgements are made about 'political correctness'. Language descriptors once deemed derogatory are parodied in common vernacular, for example in comedy. Previously concerted efforts were made to eliminate such language choices because they were argued to be offensive to certain groups, now these taboos are recouped for popular consumption. My argument here is that while anti-sexist and anti-racist movements originally sought to eliminate the proliferation of subliminal negative thinking, there is a turn towards legitimising prejudices and legitimate bias. Recipients of taboo statements are accused of being oversensitive and the speech act is justified as inconsequential.

The idea of the capillary effect of bio-power permeating at the personal, intimate level is pertinent when theorising about teachers and pupils' interpersonal sphere. Schools are no longer required to record or report racist incidences; the effect is that some pupils may not necessarily understand how to recognise these if/when they occur. Any claim that a recipient may make is subject to re-interpretation by teachers (the experts) who may reclassify or dismiss it as they choose. Not only do the technologies of power inculcate particular forms of value and perspectives, there is also an imposition of a new self-perception (Foucault, 1975).

*HOS's* relevance to this thesis is that it highlights the impact of discursive forces on the body (Mills, 2000). In this regard, the B.E.M. teachers and pupils' bodies are sites on which discourses (including deficit pathology) are both enacted and where they are contested (Mills, 2000). Therefore, one needs to give an account in the theoretical

framing of the notion that these teachers' experiences are *always* mediated through social construction about B.E.M. men/women. If as is suggested, even B.E.M. teachers' private domain can be encroached through technologies of power, then they are vulnerable to implanted forms of classification. In the school context, how pupils perceive representations of B.E.M. men/women and what their teachers understand these beliefs to be is of interest. For example, pupils' beliefs about the role of women may be contested by other ideas developed through their involvement with B.E.M. teachers' intentionally or otherwise. Likewise, the capillary effect of bio-power can be seen to function in the way black men are represented in society and may influence how B.E.M. teachers interact with and talk to pupils about negative classifications and the implantation of sexist ideas.

### Bio-power and Racism

In *SMD*, Foucault distinguishes between racism and race war discourses defining the former as merely particular and localised episodes. However, other critics comment on the limitations of such views (McWhorter, 2011; Rasmussen, 2011) pointing to the role of economic imperatives in perpetuating racist beliefs, and the absence of post-colonial perspectives to his thinking about the deliberate under-development of the colonies. Said (1978) for example, criticises Foucault on the truth of representation, by pointing to colonial writings about primitive indigenous people as constructed lies. However, Foucault's definition of racism which is clearly under-developed, is partly due to his subsequent reworking of bio-power into conceptions around governmentality. In this thesis, I apply Foucault's theory of bio-power to discuss how racism and racist discourses are internalised into the social fabric of society. This feature of internalised racism 'operates as a biological caesura within a population between worthy and unworthy life' (Foucault, 1997). The effect of racism is to, bring about the unification of a population creating the 'us' or biological whole:

[R]acism justifies the death-function in the economy of bio-power by appealing to the principle that the death of others makes one biologically stronger insofar as one is a member of a race of a population, insofar as one is an element in a living plurality. (Foucault, 1976b, p258)

Racism is arguably an example of how bio-power operates to justify division and classification of sections of the population. Historically the perpetuation of racism

has served to satisfy colonial economic imperatives; this is justified by the need to treat 'selected differences of morphology, behaviour or belief as biological deviations to be contained or eliminated' (McWhorter, 2011, p85). Biological difference, despite evidence to the contrary, is rooted in eugenic ideals that rationalises forms of exclusion, for example, social apartheid or social genocide. Such extreme perspectives align with the idea of protecting the 'composition, the reproduction, and the development of the population by isolating and excluding the abnormal' (Rusmussen, 2011, p38). Racism as a 'mechanism for individuation underwrites practices that isolate non-conformities and identifies them as aberrations to be neutralised' (McWhorter, 2011, p88). Thus, technologies of racism operate within a given population to both unify and differentiate. As McWhorter (2011) points out:

as a technology, racism easily articulates with both sovereign power, in its unifying action, and disciplinary normalization, in its individuating and its pathologization of deviation. It renders critiques for non-normal perspectives inaudible at the level of rational debate by treating them as biologically threatening behaviours rather than claims to truth. (McWhorter, 2011, p88)

There is a historical legacy of racist-thinking embedded in the psyche of Western society characterised by the idea that it is in perpetual war from 'home-grown enemies' or otherwise (McWhorter, 2011). Hook (2005) uses the term pre-discursive racism to describe these non-verbal thought processes, arguing that while yet realised bodily, they manifest in aversions and as intuitions. A close approximation to the machinations of racist thinking on the populace is as technologies of affect (Hook, 2005). Here I align with Hook's theoretical understanding of how racism operates as simultaneously material discourse and affective phenomena. This leads to the idea that bio-power facilitates discourses of affect, in its more efficient or pervasive form, and surfaces as emotional responses to phenomena about the 'other'. Furthermore, given its diversified form, racist ideas can be mobilised for political intervention to justify a host of regulatory powers. In this respect, I align with Winant's (2000) contention that the longevity of the race concept and the continuation of race thinking and racialised acts of violence and aggression guarantee that race remains a globalised feature of social reality. Racialised landscapes are influenced by world events from which schools and other institutions are not exempt (Crozier & Davies, 2008).

Bio-power is relevant to this thesis since it draws attention to the permeation of sexist and racist beliefs and how they manifest through the proliferation of varied learned discourses about human nature. A theoretical framing which acknowledges the existence of institutional (or otherwise) racist and sexist attitudes enables me to give an account of the extent to which it affects the lives of B.E.M. teachers and pupils. One cannot assume either party are immune to the effects of intolerance, since ideas about a human being's raced or sexed nature are sustained in the very discourses that define them. With regard to this thesis, consideration is given to situations that reinforce cultural reproduction of human nature because these 'natural traits' always carry the potential to be expressed as deviant or abnormal. The point I want to raise here is that these teachers not only have an overview of (and opinion on) the effects of bio-power as part of their social condition in school but are positioned to understand some of the ramifications for pupils. Hence I argue these teachers, who are marginalised within the school hierarchy, occupy a liminal position from which they hold empathy towards B.E.M. pupils.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

In this chapter I set out my theoretical frame for understanding role models, role model discourses and how these are understood by teachers. I explained the theories underpinning my thesis the aim of which is to understand how B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models. Poststructuralist theory rejects the notion of unified truth instead we are invited to question the assumption attached to these phenomena. Foucault questions the veracity of absolute truth, arguing there are only different truths about reality at any given historical moment – truths that fulfil the needs of power (Trinh, 1989). Following Foucault, I adopt a genealogical approach which is predicated on anti-foundational and anti-essentialist assumptions. By this I mean we cannot assume an originating source for knowledge and meaning about role models rather one understands these present circumstances by critiquing what they say about past events. In this way we can think of the role model concept as problematic and working within a poststructural frame requires that I consider teachers' discursive and non-discursive practices. Discourses are understood as both systems of representation and as the basis for teachers' actions. In other words, discourses function to give legitimacy to particular ways of knowing that are regulated both by the context and language choice. B.E.M. teachers are understood



as constituted out of role model discourses and there are material effects.

I then discussed the unpredictability of role model discourses to suggest they generate their own particular truths. Foucault characterises the power-knowledge nexus as an abstract force (Ball, 2011). I interpret this to mean that in order to understand power relations, attention must be given to how knowledge about role models circulates and how this knowledge functions (Widder, 2004). The significance of Foucault's thinking on this thesis is the idea that out of the complex interplay between power and forms of knowledge, certain forms of subjectivity and experiences are constituted. Foucault's concept of power, with its capillary effect, is applied in this thesis to understand the dynamics of B.E.M. teacher-pupil relations since it is a fundamental aspect of their social interactions. These relations whilst dynamic are also subject to various forms of resistance, and the teachers themselves engage in their own strategies of resistance. I propose a way of understanding the various forms of resistance by interpreting how they resist in terms of localised, situational and dominant disciplinary regimes. For example, I will examine the way that normalising judgements affect teachers' actions and practices.

Foucault's (1975, 1982) work draws attention to the historical and cultural specificity of the body and highlights the impersonality of power. To theorise about B.E.M. teacher-pupil interactions I need to consider the socialisation process in role modelling as a pedagogical discursive field. This means considering some of the motives underpinning their teaching, how they perform their role and signify this to others as well as the resources they draw upon. In short, my theory needs to provide a holistic perspective to role model relations, one that takes into account the fact that pedagogical discourses concern relations between pupils, teachers, and with other curriculum resources. This triadic relation I theorise has currency when one considers role model relationships. Taking a genealogical perspective allows me to examine past micro events in the teachers' narratives with recourse to the historical legacies of marginalised people.

My contention is that racist and sexist sentiments cannot be assumed to lie outside the school walls. Bio-power draws attention to the susceptibility of B.E.M. teachers and pupils' bodies, souls and minds to these learned ideas about human nature. I make the case that only by linking the micro-politics of B.E.M. pupil and teacher



socialisation processes with wider social and/or institutional ideas about marginal groups and about gender can we understand the complexity of role model practices and the tensions they generate. Crucial to the thesis question are B.E.M. teachers' experiential knowledge, the conditions that generate different strategic modes of resistance, and their understanding of how their discursive acts might have an effect on pupils' future actions. The aim is to understand how B.E.M. teachers speak their role model identity into existence. Their talk is constituted out of counter-narratives they produce drawing upon experiences of belonging to a marginalised group in society. In this regard, Widder's (2004, p434) comment is apt: 'it is the knowledge produced by resistance that modifies power relations, not the act of resistance itself.'

## CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Introduction*

To explore how B.E.M. teachers live the identity of ‘role model’ requires first considering the range of understandings of the term in the research literature. This is my starting point as, in this chapter, I examine various understandings of role models. The first section explores interpretations of the role model concept within two disparate research areas: organisational studies and education. Within the field of organisational theory underpinning most of the research studies of role modelling is the uncritical assumption of the ‘leaders and followers’ model (Chaleff, 2003; Kelley, 1992). I argue that this symbiotic model sets role model relations as a precondition for the successful functioning of an organisation. I then discuss key implications of this and explore its relevance to ideas about established leaders in relation to role models in schools. This is followed by a review of traditional understandings of the role model concept within education theory, beginning with its derivations in social learning and role identity theories. I then review ‘the teacher role model debates’, specifically the cogency of male teacher role model recruitment drives. As my research is based on in-depth interviews with B.E.M. teachers, I also review studies that examine their experience of associated contextual factors (including institutional racism and career aspirations). In the penultimate section I draw on this analysis to call for a re-visioning of role models, and a re-framing of the debate to ask questions about what ‘role model’/role modelling might mean for those who ‘self-define’ as B.E.M. role models and B.E.M. teachers. I conclude with a review of research studies that underpin my rationale for re-framing the debate. Shared discursive history, which I develop in the following three analysis chapters, is predicated on the arguments in this literature review chapter.

### *Locating the field: visible or invisible?*

In the methodology chapter, I state that a guiding force throughout all aspects of the research process has been to reflexively engage my own subjectivity. The process of reviewing the literature led me to respond to the late Stuart Hall’s (1992) caution for researchers to examine and theorise their own political and cultural identities and how these impact on their inquiry. A review of much of the research literature on role models and B.E.M. teachers suggests that their explicit positioning is rarely considered or problematised by academics. For ‘people of colour’, as Mahoney

(1997) points out, whiteness becomes visible. Similarly, Dyer (1997) comments that whiteness is the dominant normative space, it is an invisible perspective which overlays research since it is seldom acknowledged. Rarely are considerations given to ‘what has been silenced or invisible in academic discussions’ (Nakayama & Krizer, 1995, p303). Contributions of scholars located ‘in the margins’ and research findings informed by liminal perspectives are clearly necessary. This is not to suggest that only research that acknowledges B.E.M perspectives be considered useful or valid. Rather my aim is to be aware that, in much of the research, ‘whiteness’ needs to be treated as problematic. As Sleeter (1994) explains:

I suspect that our privileges and silences [about whiteness] are invisible to us [whites] partly because we numerically constitute the majority of this nation ... control a large portion of the nation’s resources and media, which enable us to surround our self with our own varied experiences to buffer ourselves from the experiences, and the pain and rage of people of color. (Sleeter, 1994, cited in Nakayama & Krizer, 1995, p303)

Sleeter’s reflection on the naturalization of whiteness within research processes is rare. At best a perfunctory acknowledgement of racialised differences is incorporated into the text of the research studies reviewed. While many of the contributors articulate the influence of masculine hegemony on the role model process and how masculinity operates rhetorically as a privileged place of power, they ignore their own invisible racialised power. I am reminded of criticisms levelled at the white privilege implicit in second wave feminist thinking and research (Abel, 1993; Carby, 1982; Crenshaw, 1991). For example, Singh (1995) cautions us on the limitations of many feminist poststructural endeavours in prioritising gender or sexist stereotyping as the principle oppressive force whilst relegating other forms of oppression into a secondary category.

The field of knowledge production for this thesis is at the intersection between studies about role models and about B.E.M. teachers. There is a dearth of UK related research that interrogates teaching from the perspective of B.E.M teachers. Furthermore, within this, with a few exceptions (Goli et al, 2010; Maylor, 2009), studies considering the idea of B.E.M. teachers as role models are noticeably absent. The gaps in the literature reviewed in this chapter certainly provide justification for research in this area. My contribution to the field is a to re-consider what this social identity might mean for B.E.M. teachers. My aim is to contribute to the development

of an alternative conceptual frame for understanding B.E.M. teachers as role models, one that applies poststructural interpretive readings to understanding the effects of power/knowledge and identity construction. There is a need to explore normative assumptions about role models, and include alternative perspectives that may both inform and reconfigure our ideas about the concept. The significance of this thesis is that it builds upon a small number of other studies on B.E.M. teachers' experiences in UK schools (Gillborn & Mirza 2000; Maylor, 2009; Osler, 1997) that call for further research into how gender, socio-economic status and 'race' impact on teaching identities (Brown et al, 2000; Connell 1985; Witherspoon & Mitchell, 2009).

A common-sense understanding of a role model refers to an individual perceived as exemplary or worthy of imitation. The idea of an individual with qualities one would admire or emulate, or who is identified as successful, is embedded within popular culture, myths and folklore (Gibson, 1995; Ibarra, 1999). To be conferred with role model status is, however, always contingent on recognition by others that one falls within its boundaries. My focus in this review of literature about role models is how those boundaries are mapped through research.

### ***Role models: A corporate view***

The role model concept emerges within the overlapping fields of organisation theory and management studies (Bucher & Stelling, 1977; Dalton, 1989; Gibson, 1995; Gibson & Barron, 2003; Girona, 2002; Ibarra, 1999). Identification with role models is viewed, from career and organisational behaviour theorists' perspectives, as critical to an individual's growth (Gibson, 1995; Krumboltz, 1996). Leaders in organisations are encouraged to be role models (Gibson & Barron, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). The core premise of these studies is an uncritical assumption that relations between leaders and followers are symbiotic. Symbiotic relations are deemed a pre-condition for the successful functioning of any organisation or institution (Chaleff, 2003; Kelly, 1992). Rather than developmental relationships where leaders provide guidance, the pervasive view is one in which followers are actively selective and self-reliant (Dalton, 1989). The view is that an individual's potential for career success or failure is partially dependent upon them having good role models, and through following, they can actualise and achieve their goals (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). This view aligns with neo-liberal sensibilities as the responsibility is for followers to be entrepreneurial subjects who seek out and create their own network of relationships.

Proximity to and personal knowledge of a role model are relevant to this thesis. However, although one would assume proximity is a necessary pre-condition for role modelling, within the literature this is contested. A few studies explore access to good role models and draw the conclusion that proximity is a determinant of career success (Girona, 2002; Ross, 2002). However, Bell (1970) argues for distinctions to be made between interaction and identification. He argues that a follower may have a mutual, supportive relationship yet still choose not to identify with a leader. Conversely, in other studies, relative proximity is considered a negligible influence on a follower's choice of role model (Ibarra, 1999). For example, Zagenczyk et al (2004) explore distance from role models to show that, rather than personal contact, it is a leader's outward expression of status that others respect or emulate.

The field of organisation theory is dominated by studies that focus on established leader (or role model) and report on how their characteristics, attributes or performances impact on followers' likelihood of emulating them (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Lockwood et al, 2004). The general consensus is that leadership is a contingent product of both personal and situational factors (Fielder, 1964; Fiedler & Garcia, 1987). A few studies investigate the differences between role models and followers, and how different attributes of leaders' impact on followers' selection of them. For example, Gibson and Barron (2003) found that mature followers select leaders who share similar values and attitudes. Other studies explore identity formation (Gibson, 1995; Ibarra 2004) predominantly focusing on how exemplary leaders maintain and/or negotiate their sphere of social influence. Generally, the findings point to the idea that leaders both directly and actively transform the attitude and behaviour of their followers. Some scholars argue that leaders may influence followers' identities as an indirect means of increasing their commitment (Chemers, 2003). Leaders gain influence due to followers' acceptance of their superior's performance (Javidan et al, 1995). Charismatic leaders extend their sphere of influence and commitment in situations where they are able to redefine the norms and objectives of a group (Haslam & Platow, 2001).

Poststructural approaches to leadership in management studies reconfigure the notion of role model to a social construct and examine 'identity' operating in the work place. Kondo's (1990, p24) study of Japanese work life concludes that 'identity is not a fixed thing, it is negotiated, open, shifting, ambiguous – the results of

culturally available meanings and the open-ended, power laden enactment of those meaning'. She posits the impact of the social conditions on leaders' identity formation should not be discounted. Her view concurs with Collinson (2006) who concludes that followers' identities may be more differentiated than previously assumed asserting that, while it is often assumed that leaders and followers retain a shared sense of identity, poststructuralist analyses reveal that followers' identities may be more differentiated and contested within the workplace. Followers might 'enact resistant and dramaturgical selves producing outcomes that leaders may not anticipate, be aware of, or indeed even understand' (Collinson, 2006, p4). Collinson's (2006) term 'dramaturgical' refers to a performative identity, or types of performance that draw the attention of on-lookers. For example, in organisations where there is a culture of performance management and appraisal, there is a heightened awareness of visibility which produces a range of identities. Poststructural research into the workplace identifies how power productively produces disciplined identities, constructed as conformist identities, via the corporate culture or through the use of technologies introduced to improve an organisation's efficiency (Casey, 1995; McKinlay & Starkey, 1998). Other studies emphasise different impacts of surveillance technologies and disciplinary working practices. For example, Hodson (2001) reports that resistant identities and dissent characterise many organisations contributing to the individuals' self-esteem.

Other poststructural theorists highlight the diverse, and shifting nature of oppositional identities in organisations, which they argue, are often covert, temporal and unstable (Jernier et al, 1994). For example, Ashcroft and Mumby (2004) point to the potential for dissonance or isolation when there is a limited pool of minority or female staff available as role models in an organisation. Writing from a feminist perspective, their findings suggest that some women strategically outwardly express 'masculine' qualities as part of their repertoire of management skills in order to gain acceptance. Adkins (2002) argues that men acquire value from performing femininity in a workplace but women do not acquire value by performing masculinity or femininity, as the latter is perceived as natural to them. Manthia Diawara (1998) makes a similar argument in relation to race.

Taking a Foucauldian lens on Gleeson and Shain's (1999) work on identity in organisations, we can gain relevant insights into regulatory and disciplinary forces.

Gleeson and Shain (1999) observed changes in leaders' identities who are mediating organisational change and/or implementing intensified targets. They noted that, in their data, transitional processes gave rise to contradictory identities in middle management. The middle managers were caught between various imperatives as part of their working conditions that in turn created ambiguity or double identities. According to Gleeson and Shain (1999), transition experiences produced the 'willing', the 'unwilling' and 'strategic' compliance. Managers were either committed to the change process, sceptical and developing a limited range of defensive stances, or able to reconstruct the change process whilst maintaining their core values. In terms of identity formation, transitional processes within an organisation can have a range of impacts.

Thus identity construction in organisations is highly context dependent, since this provides the resources for leaders to define and represent their social identity (Haslam & Platow, 2001). In organisations that are highly stratified, or where structural inequalities are visible, identity construction is observed to impact the agency of leaders and followers. A case in point are Haslam and Reicher's (2007) findings drawn from a BBC Prison Study to investigate two sides of a partnership. The investigation considered the constraints on a leader's identity made by their social reality and oppositional positioning. The findings suggest leadership is possible when there is a shared sense of identity. They conclude that both followers and leaders are *active* interpreters of their social world (Haslam & Reicher, 2007). Furthermore, they argue that although leaders are entrepreneurs of identity, one cannot assume followers are passive consumers or recipients of role models.

Hogg (2001) proposes a social identity theory of leadership dependent on the production of a shared (group) social identity. He argues leadership is a group process generated by social categorisation and the appearance of influential 'prototype-based' leaders. Leadership is dependent upon the production of a shared social identity. The promotion of a collective group identity is vital for the role model leadership to be maintained. Hogg (2001) posits that leadership is contingent upon the extent to which leaders are perceived as 'prototypical' of the group's identity. Hogg's (2001) description of leadership as a group process generated by social categorisation implies that the social (or cultural) group may choose to exclude a leader and/or monitor membership.

So what are the implications of this literature for understanding B.E.M. teachers as leaders (role models)? What findings would one expect to emerge from this thesis? First, the relational aspect of role modelling is crucial to transformational processes. Role modelling has an inherently consensual social attraction and influence, in addition to it being defined as inter- and intra-personal relationships between teachers and pupils. We need to consider B.E.M. teachers' assumptions about pupils' agency since their enactments are partially determined by interpersonal dynamics. Second, although relative proximity might be useful, I expect B.E.M. teachers' outward expressions of status (including 'masculine' qualities) might be used to evoke mimicry by B.E.M. pupils. Third, the identity construction of both leaders and followers will be shaped by differentiation as much as identification (Collinson, 2006). A range of contextual and/or situational social factors are implicated in teachers' and pupils' identity construction. Fourth, leadership is dependent upon the existence of a shared social identity (Haslam & Reicher, 2007). If, as the findings suggest, the promotion of a shared group identity facilitates role model relations then consideration needs to be given to how cultural congruency between B.E.M. teachers and pupils functions. This notion of a collective group identity also has a bearing on the thesis as both leaders and followers are active interpreters of the social world (Reicher & Haslam, 2007). This view assumes that teachers are incited to adopt certain cultural practices, or display themselves as incumbents of certain categories of 'masculinity' or 'femininity' on particular occasions (Coleman, 1990). The final area in need of further attention is the leadership strategies that offset followers' resistance to change, or how discipline or other regulatory techniques are applied in the context of a school. Every school has its own localised regimes of normalising practice. Inevitably these give rise to variable modes of resistance to managerial control, and to forms of self-governance adopted by individual teachers at the school. Thus one can expect contradictory and competing imperatives to affect teacher 'role model' identity construction processes and performances. Leadership is contingent on how a teacher constitutes him/herself and on the extent of their agency to engage in transformational processes.

### ***Role model: an educational view***

Traditional understandings of the role model concept found in education theory derive from a combination of role identity theories (Stryker & Serpe, 1982) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Role identity theories analyse the attitudinal



change involved where there is a desire for status and position and a motivation to emulate another. From such a perspective, identification is viewed as a process of social comparison where the aim is self-improvement in order to gain one's aspirations. The main tenet of Bandura's social learning theory is that social development (which includes acquiring gender roles) is a process in which children learn by observing adults (Bandura, 1977; 1986). Underpinning Bandura's idea is a view of human agency which perceives individuals as pro-actively engaged in their own development and having the self-belief that enables them to exercise a 'measure of control over their thoughts, feeling and actions, that what people think, believe and feel affects how they behave' (Bandura, 1986, p225). His perspective on gender roles is that significant others (for example, parents and teachers) play an active role in a child's identity formation. Bandura's work is premised on the mutability of children (objects) who can be regulated to shape their conduct. This traditional view enshrines education policy, specifically the need for teacher role models, ossifying lay thinking as universal truths. This perspective ossifies lay thinking as universal truth, and enshrines it in education policy aimed at recruiting male and B.E.M. teachers as role models to pupils.

The traditional perspectives espoused above have been extensively critiqued and their conceptual limitations exposed by feminist, poststructural and queer scholars (Britzman, 1993b; Francis et al, 2008; Goli et al, 2010; Martino, 2008). The limitation of the role model argument is premised on the idea that sex-role stereotyping is a flawed conceptual framework for understanding gender formation. This critique is consistent with the view that 'children are produced (and produce themselves) through a range of identities and social positionings' (Epstein et al, 2003, p31). Moreover, children's subject positions are constructed through processes of self-identification and interpellation. The 'girls' and 'boys' discourses operating in schools and elsewhere are mobilised by children to construct their identity. Segal (1990) argues that sex-role modelling is limited in its capacity to 'account for the complex dynamics of gender identity since the theory fails to explain the dominance of gender stereotypes for some, or the resilience to them on the part of others' (Segal, 1990, p69). For instance, Epstein et al (2003) argue that, in primary schools, normative heterosexuality is maintained and (re)enforced through discourses of childhood innocence, which are profoundly gendered. Framing 'age' as a discursive space, they posit that the social and cultural construction of gender is manufactured in/by

teachers, the curriculum as well as the process of schooling. Some scholars point to the normative gaze of heterosexuality which polices girls' friendship patterns to suggest the pressure to conform to acceptable stereotypical modes of behaviour and disposition is endemic to children and young people's experiences of schooling (Hey, 1997).

A key idea emerging from educational research on pupils' views about role models is that the influence of teachers on the lives of young people is limited (Hendry et al, 1992; Offer & Schonert-Reichl 1992). For instance, Galbo (1989, p5) reports 'that teachers are seldom found to be significant for a large portion of adolescents' (approximately 10% of all significant adults). In contrast, the influence of significant family and friends continue to impact on adolescent identity formation (Freedman-Doan, 1997). The assumption that teachers, given their close proximity during children's formative years, are the key figures is simplistic (Skelton, 2003; Lake & Eastwood, 2004). Young people's role models extend across a spectrum from peer influences to cultural icons (Giles & Maltby, 2004). However, despite this research critiquing the general political rhetoric, these studies are silenced or at best ignored.

### ***Teachers as Role Models***

The construction of the teacher role model is normalised as white/middle class and male. In research from the 1960s and 1970s, role model is used to capture how teachers take up and incorporate the role into their identity (Delamont, 1976; Irvine, 1989; Morrison & McIntyre, 1973; Shipman, 1968). More recently, Carrington & Skelton (2003, p254) have pointed out that role model has come to signify 'an ethical template for the exercise of adult responsibilities'. Wiley's (1998) work on teachers as character builders permeates views about teacher identity, for example, about promoting conformity. Hargreaves et al's (2006) report on the status of teachers and the teaching profession profiles teachers in a similar vein. In the UK, the main thrust of the Teacher Training Agency's recruitment campaigns has been to re-equip the teaching force, with an emphasis on leadership and differentiated management structures (Furlong, 2008). The new profession, is de-politicised and performative, one where 'particular views of teaching, [and] educational values are seen as dysfunctional' (Furlong, 2008, p735). Professionalism becomes synonymous with motivational orators. For example, in the UK, the 2008 Teacher Training Agency recruitment campaign evoked the idea of what it is to *be* an ideal teacher. For

example, their slogan ‘Nobody forgets a good teacher’ promotes the idea of joining the profession to become an inspirational archetype for children. The ideal teacher is someone of moral standing *delivering* knowledge.

In the introduction chapter, I pointed out that ‘role model’ debates predominantly centre on addressing boys’ underachievement and/or disaffection. I argued that ‘achievement’ is a slippery, yet narrow, term and that its use discounts other equally important markers of success. I now elaborate further on the issues attached to, and used to justify, the notion of B.E.M. role model teachers.

#### Male teacher role models: A remedy for the problem?

Several scholars are critical of recruitment initiatives aimed at recruiting male teachers to serve as role models for young men, arguing that these are ill-conceived remedial responses to the ‘boys problem’ in schooling (Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Francis et al, 2008; Martino, 2008). Scholars argue that a misogynist culture of blame is shaping these debates (Mills et al, 2004). Critical scholars question the supposition that boys’ proximity to female teachers during their primary schooling means they are at risk of effeminacy. The research findings overwhelmingly refute any assumptions that the feminisation of schooling contributes to boys’ ‘emasculatation’ or ‘underachievement’ (Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Skelton, 2001). Although this and other research challenges the politically-inspired recruitment agenda (Britzman, 1993; Martino, 2008; McCarthy, 1998; Rezai-Rashti & Martino, 2010; Segal 1990), this work is rarely acknowledged and core issues are not adequately addressed. The discourses that inform the role model debate *assume* the validity of the ‘sex-role model’ concept. Despite research studies revealing the limitations of populist perspectives, the tendency is for policymakers to ignore the findings of scholars. A case in point is Epstein et al’s (2003) study of sexualities in different phases of education which shows how heterosexuality is naturalised and institutionalised. Similarly, in England, it was only after extensive political activism that the Macpherson (1999) report acknowledged institutional racism as a feature of schooling.

Patriarchal notions of child rearing are arguably implicated in male teacher recruitment agendas. Critics question whether male teachers are possible (ideal) surrogate fathers or are an appropriate solution to the absence of significant male

figures in boys' lives. Neither 'women' nor 'men' are homogenous groups and we need accounts that understand identities as fluid, temporal and contingent. Skelton (2001) points out that despite the rhetoric there is little understanding of what is meant by a 'real man', or how such sensibilities can be interpreted or applied by male teachers working with boys in school. According to Paechter (2007), both men and women continue to be constrained by gendered discourses through which they are expected to behave in ways consistent with their gendered role.

Connell's (1995, 2000) theory of hegemonic masculinity and multiple masculinities can be applied to explain how men model power, authority, aggression and technical competency. Hegemonic practices play out and are reproduced through relations of dominance and subordination and alliances, which act to include and exclude (Connell, 1995, 2000). However, Warin et al (2006) suggest that the increased involvement of men in the care of young children has the potential to transform gender relations. They posit that there might be benefits since boys will learn appropriate modes of interaction and/or relating with females through observing male teachers. In contrast, Ashley (2003, p261) points to the potential for some male role model teachers to 'perpetuate some of the less desirable facets of hegemonic masculinity'. He argues that multiple masculinities may be enacted or embodied through, for example, group affiliations, speech, dress, style or other characteristics. The disparate discourses that give meaning to manhood vary according to factors such as race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, and religion. Connell (1995, 2009) uses the term 'protest masculinities' to describe the impact of hegemonic practices, actions and beliefs on expressions of masculinity by marginalised groups. Thus the perpetuation of hegemonic (and patriarchal) practices endemic to male role model recruitment agendas is salient and problematic when one further considers other attached justifications.

#### Role models: Under-representation or Tokenism?

Male role model recruitment is rationalised as a way of combating teacher shortages (Britzman, 1993; Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Francis, 2008; Francis & Skelton, 2005). However, Williams (1993) argues that the recruitment of male teachers serves to devalue the status of women's work. There is a privileging of male authority (Button, 2007; Francis, 2008) both as disciplinarians and in terms of promotion whereby men in a minority in a profession are promoted ahead of women (the 'glass

elevator' effect). I will return later to this issue, as it applies to B.E.M. teachers when I review research studies about barriers to their career progression. For now, I discuss their under-representation within the teaching workforce because it appears to be a reasonable rationale for the recruitment of B.E.M. and male teachers (Bush et al, 2006; Carrington, 2002).

Most of the relevant studies are by US scholars who focus on race and discuss the benefits of having a more representative teaching staff. In these studies, role modelling is generally accepted uncritically with the inference that the mere presence of male and/or B.E.M. teachers is influential on pupils (Berry, 2005; Dee, 2005; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994). For example, King (1993) in her review of literature on role modelling contends that African-American teachers are more culturally responsive to students who share similar racial backgrounds. The tenet of her observations is that these teachers have both the cultural understanding and communicative competency to engage with pupils in different ways from their white counterparts. Others argue that minority teachers bring a unique critical perspective to schooling because of their personal experiences (Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Zirkel, 2002). In contrast, Brown (2009), writing from a Critical Race Theory perspective, points out that black teachers joining the profession are challenged by the normalised culture of whiteness. He calls for colleagues to re-design pre-service courses to address black teachers' needs vis-à-vis the naturalisation of whiteness. Brown (2009) rejects the idea of 'one size fits all' pre-service education because black teachers need to develop different strategies in order to navigate the pervasiveness of white hegemony. Also Delpit (1995, p108), in her research, found that 'most of the black teachers interviewed believe accounts of their own experiences are not validated in teacher education programs'.

A review of UK literature reveals a similar range of perspectives on increasing the minority teacher pool. For example, some writers warn that affirmative action, as a justification for the recruitment of B.E.M. teachers, is often tokenistic and it oversimplifies their influence (Maylor, 2009). Similarly, Carrington (2002) expresses concern for initiatives where racial affiliation forms the basis for recruitment arguing for the need to avoid reductionist accounts given the lack of empirical evidence. Carrington (2002) adds that such recruitment policies have a negligible influence on pupils' perception of teachers. He also points to difficulties associated with B.E.M.

teachers' identity management strategies vis-à-vis pupil relations. Interestingly, Carrington (2002) reported at the time of his study the absence of accurate statistical data on B.E.M. recruitment to inform government B.E.M. teacher role model recruitment drives. Conversely Drudy et al (2005) make claims that challenge our meaning of diversity and model alternate inter-personal relations. So if B.E.M. teacher representation is to function as a counter-hegemonic device, this raises questions as to what modes of relating are permissible, possible, transformative or even desirable.

Thus the intended outcomes of teachers as role models – rationalised in terms of an appropriate climate for child development, or teacher shortages, or B.E.M. teachers' under-representation – are complex. Such approaches are invariably connected to anti-sexist/anti-racist arguments and discourses. The prevailing view that *any* good teacher should be capable of teaching all pupils subsumes mitigating factors such as ethnicity, gender, disability or class. The notion of a universal generic teacher, trivialises the dynamics of intersectional identities. Nor are teachers' culturally diversified discursive differences validated or the benefits of cultural diversity embraced. The role model teacher identity is both an objective and subjective position. It is registered in the social world in the representation of subjects and experiences of subjectivity. Role model teachers circulate as a hegemonic truth, with unquestionable logic linking them to 'underachievement'. However, in the spirit of poststructural thinking, we can ask the question: In what other ways can we think about what it may mean for B.E.M. teachers and other education stakeholders?

#### Role models: Re-visiting axes of difference?

The research literature is almost devoid of studies about what role model teachers actually do, or what they want pupils to model. I align with the view that the role model debate has led to a 'reified focus on the singularity of gender' (Martino, 2010, p38). As Martino (2010, p38) notes, while 'there is indeed a racial dimension to teachers' experiences', very limited consideration is given to race. Also arguing from a feminist queer perspective, Britzman (1993b) agrees that the focus on the singularity of gender is limited, and that consideration should be given to other aspects of a teacher's influence. She argues that we move beyond normative frames of labelling, such as the confines of heteronormativity, or those linked to power and domination. Britzman (1993b, p40) goes on to assert that invoking role models

requires an understanding that this is part of an overall commitment to interrogating ‘one’s own investments in maintaining stereotypic appearances and naturalising heterosexuality’. While I agree there is a need for attention to be given to the ways in which we embody other categorical commitments, my contention is that the issue of race is central not secondary to the experiences of most B.E.M. pupils and B.E.M. teachers in school. Furthermore, it is a constitutive dimension (both positive and negative) of teacher-pupil relations. I concur with Coloma (2008, p.19, original emphasis) who asserts that ‘race is *always already* refracted within and through other subject positions, such as gender, class, sexuality, and nation’. The absence of B.E.M. teachers’ normative framing in the literature reviewed to date, makes it imperative to call attention to counter-narratives derived from alternative epistemological thinking about B.E.M. role model teachers’ intentions.

### ***Reviewing B.E.M teachers’ experiences***

The next sections of this review explore the social conditions or contexts for B.E.M. teachers. In the theoretical chapter, I argued that institutional racism operates as a form of bio-power (Foucault, 1977) and that this is part of B.E.M. teachers’ lived experience. I begin with a review of studies reporting on these teachers’ experiences of institutional racism, barriers to their career aspirations, and their culture shock on entry to the profession. I then draw together some of the issues raised in the review to suggest a partial severing from the problem/solution framing of debates about teacher role models. I conclude with a call for an alternative explanatory frame for understanding B.E.M. teachers as role models.

#### Institutionalised Racism

A review of the literature on teachers’ everyday lives is noticeably ‘de-racialised’, and the experiences of black teachers are largely ignored (Troyna, 1994). Some studies, that can be said to illustrate the cultural diversity of the teaching profession in England, do so anecdotally outside of their larger research aims (Hargreaves et al, 2007; Hoodless, 2004; Nias, 2002). The effect is to marginalise B.E.M. teachers and to reinforce their liminal positioning and the ‘othering’ that they are subjected to in the course of their work. Most of the studies are small-scale or largely phenomenological accounts of black teachers’ induction into the profession. The heterogeneity of the B.E.M. teachers in the studies above is seldom acknowledged. Beyond the category of ‘black teacher’, there is limited analysis of inter-categorical



differential experiences or how these may have impacted on the relationship a teacher develops with pupils. Thus, there is a tendency for B.E.M. teachers in research to be marked out by essentialised notions of difference – as a generalised ‘other’. This is particularly the case when reporting about B.E.M. teachers’ experiences of racism in school. The extent of these occurrences remains unclear, partly due to the present government ending the obligation on schools to record, collate and report racist incidents to their Local Authority. Another statistical complexity arises from the conflation of racist acts with bullying, effectively concealing the classification of these different events (Carrington, 2003). The criticism levelled at the reporting of these occurrences in the research literature is the proclivity to *naturalise* the extent to which racist practices permeates the context of B.E.M. teachers’ work.

Experiences of institutional racism dominate most of the findings reported in studies that examine B.E.M. teachers’ experiences (Cole & Stuart, 2005; Gilroy 1976; Pole, 1999; Ranger, 1988). Other studies report varying instances (covert or overt) of unwittingly discriminatory practices during their teaching career (Wilkins, 2011). It is interesting to note that such experiences of racism are reported throughout their career trajectory. Furthermore, from a historical perspective, across three decades this phenomenon does not appear to have substantially diminished (Carrington, 2003; Gilroy, 1976; Maylor, 2009). By way of illustration, Pole’s (1999) comment is relevant:

The experience marks out Black teachers as a particular group of workers who experience racism and discrimination at a number of levels. Experience of overt racism and racial abuse is rare. Nonetheless, teaching careers remain structured around unintentional racism represented by views and expectations based on racist stereotypes. (Pole, 1999, p326)

These findings concur with those of Daley and Maguire (2005) who identified different typologies of teachers (and education managers) and how they assimilated, accommodated, and tolerated discriminatory practices. These experiences are not localised or restricted to established teachers or new entrants into the profession. Cole and Stuart (2005) report that some B.E.M. teachers fear potential abuse from colleagues, parents and pupils alike. The likelihood of the occurrence of discriminatory practice was substantially reduced when there was more black teachers and/or pupils in the school, particularly for those located in urban areas.



Other studies examining the experience of student B.E.M. teachers report that schools with a majority of white pupils are replete with expressions of cultural ignorance and xenophobia (Cole & Stuart, 2005; Hoodless, 2004). While these required challenge by the student B.E.M. teachers, many felt ill equipped or unaware of the school procedures for addressing these issues.

In contrast, other studies on black teachers' experiences in English schools have called for more research into how gender, socio-economic status and 'race' impact on teaching identities (Brown et al, 2000; Osler, 1997; Maylor, 2009; Singh, 1988). The general consensus among these scholars is that one needs to be critical of the tendency, in reporting findings about black teachers, to focus solely on their experiences of discriminatory practices as a marginalised group. This thesis builds on these scholars' call for research to give accounts of the structural mechanisms in play.

#### Career aspirations and Deployment

The systematic collection of ethnic monitoring data on the teacher workforce by all Local Authorities is a requirement under the Race Relations Act Amendment (2000). The last available statistics, indicate there is a disproportionately low number of the teaching workforce from African Caribbean and Asian backgrounds compared with the rising B.E.M. pupil population (DfES, 2006; McNamara et al, 2008). In their review of the leadership and career aspirations of black teachers, McNamara et al (2008) reported on the disproportionately high number of black senior leaders appointed to schools with a high concentration of B.E.M. pupils on roll. They also identified several barriers to black teachers' leadership aspirations, for example, in the composition of appointment panels, the recruitment and selection process, and the recognition and validation of overseas qualifications or prior teaching experience.

The deployment of B.E.M. teachers in schools is complex. This is partly due to institutionalised discrimination operating against their career progression. The consensus findings from research studies are that access to professional development is limited, and barriers are placed on their career paths and choices (Daley, 2001; Daley & Maguire, 2006; Hargreaves et al, 2007). For example, in his small scale study using life histories, Pole (1999) reported on black teachers' concerns regarding their career opportunities and the ways in which their 'blackness' is utilised in school to manage pupil behaviour. He also reports on the tendency of schools to deploy their

B.E.M. teachers as ‘native informants’. B.E.M. teachers’ multilingual knowledge is exploited as a translation service for parents, with no financial gains for the teachers involved. Further, their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge are seldom regarded as an asset in relation to securing promotion within the school. Clearly in terms of teacher-pupil relations, communication with the home is a key aspect of a teacher’s work. However, as Daley (2005) points out, this recognition is double-edged and indicative of African Caribbean managers’ (and teachers’) working conditions. Other studies report the channelling of B.E.M. teachers along the pastoral route (Wyatt, 2004; Osler 1994, 1997). In these cases, B.E.M. teachers take on the role of policing pupils’ behaviour and dealing with ‘problem pupils’. A related theme is the marginalisation and occupational segregation of B.E.M. employees during their careers and that needs concerted navigation. For example, Wyatt and Silvester (2015) report that B.E.M. employees are more often channelled into roles related to black issues or diversity work, and more typically encounter a ‘concrete ceiling’. In short, a common theme to emerge from the literature is that B.E.M. teachers’ work is both exploitative and simultaneously positively utilised. As Daley (2005) observes, B.E.M. teachers’ positions are precarious – already positioned as other within institutional discourses, but excluded by virtue of being ‘othered’. He further asserts B.E.M. teachers’ position is one of perpetual tension of being ‘other’ while simultaneously being the target of inclusive policy imperatives and/or actions.

### Culture shock

Hoodless’ (1990) study of trainee black teachers’ entry into the profession is useful for the purpose of this thesis because it identifies three stages in their process of acculturation: adaptation, internalisation and demonstration of solidarity. Hoodless reports that the first stage involves learning adaptation and coping skills to facilitate their survival within, what they perceive as, a racist education system. The second stage involves incorporating into their teacher personae strategies to effectively challenge the discriminatory practices that operate and that they face from pupils and/or staff. The final stage involves becoming an advocate for black pupils. I was drawn to this study because it signals possible ways of understanding how empathy develops in B.E.M. teachers toward B.E.M. pupils. By this I mean that B.E.M. teachers’ experiential knowledge of acculturation processes might be a contributing factor to how they relate to B.E.M. pupils. Hoodless (1990) acknowledges that these

stages were not fixed but rather fluctuate, dependent upon specific conditions and situations. However, given the small sample group, the author points to the need for wider research into the complex, changing and contradictory lived experiences of black teachers. This research seeks to meet this need by examining how B.E.M. teachers establish and sustain role model relations vis-à-vis signifying markers such as, religious affiliation, culture and language. This approach provides a more nuanced analysis of B.E.M. teachers' gradual sphere of influence as transformative agents in their school.

#### Leaders: In whose image?

McNamara et al (2009) report on the leadership and aspirations recommends: 'When depicting teachers in leadership posts, BME role models should be used wherever possible, in order create an image of an inclusive profession and to challenge the dominant cultural perceptions that BME teachers do not make good leaders'. While this seeks to highlight the relative absence of B.E.M. teachers in senior career positions, the recommendation alludes to the normalcy of dominant representations of potential BME leaders. By disrupting assumptions about who can occupy leadership roles, not only are Senior Managers, Education stakeholder, but B.E.M. teachers and pupils are invited to question how such ideas and thinking permeate their schools' social fabrics. If the purpose of a role model is to provide an example of personal achievement and success within the laws and customs of the host society, then to what extent is there a level playing field of equal access and opportunity? Furthermore, how do pupils perceive this 'image'? It would be wrong to assume that pupils are unaware of the structural inequities in schooling and society at large. Particularly since it is often the case that B.E.M. teachers themselves have limited power within the school hierarchy. How then can B.E.M. teachers best provide pupils with alternative visions of themselves as leaders? These questions are pertinent to this thesis since much of the theoretical underpinning of 'role model' narrowly focuses on developing individuals, and accords little attention to the structural contexts within which young people are growing up. There is a distinct lack of research on B.E.M. teachers' assumptions about B.E.M. pupils' inter-textual readings of them, or about what 'image' such teachers might choose (or find it appropriate) to promote.

## ***Breaking with the debate: Towards alternative an explanatory frame***

Despite the voices of Black teachers being marginalised and even less likely to be heard, it is vital that the pedagogies of Black teachers contribute to a 'dismantling of binaries and hierarchies that privilege Eurocentric paradigms of teaching. (Escayg, 2010, cited in Boyle & Charles, 2015)

So far, my review of the relevant literature indicates that there is a marked absence of research about what teacher role models actually *do*. Martino (2010) argues for a disarticulation of role model discourses from the politics of representation. While I support the need to separate from the limitations of sex-role modelling as a conceptual framework (Goli et al, 2010), I do not wholly reject the notion of role model. Instead I propose an alternative framing for the debate, which focused on *self-naming as a B.E.M. teacher and/or role model*. My investigation is also about how the identities these B.E.M. teachers construct (and have constructed) for themselves are constituted out of (overlapping and contradictory) discourses of 'self-naming as a role model'. In short, I propose to move the debate's focus to one that re-connects to the politics of representation and gives voice to the *self-defined* B.E.M teacher. A key claim to the originality of this research is that the voices of B.E.M. teachers are so seldom heard. In addition, poststructural approaches to understanding B.E.M. role models are notably absent from the literature. In this final section of the review, I conclude with a discussion of my rationale for re-framing the debate.

A fundamental feature of B.E.M. people's histories is their subjection in what can best be described as discourses of derogatory representations. This requires moving research enquiries towards understanding this shared legacy as knowledge production exercised through power, while examining the politics of B.E.M. teachers' self-representation. This also requires moving research towards the minutiae of teacher-pupil power relations, while holding in tension the impact of bio-politics on social conditions. The final requirement is that research focus on the discursive constitution of B.E.M. teacher role model performances. Put simply, this means investigating in what ways their words support their actions. I now elaborate on each of the above points to conclude this section of the review.

First, I propose an explanatory frame that articulates B.E.M. role modelling *through* a politics of representation. This allows the inquiry to serve as a delineation of B.E.M.

teachers' marginalised positioning in their school. In order to understand B.E.M. teachers one needs to give an account of how the representation of black men and women are depicted in schooling and in wider society. These depictions are a product of the combination of narratives about blackness in general, and narratives about black masculinity/femininity in particular. The history of black representation in a wide range of media outputs conforms to predictable images. Cooper (2006) concurs with other cultural theorists examining black masculinities and identity performances, that the predominant images depict either the completely threatening Bad Black Man or the fully assimilationist Good Black Man. The former is animalistic, sexually depraved, crime-prone and warrants surveillance, while the latter distances himself from black people and emulates white views. The assimilated 'good' is indicative of mimicry or, at the very least, shaped by mimesis discourses.

Several scholars point to the way in which representations of blackness have been inscribed within simplistic binary oppositions of positive/negative within the dominant discursive frameworks (hooks, 1990b; West, 1999). When such frames are applied to B.E.M. teacher role models, they are reductive and fail to address questions of ambivalence or transgression. The purpose of an alternative explanatory frame would be to avoid resorting to essentialised notions of B.E.M. teachers while simultaneously highlighting the complexities of their identity politics.

A related point is that not all B.E.M. teachers may choose, or want to be held as role models. One cannot classify B.E.M. teachers as either good/bad or positive/negative role models. Yet, in the context of identity politics, there is a central focus on whether images are considered 'good' or 'bad' (hooks, 1990a). Following hooks' discussions of representations, one could argue for the need to reconstruct blackness in ways that transcend judgements of whether individuals' actions are positive or detrimental.

The idea of a good image is often informed simply by whether or not it differs from a racist stereotype. ... Issues of context, form, audience, experience (all of which inform the construction of images) are usually completely submerged when judgments are made solely on the basis of good or bad imagery. (hooks, 1990a, p72)

Thus, any examination of B.E.M. teachers as role models, predicated on binaries as either good or bad, is incomplete. The complexities of B.E.M. teachers' identity

politics are such that a varied range of reactive politics can potentially emerge. For B.E.M. teachers as role models, such politics are purchased in the field of representation, and at times at the cost of their subjugation to counter-hegemonic discourses.

The second explanatory strand builds on Britzman's (1993a) calls for a more radical conception of role modelling practices, which gives consideration to Foucauldian ideas about power. As discussed earlier, such an explanatory frame requires understanding role modelling beyond the normative framework of labelling that occludes power and domination. The contextual or institutional particularities and the regulatory forces operating to transform or re-configure the identity construction of B.E.M. role models are yet to be explored through the application of a poststructural lens. I propose an explanatory frame for B.E.M. teachers as role models which recognises how the power relations defined as role modelling are in tension with teachers' multiple (subject) positions. The role modelling concept has an 'inherent logic of domination' (Fisher, 1988, p212) Taking a Foucauldian approach, the term can be treated as an interconnected system of power relations that permeate B.E.M. teachers' modes of behaviour and those of the pupils within their sphere of influence.

The notion of a B.E.M. teacher as a role model re-configures as an individual engaged in technologies of self-governance and as an agent of change. Self-governance refers to 'the various operations on one's body and soul, thoughts, conduct, and way of being that people make either by themselves or with the help of others in order to transform themselves to reach a state of happiness, purity, wisdom or perfection' (Foucault, 1988b, p18). Thus, by taking a discursive reading that makes visible B.E.M. teachers' agency one can account for the impact of processes of domination and how they relate to Foucauldian concepts of discourse, power and bio-power. Such a conceptualisation of the role model process is viewed as contingent and active, with the potential to cultivate radical forms of relating.

The final explanatory strand builds on arguments developed by Fisher (1988, p213) that B.E.M. 'role models should not be exempt from the type of criticism feminists have directed towards political leadership'. Drawing on the work of other Black feminist theorists, Fisher (1988) asks how one might assess the importance of role models for B.E.M. people. She argues that any justification for *doing/being* a role

model entails a critical examination of the messages that teachers advocate. Following Fisher, in this thesis rather than assuming natural benevolence, the aim is to scrutinise the teachers' intentional discursive work. Positioned as having social authority, we can critique whether their words and deeds are based on social justice principles aimed at empowering others. I understand performing as a B.E.M. role model qualitatively in terms of how atypical experiences are challenged interrelationally and inter-subjectively (Crichlow, 2001).

The appeal of role modelling is intertwined with a naturalised acceptance of hierarchy and social authority. In discussion about role models, hooks (1990a) quite rightly argues the condition of marginality is understood from a position of respect, obligation and acceptance of the other. Rather than thinking about separation, it is thinking about total self-acceptance, and that of others. Here I also align with her view that 'recognition allows a certain kind of negotiation that seems to disrupt the possibility of domination' (hooks, 1994, p214). She later posits that black women need to think critically about processes of domination, because they reveal both oppressors and oppressed. She asserts that to avoid dominating or becoming a victim, it is necessary to de-colonise the mind. While it is necessary to valorise the potential for transformative agency, discernment should accompany B.E.M. teachers' actions. From this perspective, a role model serves to make collective agency possible (Drury & Reicher, 2005), whilst constantly asking the question: who to you *think* you are? hooks cautions that, despite an individual's ongoing struggles, political (or otherwise), necessitating their desire to address exclusionary practices, attentiveness is required. Assuming the mantle of role model is, as Fisher (1988, p221) reminds us, 'rarely, if ever, a solely individual or completely social matter ... [what] seems to be a deeply personal act takes place in a profoundly political environment'.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

### ***Introduction***

This thesis seeks to examine how Black or Ethnic Minority (B.E.M.) teachers understand themselves to be, and position themselves as, role models to pupils with whom they share similar cultural or ethnic backgrounds. In chapter three the poststructural theoretical frame was developed to support a nuanced conception of B.E.M. role model identity work, and as such is pivotal to the research design. The methodology chapter outlines the centrality of this theoretical underpinning guiding the research production process.

I first discuss ontology and how it connects with my reflexivity within the research design followed by related epistemological issues. Here I discuss my claims to knowledge production and my positioning within the research. I argue the methodological approach addresses the research question – how are B.E.M. teachers’ discursive actions understood as role models? In the subsequent methods section, I discuss the data collection process, interview procedure and ethical implications. Here I assert the methods adopted to interrogate the data permit exploration of the dialectics between the teachers’ narratives and the social positioning available to them. I conclude with a discussion of how I apply my understanding of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) to the production of the research text.

### ***Methodological Journey***

My methodological journey can be characterised as continual engagement through praxis – reflecting on a range of theories and then actively re-reading and re-coding research data. The process involves a critical path through a maze of data, and in the process generates interpretations to be read as partial, and tentative. For brevity, I discuss my methodological journey at the most relevant stages in the research production where my ideas about the experiences of the human subject converged with poststructuralist, feminist and black feminist ideas.

### **Ontology: Social reality and Experience**

Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) asserts that ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these, in turn, give rise to methodological



considerations. The ontological premise informing my initial development of a methodology understands 'reality' as partial, multifaceted and contestable. I take the view that our 'reality' is socially constructed, subject to change and understood through an individual's interpretation of what the world means to them. In this respect I consider Harding's (1995, p342) proposition useful that researchers: 'start from the lives excluded as origins of their design – from "marginal lives" ... to explain not only those lives but also the rest of the micro and macro social order'. Harding is writing from a standpoint position, which is widely critiqued since giving primacy to experience does not work easily with a poststructural approach. Here as the researcher, I encounter the inter-connected dilemma of making experience visible while avoiding merely acting as a ventriloquist. I was drawn to Scott's (1992) ideas about evidencing experience where she argues making the experience of reality visible is insufficient, since:

making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics; we know difference exists, but we don't understand it as relationally constituted. For that, we need to attend to the historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences. It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. (Scott, 1992, p779-80)

Applying Scott's proposition to this thesis entails focusing on the discursive nature of experience and critiquing the effects of normative practices. One cannot take B.E.M. teachers' experience at face value or make the presumption that their stories are events per se. Rather, I take the teachers' stories about critical events in their practice *out of which* the teachers are read as being constituted. To think about critical events in the lives of teachers in this way is to historicise the politics of the teachers' positioning, as well as the role model identities constructed. 'Experience is imbricated in the teachers' narrations, it serves as a way of talking about what happened, of establishing difference and similarity, of claiming knowledge that is unassailable' (Scott, 1991, p.797). Experience is at once 'always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted' (Scott, 1991, p.797). The everyday experience of B.E.M. teachers constitutes the starting or guiding point, it is

not the end point of the research. There are multiple, oppositional consciousness (Sandoval, 2000) and messy realities to be teased out, and their assumptions made visible in the readings of the teachers' experience. The approach assumes dialectical relations exist between experiences of a structural nature and those that are localised. In this way, we interpret the mechanisms or processes that construct and position B.E.M. teachers, for example, in schools, *and* those that position them in relation to pupils. Scott's (1991) methodological strategy is emancipatory and invites researchers to consider subjective experiences as potentially transformative events. Taking a discursive approach to the category 'experience' requires treating B.E.M. teachers' accounts of their everyday interactions as events, that surface in the stories they tell. Attention to the discursive nature of experience requires framing experience within dominant (historically contingent), patterns of 'culture or gender -matching', and the ideology that supports them (Scott, 1992). Poststructural critiques question a priori ontological assumptions and ask whether there is existence outside discourse. Thus, applying a poststructural lens to the research is not devoid of epistemological dilemmas since it raises questions about the historical nature of truth.

#### Epistemology and Reflexivity: Claims to Knowledge Production

Citing Rouse (1996), Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p198) remind us that knowledge is not disinterested, apolitical and exclusive of affective and embodied aspects of human experience, but is in some sense ideological, political and permeated with values. In post structuralism, 'all categories are unstable, all experiences are constructed, all realities imagined, all identities are produced, and all knowledge provokes uncertainties, misrecognition, ignorance, and silences' (Britman, 1993a, p22). Poststructural epistemology asks different questions about what counts as knowledge, its production, circulation and sustained legitimacy. My scepticism led to questions about the mitigating conditions that emerge. How are they maintained? What claims (if any) could be made in the research text? What data were omitted and why? Poststructural theorists are sceptical about whether knowledge can be free from error, illusion or the political, or outside the field of human activity (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000). Poststructuralism is characterised by its refusal to provide 'simple truths' or metanarratives. If one should instead question the veracity of absolute truth, there are only different truths about reality at any given historical moment. – truths that fulfil the needs of power. Put another way, different truths are 'situated in

different discourses some of which are more powerful than others' (Ramazanoglu, 1993, p19). Thus, we need to consider where in the methodology there is recourse to examine the interplay of connections and disconnections within the research discourse. The research outcomes, emerge as outpourings from grappling with the 'complexity, uncertainty and doubt and upon a reflexivity about research production and its claims to knowledge about the social' (Ball, 1995, p269).

The researcher's positioning within the research process is an area for reflexivity because it relates to the contingency of the truth claims that are made. Reflexivity consists of 'an interest in the way we construct ourselves socially while also constructing the external objects of our research' (Steier, 1991, p245). As Peshkin (1988) suggests, by actively seeking out our positionality, we seek our subjectivity. Rather than happening retrospectively after the data collection and the completed analysis, reflexivity is continuous. So, how do I understand my positionality in relation to the act of writing itself? The act of writing is never wholly objective; the production of interpretive text is by definition inherently laden with aspects of the researcher's subjectivity.

Writing a thesis is an ongoing, developmental and constructive process, and meaning making through academic language is a discursive activity (Kamler & Thompson, 2006, p11). The discursive acts that constitute the process require attentiveness to slippage, to understand the extent to which my reading of, writing about and production of the knowledge in the field may have bias. My relationship to the different aspects of the writing process was initially construed as attempts to objectify the research act, to 'imitate' traditional methods with a view to finding my own voice. The journey to finding a way to articulate my thoughts often involved modelling academic language, style, and genre, while struggling to obtain coherency. Reflexive writing requires my partial submersion in the data and juxtaposing this with the (power differential and) knowledge of other theorists. It was often the case that constructing meaning meant constant re-working and re-engagement with theoretical ideas in an attempt to demystify the 'particularity' of the academic writing genre. For me, the act of writing and my engagement with different theoretical perspectives is a tensile relation, since, to some extent, there is both liberation and constraint within any interpretative text.

As a qualitative researcher finding a critical path entails interrogating personal philosophies and beliefs, to examine where they are implicated, or made visible in the research process (Shacklock & Smyth, 1998). Deliberate, conscious self-scrutiny is a condition of the research design, thereby making visible rather than obfuscating one's location in the 'same critical plane as the research' (Harding, 1987, p9). I was moved by Ladner's (1987) 'critical disclosure' around the difficulties she encountered trying to adopt the stance of the impartial social scientist. She became aware of how her beliefs, attitudes and in effect Black perspective were central to her identity. In the process, she abandoned her deficit model of the black community, which she recognised was the 'conceptual framework of the oppressor' (p86). Her re-reading of her data led her to describe 'their power to cope and adapt to a set of unhealthy conditions – not as stereotyped sick people but normal ones' (Ladner, 1987, p96). It was Fisher's (1988) discussion of the appropriateness of the notion of black role that led me to revise the manner in which I subsequently coded the research texts. She suggests the focus of role enquiry should be on the messages conveyed by those positioned as having social authority (Fisher, 1988). Her imperative to critically scrutinise, led me to re-read (re-listen) the research texts in conjunction with my field-notes. In my re-reading was of committed teachers who strive to challenge micro-aggression and reveal through their counter-narratives explicit racist bias in media (or otherwise) representations.

The process of reflexivity requires attention to power differentials in the experiences of being a black woman, a teacher, and a writer. There are also other intersecting factors that impact *my* interpretation of the events the teachers' narrate. The act of reflexive writing is seen as interlinked to the exercise of power since, according to Foucault (1981), discursive practices work both in inhibiting and productive ways. As we use language, we are used by it. There is a play of language prescriptions that designate both exclusion and choice to the research account. I am subjected to the rigours of academic discourse employed and the conditions dictated by those discourses. Reflexive writing practices to produce the research account, not only make apparent emergent themes and/or dissonances about role modelling but emphasise that all knowledge construction is mediated through power dynamics. Thus, together with the construction of notes, the generated data, and the textual analysis, I describe reflexive deliberations from which I theorise and explore

‘conditions of possibility’. In other words, my writing and reading developed recursively to develop a conceptual framework for thinking about what role models signify. The conceptual frame shared discursive history, will be developed in chapters five, six and seven, however, for now, I conclude with St. Pierre’s (2005) description of the moments or words in her writing as ‘lines of flight’. This is apt, as Davies and Davies (2007, p1151) note, ‘some words are a line of flight to elsewhere, and some words glue the narrator in place, whereas others open up a space to view the chaos and see how it works to bring about a certain devastation, a certain blindness’. As a feminist researcher, I am ‘ethically bound to pay attention to how I word the world’ (St. Pierre, 2000, p484).

So far I have discussed the main considerations guiding the research design, ontology, and outlined epistemological assumptions relevant to this research. The methodology is premised on poststructural thinking that power exists within and among discourse and practice, and that the subject is subjected to the effects of that power. Following this view, ‘role model’ is taken as a discursive formation. The aim is to question it as a discursive formation, as well as the discursive production of counter-knowledge about role model. A fuller discussion of the theoretical frame was given in chapter three where I elaborated on the poststructural theoretical framing of the research in relation to Foucauldian theories of power, discourse, and the subject as an effect of practice. The research objective is to consider how it is that role models *might become formed*, how B.E.M. teacher role models identities are articulated and brought to attention. I now move to outlining the research methods process.

### **Methods**

A key aim of the research design is to provide analytic frames that show how role model discourses produce different speaking positions in B.E.M. teachers’ talk and constitute their teacher identities. In the methods section I rationalise the procedures for data capture that generated the research texts and thematic concepts used in the analysis chapters. The aim is to argue that the procedures applied whilst seemingly fixed and pre-determined are imbued with inherent fluidity concomitant to qualitative research methods. Following Denzin (2003) I take an ‘interpretive perspective’ because this enables the researcher to create a ‘bricolage’ - an assemblage of diverse methods since:

‘No single method can grasp all of the subtle variations in ongoing human experience. Consequently, qualitative researchers deploy a range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience they have studied’. (Denzin, 2003, p31)

My positioning aim as the researcher is, as Hutchby and Wooffit (1998, p94) suggest, trying to engage in ‘unmotivated looking’ and to let the text ‘speak to me’ throughout the research process. Furthermore, reflexivity is a central factor because my aim is to unearth and unsettle the everyday ‘silences’ that constitute the power dynamics inherent in the co-production of research knowledge. In the methods that follows I describe the selection process, information about the participants and the research schedule. I interweave decisions salient to the data capture, in particular, seeing the interview as a dynamic space where differing power relations and speaking positions co-exist. I also discuss ethical considerations influencing the research results drawing from field notes.

### Selecting the participants

The participants selected were mostly established teachers, rather than newly qualified teachers who would still be in the *process* of negotiating their teacher identity. I specifically wanted teachers who had formed some (but not all) aspects of their identity through their teaching experiences and would have varied career aspirations. I wanted to have a range of different respondents in terms of age, length of experience and cultural background. A reasonable claim would be that it would be difficult for sufficient respondents to be situated within the same school. While context is important, my enquiry focus is the everyday micro-politics of teacher-pupil interactions. The data would inevitably include variability with regard to the contextual impact on the development of a role model identity. However, such variations would provide a richer depth of experience, despite the reduced potential for studying common themes that may arise from my preconceived sample size.

Prior to embarking officially on the research a recurring conviction I had noted that wanting to be a role model was a recurring reason given by many B.E.M. students applying to enter the teaching profession. The research question had initially developed out of an interest to know whether such teachers existed. Moreover, I

expected that 'suitable participants' might not be readily available, or I would require large-scale mining to obtain a random sample of possible participants. However, as a mathematics teacher educator, I have informal and formal exchanges with several B.E.M. teachers working in London schools. I had met some of the participants either through attendance at professional meetings or teachers' conferences. Two of the participants were former students of mine (Ali and Sherrine). I compiled a list out of registers from past meetings which subsequently provided the initial database of potential respondents. I sent letters (see Appendix 1) to twenty-two B.E.M. teachers and received nine came forward of which eight were finally selected.

The respondent pool consisted of only mathematics teachers (although one taught mathematics in addition to her other subject specialism) and therefore would be a delimiting factor. Having such a small pool would inevitably impact on the research results, however due to the logistics of time management and scheduling it was not possible to search and include additional participants.

The fourth participant interviewed in the first round of interviews withdrew his consent shortly after his second interview. His decision at a critical stage in the coding and analysis process was disruptive but unavoidable (I erroneously did not stipulate a date when their withdrawal would not be possible). The participant was in a legal dispute with his school and felt that his anonymity might be compromised. His stories contained a range of claims about his negotiation of institutional racism in his school that had become untenable. Whilst none of his data is used, some of his strategies of relating with B.E.M. pupils overlap with those of the other participants. Despite the absence of this participant's data in the thesis, my analysis of his stories provided insights about my subsequent re-coding and development of my conceptual frame about role model relationships.

### The Participants

Information about the participants is summarised in the Table 3.1. below in chronological order based on the first round of interviews. All the participants are currently teaching in London secondary schools. Details of their school's location are omitted in this thesis with one exception to ensure anonymity. All the teachers reported that they had been externally graded as 'Outstanding' in their most recent OFSTED inspection against the Teaching Standards.

Table 3.1

| <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Self-description</b> | <b>Years teaching</b> |
|------------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ali              | 27         | British/ Bengali        | 5                     |
| Nigel            | 28         | Nigerian/British        | 5                     |
| Nattalie         | 28         | Sri Lankan              | 5                     |
| Josephine        | 43         | Jamaican                | 8                     |
| Sherrine         | 32         | Egyptian                | 7                     |
| Kenneth          | 35         | Black/British           | 8                     |
| Eileen           | 53         | Jamaican                | 22                    |

Ali refers to himself as British. He is a second-generation settler, with extensive family roots in Bangladesh. He was raised in a single-parent household; he is the eldest of three siblings, single and lives with his parents. Ali attended primary, secondary school and university in Tower Hamlets. He has a wealth of experience through community projects and tutoring to friends and peers after school; he continued with his voluntary work whilst at university. His motivation to become a teacher was due to the lack of home support he experienced as a pupil. Ali had been teaching at the school for four years at the time of the interview having recently moved to another local school, with the promise of Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) status and second in the department.

Nigel completed his teacher induction at a school on the outskirts of London, and then moved to his current school four years prior to the start of the interview. His current school is located in a working-class estate on the outskirts of London. The school has strong ties with the local community, in recent years it has greatly improved (in terms of Ofsted criteria). His career trajectory is to remain a mainstream classroom teacher despite pressure to apply for an internal promotion. Prior to the publication of the thesis, Nigel had branched out and now manages his own franchise 'after school' modelled on a similar format to that of the supplementary school where he had previously taught. He oversees the teaching of several part-time teaching staff and has overall responsibility for both the school's curriculum and its parental/community links. He does some teaching in the supplementary school, however, given the constraints of his time he says the amount is minimal.



Nattalie self-identifies as an ethnic minority. She was educated primarily in Sri Lanka, but she completed her A levels and degree in the UK. After graduation Nattalie was contacted by an education recruitment consultant who advised her to consider entering the teaching profession, they also helped her to enrol onto a PGCE course. Her first teaching post was in West London, which she held for two years; she moved to her current school two years ago. Nattalie claims to be career driven. She is an AST teacher as well as having responsibility for improving the quality of teaching across a cluster of local schools. During the interim period between the interviews, Nattalie married a non-Sri Lankan and was on maternity leave. Due to unforeseen circumstances, she could only briefly reply to follow up interview questions by email, where clarification on previous questions was sought.

Josephine self-identifies as a black woman. She originally worked as a civil servant but found the post unfulfilling and unchallenging. Her decision to change careers was prompted by first-hand knowledge of the racist attitudes of some teachers towards her teenage children and friends. She was educated in the West Indies, where she had quite different experiences of education, and was critical of the UK system that had failed a high proportion of black students. She moved to her second West London school four years prior to the interview. Josephine claims that the school has undergone dramatic changes both in its high turnover of staff and the demography of the study body. Josephine is a practising Christian who claims she has become isolated and recently feels subject to practices she deems discriminatory.

Sherrine is an Egyptian teacher, who completed most of her education in the UK. After graduating from a London University, she worked as an administration manager in defiance of her parents' wishes. Sherrine is married with two young children. Both of her teaching posts have been in single-sex schools (North and East London) where she has actively sought promotion. Sherrine see herself as a strong advocate for the right of all girls to be encouraged to realise their potential. Prior to the thesis' publication, she was promoted to the senior management team in her current school.

Kenneth teaches in a South London school. He had held a post at the school for six years at the time of the interview. Despite his long teaching experience there, Kenneth has elected not to seek promotion within the school. He claims that would

position him differently with respect to the pupils. He is also involved in community work, which gives him the autonomy to teach in the style he much prefers and would set him outside of the regime of the school. His work also involves parental advocacy, advice clinics and occasionally as being an independent observer/support to parents at exclusion panels across the borough. Along with other Christian organisations, he has created newsletters and advice materials for parents on how to select the secondary school and the 'choices' available to them.

Eileen was contemplating whether to retire at the time of the interview, however she was keen to reflect on the changes she has experienced during her long teaching career. Eileen has taught in several secondary schools in North and East London whilst progressively moving towards senior management posts with each promotion, culminating as Head of the Design and Technology Department. After a brief period away from the classroom, she returned as a classroom teacher so that she would be in a better position to offer quality support to parents and troubled pupils. At the time of the second interview, Eileen had been promoted to Head of House.

### Research Schedule

As a part-time student and full-time academic, scheduling and managing the imperatives of both vocations was challenging. The first round of interviews occurred towards the end of my second year. There followed intermission periods which were partly unavoidable the main reasons were that during the course of this thesis I have had several different supervisors (twice due to retirement). With each change of supervisor, I was redirected to different interpretative methods of data analysis which eventually shifted the emphasis of my research.

I initially intended to apply an approach under the rubric of narrative enquiry. For each B.E.M. teacher, their narration would be taken as a unit of analysis, so that I could examine the relationship between the stories contained and their discursive formation. My original research design was in the form of a narrative enquiry structured as a set of vignettes about each participant's experiences of being a role model. I considered a (comparative) approach to narrative analysis because a relational perspective, would provide the 'warp and weave' of discourse (Epstein et al, 2000, p8), and in the process contextualise the teachers' work. However, stories about how their pedagogy related to the construction of their role model identities

appeared too simplistic. I wanted to move beyond research outcomes organised as a set of biographies that could generate a more holistic interpretative data. In addition, my studies were interrupted due to bereavements and changes of supervisors.

In the interim, I had become increasingly discontented with my original plan and questioned the appropriateness of doing a narrative analysis for each teacher's biography. To make their narratives more readable, the transcribed interviews had been summarised and rewritten into coherent stories. Initially, the narratives, were organised thematically around (1) the available subject positions (2) their identification with these subject positions and (3) the multiple identities constructed in their narrative about performing their role. This first round of coding began with summaries on the content of each narrative, the stories that each teacher used to talk about their role, and the production of a coded list of subject positions for all the teachers. I abandoned my original approach because I considered it too limiting, and more importantly, lacking originality. Furthermore, my engagement with poststructural ideas generated more scope for addressing the revised research questions.

I completed the first round of interviews midway through my fourth year. I repeatedly re-coded the data and developed a conceptual frame – shared discursive history – that helped organise my thinking. As a consequence, the focus for the research outcome switched to understanding role model in terms of B.E.M. teachers' socialisation processes. The data collected from each of the interviews contained overlapping themes as well as differences. For example, all the teachers talked at varying lengths about the quality of their relations with pupils, whilst drawing on social, cultural, gendered norms and assumptions about B.E.M. pupils. Each interview required that I pause, transcribe the data, and engage in extended deliberations characterised by actively reflecting on the relevance of my theoretical frame whilst struggling (yet engagingly) with field of knowledge production.

The follow-up interviews were conducted and transcribed during a short period of study leave. These interviews were designed firstly, for clarification of previous stories and secondly, to locate the teachers' understandings of role model within the wider political and social context. I sought clarification on parts of the interview where there were stories relating to the unsaid in our conversations, 'the elisions,

blind spots, loci of the unsayable within the text' (Grosz, 1989, p184). Second, the questions differed slightly for each teacher in order to elicit more information about some of the 'critical events' they had previously discussed. The critical events (some re-told and others for further illumination) provided another layer of contextualisation to their counter-narratives about what role modelling entails. I fully immersed myself in the data to the point where I could recite parts of the teachers' stories verbatim. Themes coalesced around how they used their subject positions as a pedagogical resource, the ways in which they performed their role and their relations with pupils.

#### Scope of interview questions

The interview format was semi-structured; the advantage would be that it allowed the discussion to shift as issues arose. The format meant the questions posed were designed to act as triggers to initiate discussion with a minimal degree of direction. The questions sought to elicit from the participants what they did in the course of their teaching and pedagogical practice that allowed them to perceive of themselves as role models. During the interview, I probed for information about what role modelling meant for them, and to give examples about how they performed their role. Refer to Appendix 2 for the specific interviews questions (and follow-up). In brief, the main questions centred on:

- Experiences of role models during their education
- Teaching experiences and school context (including biographical information)
- Their philosophy of teaching (it was expected that some prior motivation for becoming a role model would be linked to the B.E.M. teachers' experience of having a role model themselves)
- How they were viewed others (colleague and pupils)
- Expectations for future career/agents of change
- Teaching practices/events that signify or reinforce role model/mimesis discourse
- Participants' response to them being a role model (for example, pupils mimicking behaviour, desire to achieve, duty of care, leadership)
- Significant events in the participants' practices that challenged/re-affirmed/resisted the subject-position of teacher role model.

As with McLeod (2000, 2003), I take the view that interviews are unlikely to reveal a transparent or self-evident reality or offer a complete account of the participants' subjectivities. In a similar vein, Freebody (2003, p132) cautions interviews cannot be treated as 'transparent windows into people's stable, self-contained knowledge or beliefs about a topic'. In line with poststructural thinking, McLeod (2003) posits that research interviews serve as a glimpse of the lived experience of the participants at a particular time. The interviews were regarded as a space in which 'identity work' takes place. In terms of the analytical approach, 'the processes of interviewing and of being interviewed are not simply about the giving and receiving of information but at least as much about speaking identities into being, solidifying them and constantly reconstituting them through the stories we tell ourselves and each other' (Epstein & Johnson, 1998, p105). The teachers' responses varied in depth, as well as diverged into other related issues as their stories unfolded.

#### Ethical considerations

Simons and Usher (2000) suggest research ethics is a situated practice. The researcher needs to make visible the unavoidable dilemmas, and seemingly inconsequential judgements that constitute her ethic practice. The key ethical considerations at the start of the research were informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. The second related set of ethical issues, pertinent to method of data capture are power differentials in relation to the interview space, and the researcher's positioning. The discussion of the interview process also provides a synopsis of the schedule detailing reasons for the extended period.

Each interview began with a clarification of my own investment in the research, how it arose and any questions they may have from the consent letter (Appendix 1) and issues of confidentiality. The participants were invited to interviews having been informed they would last no longer than ninety minutes. At the start of each interview I asked whether the discussion could be recorded; in all cases, consent was given. They were informed that they could terminate the interview at any time should they wish and that a transcribed copy of the recording would be made available for subsequent inspection and amendment. The participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their privacy and disguise their schools' locations. The only exception is Ali where the local context is deemed relevant to the generation of

knowledge about influential factors.

### Positionality and Power Differentials

Villenas (1996, p722) points out ‘as researchers, we can be insiders and outsiders to a particular community of research participants at many different levels and at different times’. I take this to mean temporal shifting insider-outsider positions are not only inevitable, but may occur irrespective of whether one is studying one’s own cultural milieu or not. I may occupy an insider position vis-à-vis Black women, teaching in mathematics, education background, or an outsider position with regard to age, ethnicity, or as a teacher educator.

I made the methodological decision to include participants previously known to me. A feature of qualitative research is the boundaries of insider and outsider positions are always permeable (Oakley, 1981; Song & Parker, 1995) in relation to data collection (Taylor, 2011). Although I did not know them well, it remains true there will be the increased possibility that either (or both of us) will influence the knowledge constructed and what becomes known (Milligan, 2016). Moreover, the possibility that participants’ pre-conceived ideas about who I am may influence what they would (or would not) reveal can equally apply to researchers studying cultures that are not their own. In her discussion of the ethics of friendship, Taylor (2011, p9) advises the researcher ‘to be both self-aware and researcher-self-aware and to acknowledge the intertextuality that is a part of both the data gathering and writing process’. With this in mind, the style of the interviews was designed to generate reflexivity, as well as ‘conversational’ type discussions. All the interviews started with talks about their educational background and careers, but then diverged in different ways according to how their stories about their teaching unfolded. The direction of the discussion and the importance attached to certain areas by every participant were uniquely different. However, it is acknowledged that having familiarity with some of the participants may inadvertently shape the tone and direction of the interview.

Fine (1994) tells us that by dealing in voices, we are affecting power relations. To listen to people is to empower them. But if you want to hear it you have to go to listen in their space or in a safe space. Before you can expect to hear anything worth hearing, you have to examine the *power dynamics of the space and the social actors* (Fine, 1994). For these reasons the interviews were conducted either at the participants’

homes or at locations of their choosing. Only one participant asked that the interview take place in their school. It was important the participants felt comfortable and relaxed in the surroundings to allow them to talk freely and openly.

Although, the topic of discussion was about their perception of themselves as role models, all of the teachers talked extensively about how they promoted mathematics. As Morawski (1990) reminds us, rich interview material may be isolated 'innocent moments of experience ... there is the need to explicate our own stances and relations to these voices' (Fine, 1994, p219). Although the possibility of misrecognition is ever present, from our discussion one could discern that the teachers had an understanding of societal and institutional (i.e. schools) forces that shaped and determined their lives. The conversation format was often as mini-stories about teaching in order to convey the particularity of their experiences.

The style of the interviews allowed the participant to shape the tone of the discussion. Similar to Johnson–Bailey's experience when interviewing people with whom she shared common view on race and gender, the participants' stories were supplemented with non-verbal cues:

There were silent understandings, culture-bound phrases that did not need interpretations, and non-verbalised answers conveyed with hand gestures and facial expressions (Johnson-Bailey, 1999, p611-662)

For me, importance was given to allowing the voice of the participant to be heard. The effects of power relations between the researcher and the participants cannot be easily fathomed, since, in every utterance, different positions may be taken up for a variety of reasons, some of which may or may not unwittingly enrich/bias the research process. I was guided by the advice of researchers who suggest the use of a journal to describe the feelings that emerge in the emotional climate of the interviews because there is the potential for such outpouring to affect the subsequent interpretations made (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Fine, 1994).

You have to be willing to hear what someone is saying even when it violates your expectations or threatens our interests. In other words, *if you want someone to tell it like it is you have to hear it like it is.* (Reinharz, 1988, p15-15 cited in Fine, 1994, p20, original emphasis)

For example, one teacher (Ali) wanted to impress upon me my ignorance of everyday dangers associated with living in a particular place. His talk emphasises my shift in position vis-à-vis Bengali culture. He began our interview by outlining in graphic detail an unprovoked racist attack he experienced. The affect could be read as an intention to shock. His position as an authoritative voice could be interpreted here, but the emphasis was on my outsider status. My notes on the casual way in which the story unfolded indicate the shift in tone. The change suggested that even though we were both educators, there were differences in our experiences that he wanted to make known. Although we were both B.E.M. people, the experience of Bengali people in his community was not, he felt, commensurable with black people for a variety of reasons. The rise of Islamophobia in recent years had re-configured Muslims as the ‘folk-devil’ and demonised them, for example, in political and media discourse. He insinuated and made reference to the existence of such sentiments yet was reticent when probed. The act of self-policing his own (political) views, is read as a deliberate omission because he subsequently argued it was irrelevant to our discussion. There were obvious (to me) signs of discomfort, I base this on cues such as repeated disclaimers, facial posture, shoulder shrugging. In my journal, I noted: ‘he stresses local conditions of racist attacks, but is unwilling to debate in any way (what he considered) the root cause’! Also, after reading the transcript he wanted assurances that his opinion on the subject would be erased since this would breach his notion of confidentiality.

Some of the teachers’ stories about their role model work concerned mediating or advocating on behalf of pupils. The ethical consideration to avoid harm through inclusion (for example, disclosing particular stories about B.E.M. pupils) was offset by accepting that the captured data is co-constructed and such ‘co-authored’. While at times this confidential information or ‘situated knowledge’ gave more context to the overall research text, a more pressing aim within the research context was for parity within our differential power relations as researcher and ‘researched’.

You have to be the person someone else can talk to, and you have to be able to create the context where the person can speak and you can listen. That means we have to *study who we are and how we are in relation to those we study*. (Reinharz, 1988, p15-16 cited in Fine, 1994, p20, original emphasis)

The interview requires the researcher to ‘really listen’ because it is a ‘critical tool for



developing new frameworks and theories based on women's lives and women's formulations' (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p18). Another example of emotional outpouring occurred during an interview with a female teacher (Josephine) after a rather harrowing day in her school where she was subjected to racist abuse by a child. She extended the interview to talk about the differential treatment and support from senior management she received. She talked about the recurring dismissive manner in which her reports, which concerned sexist comments by pupils in her class, were 'managed' by some senior staff. While this was a contributory reason for her considering leaving the school, my field notes record her showing resilience to the 'everyday'. Her posture shifts, she touches her skin, and quietly murmurs, 'we both know how [they] can smile in your face and pretend they don't agree with the boys' sentiments'. My field notes from this part of the interview recorded her insinuation that, while sexism and racism were an issue for her at the school, having devout Christian beliefs was overwhelmingly construed as negative and contributed to her alienation in the school. Reinharz (1988) points to the benefit of dialogue in knowledge co-construction to avoid misrepresentation by the researcher. This secondary information was insinuated by her as not to be included/reported, but sensitivity to her religious perspective was important. Despite assurances of anonymity, in the follow-up interview, Josephine rationalised the issue as negligible, rather an outpouring of her own struggles with her 'Christian identity'. The research dilemma was the extent to which the ramifications of the disclosures in her story would be a breach of trust, or harmful. Yet at the same time a line of enquiry (that had surfaced significantly with respect to another participant) collapsed and for a variety of reasons is not developed in this thesis.

In both cases, respect for the teachers' need for confidentiality was paramount. While my thesis seeks to interrupt those silences, which assault the lives of B.E.M. teachers, the researchers' work of de-silencing has consequences. For example, whether particular revelations while potentially a contributory contextual factor, are 'appropriate' or relevant to the research question. In the context of the interview, an environment where the teachers felt safe to talk about issues that were important to them meant that some stories remain 'unsaid' and omitted, but inferred. During the interviews, I registered the emotions stimulated through the discussions as well as the body language of the participants. I adapted some of my questions, in terms of

order, to maintain the flow of a conversation. We revisited topics, made connections across experiences the teachers had talked about, and paused.

In summary, the long intervals between each of the interviews were productive, since after each re-listening subsequent interviews were richer. A central aim was that there would be an unfolding of issues allowing the participants to 'open up' and share their thoughts. Boler (1999) argues empathetic listening and reading is inherently risky because of the potential for the researcher and researched to mirror one another. She suggests pedagogies of discomfort as an alternate practice of listening. By this, she means alternative practices of listening are ones where we are attentive to hearing a nuanced difference. Probing the pauses and silences allows participants to face their discomfort about an issue in a safe space. The decision for a less structured formal stance in the interview elicited varied reflexive responses since participants were equally guiding the discussion. The lag between the first interview and the last follow-up interview enabled me to shift my analytic focus to one which better suited the research design. While I acknowledge there are nevertheless justifiable sensitive omissions in terms of the ultimate research aims, the re-configuration and re-coding of the data was beneficial. Thus, a positive effect of my earlier extended submersion in the data was that I could tie together disparate meanings across the stories at different stages of the analysis.

So far, I have given attention to considerations relevant to the analysis, specifically data collection, ethical decisions around inclusion, omission, and ethical protocols. Having previously, discussed several epistemological assumptions governing the approach, this final section is where I describe how the research texts, field notes, commentary and/or interpretations were analysed. I briefly outline why and how I apply discourse analysis using Foucault to interrogate the research data (units of discourse).

### ***Discourse Analysis***

Discourse analysis is the term used to describe the process of capturing regularities of meaning (patterns in language use) as these are 'constitutive of discourses and to show how discourses, in turn, constitute aspects of society and the people within it' (Taylor, 2001, p9). Discursive analysis is appropriate in this thesis because the aim is to interrogate the productive power of role model discourses that construct

recognisability (Taylor, 2001). In other words, I aim to recognise and name the discourses the teachers draw upon in order to identify the possible ways they make meaning about their role and with what consequences. While not all meanings will be the same for all the teachers in all contexts, what they say about role modelling (discursive practices) may reveal the interplay of constraining and enabling factors at work.

I wanted to make visible the relationships between the teachers' constructed sense of identity, their personal investments, and the sets of persuasive/pervasive social meanings and values circulating in their school. I also wanted to locate the teachers within wider institutional privilege discourses, and drives that are themselves culturally constituted. Thereby I examine the social forces in play and how they define themselves through their struggles with (hegemonic) power regimes. However, I found working with spoken discourses is fraught with 'unresolved tensions, competing perspectives, shifts of power, ambiguities, and contradictions' (Baxter, 2002, p6).

Foucault has been criticised for his reluctance to clearly delineate a research method (Graham, 2005; O'Farrell, 2005). In this respect, the various methodological injunctions prioritised by Foucault's conception of discourse suggest his genealogical approaches contain an element of uncertainty rather than the charge of an element of ambiguity (Graham, 2005), which is precisely why his application (Hook, 2001; Sawicki, 1998; Mirza, 2009) has, for me, an eclectic appeal. Foucault invites the researcher Foucault instead invites the researcher to use a 'tool-kit' approach, and selectively utilise his concepts where appropriate. I structure my explanation of the analytic in accordance with an approach suggested by Graham (2005) who offers some methodological guidelines for applying Foucauldian ideas to the analysis of texts and/or practices. I first, begin with Hook's (2001) cautionary principles for researchers who apply Foucault's concept of discourse.

### Underlying Principles

The imperative as Hook (2001) points out is to demonstrate that what counts as 'the truth' is a product of discourse and power. My scepticism towards B.E.M. teachers' 'truth claims' requires that I am attentive to *how* their claims come to be derivations of their experiential knowledge. The assumption is that they draw on existing sets of

meanings or discourses to constitute their teacher subjectivities. Hook's (2001) discussion of discourse analysis, takes the Foucauldian view that text plays a role in generating, enabling and limiting empowered/disempowered subject positions. Hook (2001, p522) advises the researcher to adopt a 'criticist' vantage. Put other way, the work of a critical methodologist is such that it finds its 'greatest efficacy as an instrument of resistance and contestation'.

#### Analytic approach: the statements

I applied discursive analysis as used by Graham (2005). She suggests a three tiered approach: defining statements (atoms of discourse); recognising particular objects of discourse; and tracing the 'positivity' (Foucault, 1972, p214) of a particular power/knowledge formation. Following Foucault (1972; 1980), the purpose of the analysis is not to reveal a true meaning of what is/is not said, but rather to examine how the statements/stories function. Here I mean what is it the stories *do*. The analytic task then is to understand what the constitutive effects of saying 'I'm a role model' might be for the BEM teachers, how they talk about their difference, the claims made, and what are the effects for them in the 'real'. What are the material effects of making the claim? (Foucault, 1980b, p237). As Graham (2005, p7) so aptly states the objective of a Foucauldian discursive analytic approach is: 'to explicate statements that function to place a discursive frame around a particular position; that is, statements which coagulate and form rhetorical constructions that present a particular reading of social texts'.

Discourse analyses is, as Graham (2005, p4) states, gives attention to the 'function of statements' that work to re-secure dominant relations of power (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995) and the correlative formations of domains and objects (Dreyfus & Rainbow, 1984; Foucault, 1972). Here the interview accounts are taken as a corpus of statements for interrogation. The statements are viewed as 'a function' (Foucault, 1972, p98), the reading of them is in terms of their constitutive properties. I interpret this to mean reading the statements as a special mode which enables 'groups of signs to exist, and enables these rules or forms to become manifest' (Foucault, 1972, p99). In this way, my interpretations concern the strategies the teachers engage to position themselves as a role model, their dividing practices, and the generation of 'counter-

narratives'. In other words, I am examining the power/knowledge nexus and the conditions that allow the teachers to talk about roles in the way they do. The narratives of the teachers are read as discourses, and their stories as 'atoms of discourse', which regulate social practices and thereby produce their own form of 'subjectification' or identity construction (Epstein et, 2000). My readings concern questions about how 'role model' is constructed in the various atoms of discourse. For example, I analyse the statements (or atoms of discourse) in terms of, the power of the teachers to make their claims, how they illustrate and support their claims, and the effects on the teachers. Another task in the analysis is to identify the various objects of discourse (the stories), for example, the pedagogical use of descriptors synonymous with 'relating'. Another aspect of the analysis concerns tracing other explanations in their statements, for example, how earlier role model influences link to their ideas about relating.

The focus is on the dynamics of power, knowledge and subjectivity since this allows me to examine gender and emotions as texts to be read (Davies & Gannon, 2005). Linked to this focus then is aspects of their talk that offer 'different focal points of power' (Deleuze, 1988, p17) to explain the relations possible for the teachers. Here, I draw on Davies and Harré's (1990) ideas about positionality as another rationale for the analysis. Their theory is a useful device to study the means by which power is localised through discourse (Harré & Langenhove, 1991, p363). The researchers advise considering multiple positions, since this may alert us to the ways speakers engage actively in identity work. I examine how the teachers take up different subject positions in their talk. Not all positions are available, there were constraints imposed both by the context of the speech and the emotional regulatory component of our talk (Davies & Harré, 1990).

Thus fissures within role modelling relationships are problematised by examining stories of conflicts and tensions associated with becoming a role model. The final aspect of the analysis refers to thinking of discourse as an event. Hook (2001, p6) defines eventualisation as 'rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies that count as being self-evident, universal and necessary'. Here I take this to mean interrogating the data to understand critical events in their stories that can be read as precipitating a particular choice of action.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SHARED DISCURSIVE HISTORY

### *Introduction*

Positioning can be understood as the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts. (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991, p395)

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models to B.E.M. pupils by examining the dynamics of their role model relations. In this chapter I introduce shared discursive history as a conceptual frame to explain the teachers' multiple positioning's within such power relations.

Shared discursive history describes a unique and distinct subjectification process between B.E.M. teachers and pupils. The distinctiveness of shared discursive history is that it describes the formulation of social relations as well as the factors that support and inhibit their maintenance. Shared discursive history is used to explain the processes whereby the tensions between B.E.M. teachers and pupils are reconciled. Shared discursive history is used to interpret the discursive context of the teachers' narrations, and the forms of counter-narratives they produce and that they use to inform the relations established. Shared discursive history has three interconnected components, which I refer to as: shared marginality; identification with and performance of role model; and resources (pedagogical and cultural tools).

I begin with an explanation of each of the components, and the key arguments developed in this thesis. The chapter is then correspondingly divided into three sections where I develop these arguments by examining generic themes emerging from all (or most) of the B.E.M. teachers' narrations which form the core ideas underpinning shared discursive history. The exemplars drawn from the teachers' narrations typify the claims made by the participating teachers. For brevity only exemplary extracts are examined, but I cross-reference to other sections in the thesis to avoid repetition or to emphasis a particular point.

Shared marginality refers to distinct forms of relating to B.E.M. pupils based upon the B.E.M. teachers' experience and knowledge of their marginalised positioning. The premise of this component is that the teachers relate to pupils based on their knowledge of what it means for them to be a minority within a community, and in

society in general. A significant theme emerging from the teachers' narratives is what they share with B.E.M. pupils is having had experiences of 'othering'. Despite all its diverse manifestations, 'othering' describes a condition of their social world and affect how B.E.M. teachers relate to pupils. A key argument developed is that while B.E.M. teachers may recognise and contest the dominant social conditions to which they are subjected in school, they also recognise the limitations that pupils have to challenge these. This leads to the teachers having feelings of empathy towards B.E.M. pupils based on the knowledge that becoming aware of the effects of marginality and differential positioning can evoke epistemic crises for them. In this thesis I explore aspects of the teachers' personal histories, focusing on their various epistemic crises or critical events where different forms of responses are enacted. Shared marginality is the analytic component which examines the discourses the teachers use to demonstrate this empathy with pupils. In subsequent chapters, shared marginality is further developed to also show that while B.E.M. teachers relate with pupils based upon empathetic understanding of marginalised positioning, they also relate to pupils' resistance in gendered ways. Thus shared marginality refers to a distinct form of relating with pupils within which teachers model strategic positioning to pupils.

Identification with and performance of 'role model' is the second component of shared discursive history. It emerges as a response to shared marginality. In this chapter I examine the generic themes arising from the teachers' identification with influential others they deem as role models. Here I explore the 'protégée-role model' identification process, and the qualities or behaviours the teachers seek to emulate. B.E.M. teachers' identifications as role models and their positioning strategies vis-à-vis B.E.M. pupils are related to their previous (or current) encounters with influential others.

I argue that the identification process is a pre-condition that affects the practices the teachers enact and how they may subsequently perform as role models. A key argument developed is that the teachers' identifications with the role model discourses out of which they are constituted contains the permanent possibility of resignification. Taking these points, one needs to also attend to other signifiers or symbolic messages that the teachers seek to convey by examining how they perform their role. In the subsequent chapters I illustrate some of the different ways that the

male and female teachers perform their role. Performing the role is complex because the teachers cannot easily predict how their 'signifiers' will be read by others. This unpredictability is due to several factors linked to the teachers' understanding of how B.E.M. people are represented in social discourse and the beliefs pupils may hold about these representations. Performing role model is both a constraining and enabling activity, which is temporal and highly contingent upon how they make themselves recognised by others.

The third component of shared discursive history refers to B.E.M. teachers' utilisation of available resources, cultural artefacts, or spaces. Resources are understood as additional pedagogical tools that teachers have at their disposal, which they deploy to both consolidate and extend their role model image and to augment their relations with B.E.M. pupils. The key argument I develop is that B.E.M. teachers' deployment of resources, whilst being strategic, also provides discursive authority to their narrations. In the subsequent chapters, I argue the teachers draw on resources to express and validate their teacher identities as reverse discourses. In this chapter however, I consider the teacher as a pedagogical tool or resource subject to the management directives of their school. As their activities are negotiable, this requires them to re-think the cogency of their work and how to deploy their experiential knowledge in ways that are supportive to B.E.M. pupils.

Throughout the thesis, the three components are shown to overlap since it is their inter-dependency that is crucial to understanding the complexity of role model relations. Shared discursive history is developed in this and the two following chapters in which I examine the different dynamics at play between B.E.M. female and male teachers vis-a-vis their role model power relations with pupils. Thus, while this chapter on shared discursive history introduces complexities by considering social interactions as both inter (between teacher-pupil) and intra (between-teacher hegemonic forces), role model relations must be understood as asymmetric relations that are always subject to resistance.

### ***Shared Marginality***

Shared marginality concerns how B.E.M. teachers describe, explain and understand how they relate to B.E.M. pupils. Their mode of relating is significant because it allows us to understand not only why the teachers position themselves in particular



ways, but how this is rationalised. The importance of establishing good relations is a key theme to emerge across all the teachers' narratives. So I begin with exemplars drawn from the teachers' stories to illustrate the range of different ways they talk about the topic. Having illustrated the importance of good relations I then move on to discuss how empathy is fundamental to the relating process. In this section I examine some generic concerns the teachers raise about relating with pupils.

Here the teachers talk about how they empathise with the pupils' sense of alienation and they also talk about epistemic crises they have encountered at some points during their life. As previously stated, shared marginality refers to the conditions, experiences, and positioning that minority people face which make explicit to them their designation as being different. My contention is that variable but patterned instances of 'othering' are an ongoing constitutive part of the social condition of B.E.M. people. I argue that this is fundamental to the sense of empathy that B.E.M. teachers have towards B.E.M. pupils.

### The importance of relating

Numerous studies on teacher-pupil interactions suggest relations are improved through the cultivation of engaging pedagogical conversations that 'hold the interest and imagination of young people, and thereby enhance pupils' lives' (Carr, 2005, p265). Teven (2009, p.159) cites Campbell (1972) and Feldman (1986) to argue that: 'in order to maximise learning, it is essential for teachers to develop a good relationship with their students, because the rapport established between teachers and students, in part, determines the interest and performance level of the students'. Given my research focus, I expected that all the teachers would talk in some way about their interaction with pupils. Also, as the teachers discussed their pedagogy, they described incidences, conflicts, and a range of other interpersonal exchanges that are not necessarily specifically connected to B.E.M. pupils. All the teachers expressed the importance of relating with pupils, since this is fundamental to social interactions where the aim is to establish rapport. In the excerpts below I include some contextual detail to illustrate that, while this was not a question specifically asked to any of the teachers, the issue of the importance of relating consistently emerged.

*Ali: It's important to have a relationship with everyone ... anyone that you're trying to communicate to ... in the sense that you're trying to teach these kids how to be better, you have to be good to them in that sense as well. ... Why should they come to your class and just give you respect straight away? How do they know what you do outside of school? Just because you're a teacher... so you need to let them in a little bit for them to understand how you are ... and ... how you work.*

*Eileen: I hear it all the time, ... 'miss why do you care anyway'? This is usually when a child has detention with me, or when they are getting one of my 'talks' about their future. They know I care about them ... and because at Parents Evening their carers will mention it, and thank me, but ... I do, ... a lot ... I can't not care about them.*

One could not disagree that relating is important and both teachers here emphasise their long-term commitment to establishing relations with pupils. Relationships based upon mutual respect while honourable must also be demonstrable. Eileen qualifies her efficacy by commenting on how her commitment is also noted by some of the pupils' carers. Although only two examples have been given so far, as I will show, all the teachers did not comment merely on the relations they have established with B.E.M. pupils, but spoke of these as fundamental to what they do. I am not suggesting that this aspect of their pedagogy is reserved only for B.E.M. pupils, but rather seek to illustrate its importance for these teachers.

Another point to note is that any 'friendship between pupils and teachers might just be a complete illusion because fundamental, structural inequality inimical to friendship between teachers and students persists' (Rawlins, 2000, p21). Teacher-pupil relations are based on an implicit agreement of cooperation, but one must also recognise the power differential between them. These relations are contingent, without the automatic assumption that a teacher's status is recognised, rather it has to be earned.

*Nattalie: Even though they know you can really punish them like their parents might, of course you still have the power to make their life difficult by applying sanctions if they misbehave. But that's not my goal, the important thing is being someone they can relate to because of who you are to them, who shows them you care about them as individuals ... but who they accept as the one in control.*

*Sherrine: Mutual respect for me is so fundamental, what's the point of teaching if you don't expect and show the girls how to relate to another respectfully. I don't mean on a superficial level, ... make it plain and obvious to them. ... Do it in a way that they realise, I can tell you what to do but, I am treating you as, as how I would like to be treated. ... There's no need to abuse your control over the girls, that's just a power trip.*

The disciplinary regimes operating in schools may induce pupils to comply with the authority of the teacher, but an essential quality of the relation is dependent on reciprocal respect. The power differentials then need to be managed by the teachers since these relations are embedded in larger social conditions of power and scrutiny (Rawlins, 2000) to which both are accountable. Reciprocity entails teachers and pupils 'continually developing, negotiating and maintaining social connections' (Gomez et al, 2004, p483). This generic theme of reciprocity is evident in all the teachers' talk. Furthermore, the everyday work of relating to pupils requires commitment to social and emotional connections, however, this can also bring relational tensions that have to be constantly negotiated (Aultman et al, 2009; McBride & Wahl, 2005). The excerpt below exemplifies the negotiations of this delicate balance:

*Kenneth: I think that one of the reasons why pupils talk to me is because when they tell me something I actually let them know that they are showing me something or teaching me something. Even if it is something 'off road' or negative. I say 'wow I didn't know that ... but why do you think so'? I let them know that they have informed me, and the fact that there seems to be a two-way interaction they believe they have something to offer.*

Thus incorporating moments where the teacher can have those one-to-one interactions is crucial, talking with pupils on a personal basis, showing respect and empathy and 'telling students that they care' (Teven, 2009, p166). As well as making explicit to pupils his interest in their welfare, Kenneth talks about the need to have a flexible attitude that allows pupils to feel their contributions are valued. This idea of valuing pupils' contributions will be revisited in subsequent chapters particularly where they are at variance to the teachers' perspectives. Having illustrated some of the general principles governing their mode of relating, I now turn to the key aspect of shared marginality that concerns the social conditions that lead to these teachers having empathy toward B.E.M. pupils.

### Marginality and Empathetic relating

Britzman (2003, p1) points out that ‘because teachers were once students ... their sense of the teacher’s world is strangely established before they begin learning to teach’. Although she was referring to beginning teachers’ induction into the profession, I suggest this knowing continues for many teachers. Furthermore, I suggest that B.E.M. teachers have experiential knowledge that they bring to their teaching, about what it is like for B.E.M. pupils to inhabit marginalised positions in school. Shared marginality is significant because of similar experiences of ‘othering’, as a condition of the social world of both B.E.M. teachers and pupils. The teachers recognise the effect of this on their own working life and at the same time observe pupils’ response to similar experiences. Empathy is present due to the teachers’ awareness of how ‘othering’ operates to position them and B.E.M. pupils in their school. To illustrate this point, the excerpts below are taken from their narrations, where they refer to B.E.M. pupils’ encounters with and management of their colleagues’ cultural incongruences:

*Eileen: These teachers don’t know what it’s like to be young and black. ... It’s scary for them [B.E.M. pupils]. ... We all make mistakes. ... They need to know that’s how we learn. ... We learn from our mistakes.*

*Josephine: They [colleagues] just don’t try to understand them, however rough, disruptive or uncontrollable they [B.E.M. pupils] are, most often there’s a reason. ... And it’s not about personality differences. They are angry about how they’ve been treated but don’t know how or what to do about it.*

*Ali: This is my personal opinion. ... Some of the staff and some of the senior management that have come to our school are from like posh backgrounds. ... They’re also from different areas, ... they have never been into or lived in Tower Hamlets. ... It’s a totally different machine the way it works. But then again I would say yes, because there are teachers here who have been here for a very long time, 11, 12 years and they’ve understood through their mistakes that they’ve made and some have lived here and gone in, ... they understand. But personally I still don’t think most of them understand everything though, ... they understand to a degree.*

Berry (2005, p36), reminds us ‘telling the story is important; however, equally

important is what is remembered and what is selected to be told from that memory'. In the excerpts above, the teachers claim about their colleagues' mis-recognition and mis-understanding of B.E.M. pupils in terms of cultural norms maybe neither unusual nor novel. The stories are not intended to essentialise the experience, but rather to expose current tensions in the power relations B.E.M. teachers have with their colleagues. The teachers talk about the discursive framing of B.E.M. pupils as indicative of abject indifference. Shared marginality can be understood as a teacher's empathy with B.E.M. pupils with whom they have memories of discursive framings of B.E.M. people.

A key idea raised by McNay (2008, p294) in her discussion of recognition is that researchers should consider the 'indirect routes of power that connect specific identity formation to the often invisible structures underlying them'. The argument I develop is that teachers' empathy results from recognising the structural limitations on their own coping strategies while at the same time being aware of the need to be responsive in ways that enable B.E.M. pupils to develop their own survival strategies.

To illustrate the effects of structural hegemony with regard to shared marginality the excerpts below suggest (something that I re-iterate in subsequent chapters) that the various representational discourses of 'other' that B.E.M. teachers and pupils negotiate are *constant* social conditions of schooling. The teachers are embedded in daily organisational life where they are never in a position of exteriority to the hegemonic conditions that they oppose but from which they cannot escape. Here the teachers contextualise aspects of their working conditions and rationalise why they relate to pupils' experience with empathy:

*Kenneth: I'm not saying it's right, it's not something you get used to ... but that's the reality. ... It's not just in school they are misrepresented, ... you just have to open the newspaper to see that we are always portrayed in negative ways. ... Racism is a learned phenomenon and the media has a lot to answer for it. But we have a responsibility to do our part too.*

*Eileen: As a black female teacher, I feel I have to be a social worker, help pupils make the transition to adulthood. ... Remember we are preparing them for survival in a world that's*

*so different to what it was like for us. ... We have equal rights on paper only. ... They're our chance for it to be a reality.*

*Nattalie: The first thing that stood out for me when I came here was that some teachers talk about the children's background as if it's their fault! You can't judge a child simply because of where they're from... That's something I can't get used to ... I don't know if it's like that everywhere though.*

*Ali: First of all, I think I have a basic understanding of most of the Asian pupils in the school. I do understand how their life works and where the life has started off from. ... Unless you're from our community you wouldn't know ... Bengalis, they have responsibilities back in Bangladesh they need to look after the brothers, sisters, mothers and family in Bangladesh. ... I've kind of gone through it, ... it's kind of a different feeling I understand where they're coming from ... at times all they see is that their parents are at work.*

The teachers' stories draw attention to perceptions about how B.E.M. pupils are evaluated by some of their colleagues. While the inference here is that such conditions may be localised or widespread, the point I want to illustrate is the inner conflict such misgivings present for them, particularly since they do not want to be understood as merely passive recipients of normative processes. My contention is that, despite their propensity to adopt a neutral position, they also have conflicts about how to respond. The teachers' empathy to B.E.M. pupils whom they perceive as subject to, in these examples, negative judgements reflects their own position since they too are subjected to dominant perspectives about B.E.M. people. At the same time such conditioning factors, which negatively impact on pupils' lives, need to be challenged. B.E.M. teachers empathise with B.E.M. pupils' unpreparedness for the realities of an unequal society. They also register that their colleagues' inability to interpret some B.E.M. pupils' behaviour patterns creating unavoidable relational dissonance. Transition to adulthood for all pupils is characterised by an evolving awareness of the realities of their social condition. The positioning task for B.E.M. teachers is to relate to B.E.M. pupils in ways that enable them to develop the skills to navigate the complexities of this transition. There is no unifying strategy that can equip B.E.M. pupils with *survival skills*, rather, as I will later show, the teachers assess the situation as uniquely determined by other factors at play. There are a multitude of

influential factors that combine and conflict, which they at times may acquiesce to or respond to creatively. Shared marginality is significant to understanding role model relations because teachers' empathy is based upon relating within a distinct set of parameters. Shared marginality foregrounds the social conditions for relating and as I will later show other dominant regulatory powers and/or pupils' resistance are also influential. I now consider epistemic concerns, which together with contextual factors are fundamental to understanding shared marginality.

### Epistemic crisis

Recognising aspects of B.E.M. pupils' subjectivity as their own is central to B.E.M. teachers empathetic relating. MacIntyre (1977) describes epistemological crises as encounters between traditional virtues or ideas and new discourse-dependent truths. Although I discount and reject his notions about traditional and core virtues, the idea of epistemological junctures is useful in the thesis. Here I connect subjectivity with empathy and radical awakenings, and consider B.E.M. people's subjectification processes as interrupted by epistemic events. I refer to epistemic events or crises to describe particular types of experiences for B.E.M. teachers and pupils where they appropriate or reject an existing truth. Epistemic events describe a significant juncture in an individual's subjectification and the thinking processes that accompany their self-transformational processes. For example, a B.E.M. person's sudden awareness of racist beliefs held by a group of 'friends' positioned him/her in ways not specifically linked to personality traits. Shared marginality is premised on the idea that the teachers recognise that, as with B.E.M. pupils, they experience epistemic crises. I argue B.E.M. teachers' experiential knowledge of the effects of such crises on pupils underpins the way they form relations with pupils. By way of illustration, I offer a poignant epistemic crisis in the next extract from Nigel. He described an encounter that results in his realising the effects of social conditioning, thereby disrupting his assumptions about hierarchy and ethnicity:

*Nigel: So when I went to pick up my sister I was aware that the Head was a black lady ... and even then at that age, ... I don't know how to put it in words. ... It was ... seeing a black teacher, it had an impact on me. ... Although she did not teach me, she wasn't in control of me as such, ... but it does ... make you feel something ... I always had white teachers.*

In his reflection on the event Nigel says that *'the mere existence of a black teacher'* had a profound influence on him. He recalls becoming aware of a black female head teacher who taught at his younger sibling's school in London. Nigel said that he encountered his first role model while he was at primary school (age 7-11). At the time of the incident (the late seventies), it was rare for black teachers to be working in schools. Although, his role model was personally unfamiliar, she was the object of his gaze. Nigel claims the disjunction between what he considered to be possible and impossible had a marked impact on the way he subsequently understood his social order as well as his place within it. In his account Nigel locates his younger self as only having relations with teachers who were *'in control of me'*, in other words, controlling his learning (academic and social) and 'others' who were not.

The disruption to Nigel's normative frame of reference is, in this case, experienced as emotional dissonance. During the interview Nigel was not able to articulate in words his response to encountering difference, rather the experience is intuited bodily. Nigel reflects on being forced to abandon his (stereotypical) image of what a teacher is, or who could be representative of a head teacher. Nigel says the first encounter had a significant impact emphasising that it *'made [him] feel something'*. The pauses in his speech are used here to denote that Nigel had to recompose himself before continuing our conversation. He adds: *'back then I didn't know any better ... it's sad to think I could be so shocked ... but at the same time it was like a revelation'*. Nigel's reflection on the incident made him respond in an unusually emotional way. The disruption to Nigel's previously defined norms (or truths) registers as a critical emotional event. I recorded the realisation as being quite profound for him suggesting that processes of subjectification implant truth claims that occasionally affect him (and pupils) in unexpected ways.

Another example of a critical event that creates a shift in self-perception and how others view you was given by Eileen. She grew up in the West Midlands and went to her local primary school that she says in the early sixties had a fairly large number of West Indian and Asian children within their catchment area. Here Eileen describes an incident where she inadvertently overheard a conversation between teachers in her school.



*Eileen: I was lying down pretending to be sleeping in the back of the classroom because I didn't feel well and my teacher said I could stay in during playtime. ... Anyway teacher Mrs Green and, and another teacher were talking ... this stands out for me ... and I'll never forget this. ... She said 'I'm fed up of teaching all these darkies! And there is no way I'm going to let my child come here and mix with them'.*

Eileen claims the incident was unforgettable because prior to overhearing her confession, Mrs Green had been her favourite teacher. The teacher was someone who caused Eileen, due to her innocence, to become quite disillusioned. Eileen reiterated this, saying: *'the fact that she called us all darkies, was the most hurtful part'*. Eileen had been privy to a conversation that revealed to her the way in which she and all the other B.E.M. children in the school were really perceived by the teachers. She reflected on the event by adding: *'covert racism is more insidious. ... Children don't see it coming'*. Here Eileen explained that while more blatant racist attitudes can be challenged, it is difficult to deal with insinuations, or opinions expressed in private. Eileen said that the event is significant because it is a constant reminder of how one is classified based on skin colour. Eileen described her perception of the event as: *'something we all live through'*. Eileen does not think her experience is an isolated event, but is one of many that occurred during an era when the diaspora's integration into white Britain was beginning to impact on wider sectors of the community. The experience, nonetheless left an indelible mark on Eileen who added: *'As they say it's the people who are closest to you who can hurt you the most. ... That was the day I was supposed to be sleeping but my eyes where opened wide'*. Eileen's encounter with this new truth about how she is perceived as 'other' can be read as an example of our modern day equivalent of 'double consciousness' (Du Bois, 1903; Fanon, 1967).

For both Eileen and Nigel, I understand their stories by drawing on Scott's (1992, p779) assertion that 'subjects ... are constituted through experience'. Their subjectivity is understood as mediated through visible and non-visible markers of difference, with particular forms of power relations implicated (Coloma, 2008). Eileen's empathy with B.E.M. pupils can be understood in terms of her experiential knowledge of the covert and overt ways in which B.E.M. pupils are sometimes regarded as 'phobic objects' within teachers' discourse (Hook, 2005). The teachers' accounts of their social conditioning suggest that their subsequent role model

identity may, in part at least, be constituted out of earlier shaping discourses. Nigel's experience is read as introducing dissonance into his earlier beliefs about who could and could not be a teacher. The event not only epitomised for Nigel what a role model is, but made him think teaching was a profession where he '*could achieve and inspire other children*'. Such events force these teachers to be aware of particular 'truths' and how stereotypes can be mobilised or appropriated. For Eileen, the event epitomised how teachers classify B.E.M. pupils. The particularity of their socio-cultural, geographical and historical moment is such that both teachers are changed in some way by the events. In Nigel's case he later moved with his family to Nigeria for a short period which led to adjustments and to a revised 'normative' perspective: '*all teachers there were black*'. Eileen's family sent her to a secondary school outside the catchment area, where she had a very different experience to her peers. I suggest both teachers' position in the interview is as someone who realises their past naivety to wider historical processes and the present effects of these processes. The events can be read as critical turning points for both teachers' subjectivities, in terms of how a child's schemata about the world becomes unsettled modifying previously held beliefs.

The two stories exemplify particular epistemic crises which they elect to recount from an 'infinite and multiple series of subjectivities' (Scott, 1992, p111) that constitute their experience. My contention is that such epistemic crises are not rare or isolated critical events, rather for B.E.M. people they are experiences which they register as milestones in their consciousness of the implications of being positioned as 'other'. There is a general consensus among researchers for the need to examine the ways of knowing and contributions that B.E.M. teachers bring to their discursive work (Galindo & Olguin, 1996; Kohli, 1999; Simon, 1995). Further examples of such experiential knowledge, in the form of critical events are examined in chapters five and six. For example, I look at how they relate to B.E.M. pupils who may intentionally (or unintentionally) accept their given social world. Contained in each of the teachers' stories are events they claim precipitate the questioning of their own (and others') internalised truths and perspectives. There I develop the idea of shared marginality to show that, while shared histories often enable and evoke powerful and emotive forms of relating, empathetic understanding can also produce conflict for B.E.M. teachers.

In conclusion, using the exemplars selected, I am suggesting that shared marginality refers to a particular form of relating because the teachers are aware of the effects of institutionalised or other forms of difference on B.E.M. pupils. I argue shared marginality is based in B.E.M. teachers' acknowledgement of their own poignant epistemic crises and their empathy with B.E.M. pupils' (potentially) emergent realisation of othering. To understand how B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models one needs to give an account of the hegemonic conditions under which they operate. The teachers' experiential knowledge of the effects of epistemic crises and of the effects of racial objectification on B.E.M. pupils create a distinct set of circumstances through which they form relations with pupils. For B.E.M. teachers to relate to B.E.M. pupils require them to enact specific subjectivities and to invoke specific histories. Although role model relations are based around empathetic understanding of B.E.M. pupils' subjectification, clearly one must acknowledge varied experiences and understand the effects of marginality in terms of, for example, gender, social class, and age. The component shared marginality emphasises the dynamic of B.E.M. teachers relating to B.E.M. pupils since both share an experience of 'othering'; it is a condition of their social world. I want to argue that the teachers' observations of these, and their understanding of the effects of racial objectification, are central to relations of empathy. To understand the various discourses that shape their practice, and modes of relating one needs to also explore the teachers' processes of identification with the notion of role model.

### ***Identification with, and performance of 'role model'***

The notion that identity has to do with people who look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same is nonsense. As a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the Other. (Hall, 1992, p49)

B.E.M. teachers' identification with their notion of role model emerges as a response to how they understand shared marginality. The second component of shared discursive history considers how the teachers recognise other people as role models, the practices they enact to signify to others they are role models, and how they perform their version of role model. In this chapter I examine some of the generic themes emerging from the teachers' talk about how they identify with their notion of role model. Hall's (1991) cautionary note is useful here to remind us that identification needs to be considered from the 'minority' perspective. There are

marked differences between how the male and female teachers perform as role models that will be discussed in chapters five and six and that reflect gender differences in how the teachers relate to B.E.M. pupils. For example, all the male teachers talk about their performance in terms of their popularity among the pupil body whereas the female teachers speak about their performance of a pedagogy of care. In this chapter, attention is given to the common emergent themes related to identification with various notions of role model, and the teachers' positioning in their narrations.

### Identification with Role Models

Previously, in the methodology chapter, I described the informal nature of the interview in which I posed some questions when it seemed appropriate or relevant: 'Who were the role models in your life?' 'Are there any significant persons who influenced you in the past?' 'Was there someone whom you would like to/do emulate in some way?' A secondary aim of these questions was to understand the extent to which mimesis discourses were included in their talk, and in what ways the teachers had considered the influence of role models on their outlook.

Two of the teachers claimed not to have role models, Eileen remarked: *'I was brought up in a close Christian community we were always there for each other ... it's not something that's been important to me ... maybe it's 'cause of how I was brought up'*. Similarly, Ali responded by saying: *'I know there are a lot of the kids who do look up to me, but I learnt at an early age to rely on myself. ... I found out a lot of things the hard way, ... so really you should be your own role model ... you should look into yourself ... we're all unique ... it's about find out what you do best and then going for it'*. I found these revelations surprising given that the teachers believed themselves to be role models. Ali holds the view that everyone should have themselves as their own role model because life is about self-determination. Although in a later part of the interview Sherrine similarly argued that pupils should be encouraged to be their own role model, she first cited her father as her role model:

*Sherrine: I did an assembly about role models when I was a deputy head of year and it was about my dad, I put up pictures of Angelina Jolie and other celebrities ... and famous people I and said my role model is my dad. After telling them his story, I ended by saying I was lucky enough to have someone close at hand to always instil in me the belief that you*

*can be anyone you choose to be, but you all can be whatever you set your mind on, believe in yourself and don't let anyone or anything prevent you from fulfilling your ambition.*

Both Ali and Sherrine perceive self-reliance as attributes that pupils need to develop. This could suggest that, rather than mimesis, their identification with role models is based on conveying messages to pupils about self-determination. Sherrine said the assembly was necessary *'because I don't want the girls to think that fame is the most important goal in life, ... I also showed them Mother Theresa to make them realise that it's your inner conviction that's important, you can't get anywhere in life without that belief'*. As I will show later, discourses of 'self-belief' permeate the teachers' narratives and are central to how they position themselves as role models to B.E.M. pupils.

In addition to the black teacher mentioned above, Nigel referred to two other role models (male Asian mathematics teachers) who joined his secondary school. As with his first role model, Nigel identifies with them symbolically while simultaneously experiencing them as alluring and (to some extent) intangible. He recalls: *'when I look back now and remember ... there was something I wanted ... though they were not black ... they were males which means I could identify with them and they like closer to my race'*. Nigel identifies with the teachers because he felt they shared similar backgrounds with him. He postulates the teachers were alluring to him because they were the only minority teachers in his secondary school. Nigel was never taught by either of the teachers, but decided to elicit the attention of one of them by regularly asking for help with his mathematics homework. Nigel describes how he sought out this teacher and ingratiated himself by appealing for additional work to improve his understanding:

*Nigel: He wasn't even my teacher he was just a maths teacher but I used to go to him at lunch time and say 'sir, I'm good at simplifying fractions, sir, could you give me some other work' ... and he would be giving me advanced work, ... harder than I did with my teacher ... and calling some of the older kids and saying 'look at this boy he is only 14 years old and look at what he's doing ... and you guys are just messing around'.*

Nigel's account is suggestive of his desire to move from a space of longing to a place of belonging where he could obtain recognition. By seeking the attention of his role model and obtaining his support Nigel could perceive himself as a member of his teaching group. Note here the micro workings of power in what could be

considered an innocuous relation. Nigel (the learner) strategically positions himself as a model pupil. He continues: *I always found myself ... wanting to please them ... wanting to gain their favour ... wanting to be seen good in their eyes*. Nigel's positioning in his talk is as a protégé with an awareness of lack. He wants to be seen as 'good' in the eyes of his role models. Nigel's strategic re-configuration of himself as a protégé to his role model suggests his subjectivity becomes 'what one is by internalising power-produced truths and acting as one should to conform to what is learned about oneself' (Prado, 2000, p80). The avowed aim, from a Foucauldian perspective, is that disciplinary techniques install new habits to change an individual and alter their behaviour. As Prado (2005, p80) reminds us: "This is a matter of subjectivity being defined in the process of 'learning' what one is by internalising power-produced truths and 'acting as one should' to conform to what is learned about oneself".

Nigel claims his manoeuvres were ultimately beneficial since he later gained a higher social position among his classmates as he was ranked as 'good' at mathematics, adding: *maybe it's that role model thing ... I really do believe it does exist*. His desire for attention could be read as a curiosity or a novelty, but Nigel said these teachers' presence generated a determination in him to become a mathematician.

So far, I have suggested the teachers' identifications with their notion of role model are linked to discourses of self-belief and self-reliance. In Nigel's case, learning about self-belief arose from his establishing a productive relation with his role model in which he imitates the willing learner. This implies that mimesis discourses cannot be discounted when considering a protégé(e)'s positioning vis-à-vis role model identification. For example, several of the B.E.M. teachers talk about their colleagues' admirable teaching qualities, which they emulate.

*Nattalie: When you've been teaching a long time it's easy to get so used to it, but when you have another teacher there and every time you go past that class and ... you just look at them teaching ... and you are amazed as to what is happening in that classroom ... that motivates you even though, you don't want to get so complacent about things, you know, you ... another day, another lesson ... so when you see another outstanding teacher, someone that can motivate you ... yeah.*

*Sherrine: My father taught me when I was younger at a school, just by watching him. If I could grab a class like that I have them so engaged in their mathematics, I know I do. I'm sure I do, but that's who I want to become ... because he's never tired of learning. That's the special quality that I want to emulate, up for change all the time. This is really weird coming from an Egyptian background where the men are often fixed in their ways, unwieldy, he's not like that at all.*

*Kenneth: I admired her [former Head of Department] because of her commitment to the kids and her passion was definitely there ... I've seen her, when she couldn't get through to a child she would be talking to me and crying ... 'what can I do? What can I do'? ... She was one of the teachers that use to ask me [how to reach the black children]. I'd say 'try this', and sometimes she'd come back and say 'yeah, that worked', even though she was a more experienced teacher than I was, been in the job a long time, yet she was willing to hear from her juniors and still learn. I respected that as well.*

In the narrations above, the teachers' positioning is as protégé(e)s to their role models. I suggest that each of the teachers identify with their role model's commitment to engaging with learners, and this is something that they continually seek to emulate. The teachers' identifications with role models however focus on the qualities, which (as I will later show) they have to some extent already acquired. The teachers in this thesis are all rated in their schools as outstanding teachers. Nattalie is ambitious and highly motivated to succeed in her career, and so inevitably aligns herself with colleagues who display these characteristics. Similarly, Sherrine has as a commitment to life-long learning and strives to inculcate this into her pedagogy. Kenneth's role model is someone for whom hierarchy is secondary to valuing another person's contribution. Kenneth's passion for finding ways to unlock pupils' 'potential' suggests his identification with his role model is due to this shared perspective. Given their self-defining stance, I interpret their narratives about influential colleagues as expressing identification with discourses out of which they themselves are constituted. Here, the social inscribes itself on the teachers themselves (Davies & Gannon, 2005) and influences how they position themselves as role models' protégé(e)s.

However, role model identification is complex partially due to the differing extent to which the teachers are able to emulate their selected figures. For Nattalie, in contrast,



self-identification is based on her observation of her colleagues' teaching. Her subjectivity is explained in terms of continually improving her pedagogy, mindful of her everyday attitude, and work ethic. While self-improvement is important, equal weight is given to external validation:

*Nattalie: Now I'm not saying that I don't know if I'm a good teacher, I just personally feel that, I don't have the confidence to name myself as a good teacher unless others do, others would be able to see if I'm a good teacher or not.*

Poststructural readings holds the dual notion of the teachers' subject to and subject of hegemonic discourses. For Nattalie, external legitimacy is salient to what constitutes a 'good teacher' rather than her own judgement. Her narrative is not taken as an outlier, rather I acknowledge that for all the teachers there are a myriad of circumstances where internalisation or rejection of a given label occurs. The aim is to illustrate particularities and contextualise what is meaningful to them. Furthermore, these teachers' 'influential' accounts may be read as contextual pre-conditions for their subsequent compliance with, resistance to and agency within role model discourses (Morgan, 2004). Continuing this theme, Josephine's role models are key figures in African-American history. Her identification with them is parasocial, with them becoming almost 'fictional' black female characters (as they are not personally known to her).

*Josephine: Harriet Tubman, ... yeah, she is one of my role models, my other role model is Rosa Parks, I like those people who you know, stand up for what they think and do what they know is not going to be a popular decision but someone has to do it and it is helping a worthy cause.*

Josephine says she admires these women because of what they represent to her – the Black civil rights movement occurred during her youth so she was probably not immune to the associated discourses. For Josephine, an admirable quality of a role model is a readiness to stand in opposition to popularly-held beliefs or views that are unjust. Josephine claims it is important that an individual's actions are directed by their own convictions rather than the result of someone telling them what they should or should not do. It is significant that her role models are drawn from stories of people who adopt an oppositional stance to prevailing racist disciplinary regimes.



Josephine conceives of her role models not as neutral, but rather attaches symbolic and historical connotations to them. She wants to become one of *'those people who stand up for'* their beliefs, as a representative of 'others'. Josephine's role models interestingly are someone whom she *'likes'* /admires but with whom she does not always align herself. As a pre-condition for her own agency, while Josephine may approve of their qualities, she makes no claim of personal ownership over them. Josephine's para-social figures, while renowned for their personal conviction and fortitude, represent an ideal self, which Josephine often struggles to imitate. As a representative authority figure in the classroom, Josephine's adoption of such a stance has its own ramifications and tensions, as I will show in Chapter Seven where I examine how Josephine negotiates survival in her school when confronted with discriminatory practices.

Regardless of whether identification is para-social (Josephine), at a distance (Nigel) or more intimate, all the teachers talk about being prompted into personal action. To further illustrate the teachers' identification with 'visionary' role models, I discuss Kenneth. Here Kenneth is referring to a role model who was a particularly charismatic leader:

*Kenneth: When I actually got the job I was really impressed by how he spoke about the school. It was his family. He's a black man as well. which even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it's still rare ... to see a black guy at the top. Then to see the interaction with him and the school as a whole was great. ... Everybody respected him. And it wasn't because he was soft or anything like that but he knew what he was about and he knew how to interact with people, keep them in the know, he knew how to put across a vision and to get people to own it by giving them access to speak about it.*

Kenneth describes the senior teacher as profoundly influential to him the start of his career. Kenneth's account emphasises, as Rollock et al (2011, p1079) point out, that skin tone as a 'perceived marker of black identity' continues to shape and inform the experience of black people in contemporary society. It appears that, for Kenneth, working in a school where there was a black person *'at the top'* challenges his previously-held knowledge systems and suggests (thought-provoking) alternatives. One could argue the identification here has a symbolic or representative effect. The senior teacher's insistence on accessibility and transparency was a strategy Kenneth

applauded. Kenneth admired a role model character that is able to command the respect of others through consensus. As with his previous example, Kenneth identifies with role models who personify altruistic objectives where their aim is to improve teacher-pupil relations. Kenneth's identification with his role model is marked by the way in which the Senior Teacher was willing to share his vision of the school by ensuring that such knowledge is distributed to all its members. The school community was regarded as a *'family'* suggesting that interactions between its members were imbued with care and affection. The ideal of inclusivity, and valuing all members of the school community is a quality which Kenneth said he wants to emulate: *'that's always my aim when I go into school, everyone should be appreciated for what they bring to us ... as a community'*. Unlike Josephine, Kenneth aspires to incorporate these ideal role model qualities into his practice.

Thus, fluidity and marginalisation impact on the contested nature of concepts such as 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'black' in relation to identity and how/why the labels are assigned. To conclude, the teachers' identification and narrations are about how they perceive their role models, how they have been changed by the encounter and what they want to become. Their identities, as Hall (1991) reminds us, 'are never completed, never finished, that they are always, as subjectivity itself is, in process'. It is this fluidity that I want to capture within their stories, to illustrate that self-assignment may not necessarily conform to a legitimating ideology or specific action. Their narratives draw on discourses of identification with a role model which highlight human qualities, for example, self-belief, self-determination and self-reliance. The teachers' self-identified narratives also point to what they perceive it means to emulate and/or embody a contextualised social construct. There is I argue a constitutive force to how they construct their social reality dominated by ways of dealing with hegemonic discourses. While there is always the potential to internalise, collude, resist or reject, their narratives give voice to the saliency of a specific event. Rather than suggest a theory of social change, I argue one should scrutinise the teachers' perception of their actions and counter-narratives on B.E.M. pupils. The teachers speak about identifying with role models who advocate alternative versions of their current social and teaching world. They identify with significant others who are prepared to question the validity of their assumptions. For some teachers their encounter creates effects. For example, in Nigel's case he re-positions himself as a

‘good pupil’ and gains recognition. The effect of his encounter can be read as productive, and contributing to his re-labelled learner identity.

### Signifying as a role model

As a precursor to subsequent chapters where I explore teachers’ performances of their roles, I briefly mention how this connects with signifying practices and representation of the self. Conforming to representative discourses may be momentary or on going, yet as Gannon (2006, p13) points out, identification ‘resides in the permanent possibility of a certain re-signifying process’. How these teachers perform and signify themselves as role models to others is always mediated in complex ways by discourse, power and context (Alcoff, 1991). The discursive context of their utterances is always linked to the specifics of their audience. The extract below is from Kenneth’s discussion about his interactions with parents and pupils, where he also rationalises his self-defined position as a role model.

*Kenneth: Because I think, not within because people don't see who I am within, but what you can see on the outside is still a rare thing. A black guy who is in a profession, who looks like he's doing well, and when he speaks he sounds like he's talking some sort of sense, yet still able to communicate with them, who hasn't ... and I use this phrase carefully ... 'sold out'.*

*Patricia: ... What do you mean by 'sold out'?*

*Kenneth: There's a general feeling, and I will take this from the communities that I know about in North and South London. When black guys get to a certain level their cultural allegiances change. People believe that they are playing the game so much that they forget the culture that we have as African and Caribbean people and only go for white middle-class culture that we are situated in ... and kids see that ... and are not all that impressed.*

This extract illustrates the complexity of B.E.M. teachers’ identifications as role models and the significance of the social signifiers attached to them. Kenneth’s account is an example of him disrupting signifying processes for B.E.M. teachers and normative judgements around difference (Simon, 1995). The problem of representation is apparent in his repeated reference to ‘black guys’. The subject of blackness, remains central to the writings of conscious scholars, specifically the

challenges faced by black men to define their reality within a racist/racially-structured society. Some black scholars continue to argue that 'skin colour' is a mask, which we wear, inscribed with discourses of representation (Fanon, 1967; Hall, 1990; Moore, 2005). B.E.M. people carry with them their own cultural codes, mores, and folklore (Bergner, 1995; Crenshaw. 1991). As Hall (1990) points out, B.E.M. people are a walking personification of a history of the diasporic/post-colonised subject. Kenneth's reference to skin colour illustrates how external judgement is a salient aspect of how he identifies as a role model. Furthermore, this form of signifying practice re-affirms the inter-connectivity of shared marginality to B.E.M. teachers' role model identification.

Kenneth rejects being positioned as '*sold out*', a pejorative term synonymous with someone who internalises and wears as a social mask the white man's dispositions. He constructs the pupils and others (parents, colleagues) as able to read him inter-textually, and so justifies how he self-represents. Kenneth gives discursive authority to his statement through his reference to culturally-embedded markers used to differentiate class and status. The study by Rollock et al (2011) is useful here as they contend that:

The black middle classes are living through not a double consciousness (as Du Bois has famously theorized) but instead through a set of multiple consciousness's as they move back and forth the class and race divide within different social spheres populated by audiences and actors of varying race and class backgrounds. (Rollock et al 2011, p1088)

In other words, Kenneth is 'speaking back' to other blacks in a way that informs them he is playing a survival game in the 'White World' (p1088). Rollock et al (2011, p1088) coined the term 'authentic signalling work' to explain how dual messages are strategically communicated to 'gain inclusion and acceptance and to indicate their difference from working class blacks'. As will be shown later, Kenneth's chosen position, his rejection of consensus, finds expression through his refusal to enact or adhere to 'normalising' positions. Within the hierarchy of the school, Kenneth claims he is read as someone with a '*chip on my shoulder*', whereas he wants to be regarded as someone who struggles against the damaging effects of discourses on aspects of his social reality. Following Biko (1973), the counter-narratives the teachers produce are in tension with how they are construed by their audience (others), and thereby

determine the quality of the strategies or performances possible. My key point is that B.E.M. teachers' experiential knowledge of being positioned as 'other' in dominant discourses affects their identification process. Thus while a teacher's rationale as a role model may be moral and political, their actions are also strongly tied to discourses of representation. Thus, shared discursive history should be conceived as having an identification and performance component since it is through representative language/signifiers that B.E.M. teachers enact their discursive work.

### ***B.E.M Teachers as a Pedagogical Resource***

Who is it that determines what is to count as valuable, effective or satisfactory performance and what measures or indicators are considered valid. ... These struggles are currently highly individualised as teachers, as ethical subjects, find their values challenged or displaced. (Ball, 2003, p216)

The deployment of resources is the third element to shared discursive history. In this section I focus on B.E.M. teachers' understanding of themselves as pedagogical resources that can be appropriated by B.E.M. pupils. The intention is to exemplify their deployment as a pedagogical tool in order to illustrate some of many everyday micro-management practices in their school that affect how they choose to engage with B.E.M. pupils. Ball (2003) argues that neo-liberal ideology produces a performance culture in schools which impacts on teachers' beliefs and professional judgements. For example, it can lead to them subordinating pupils' holistic development to targets, outcomes and the exigencies of external judgements. Ball argues that neo-liberalism requires a continual re-working of the relationships between individual commitment and action in an organisation. By considering the teacher as a pedagogical resource, I aim to highlight tensions arising from the erosion of professional autonomy through complying to managerial authority. In other words, I focus on the teachers' discursive practices where there are struggles over principles, struggles over whose and what knowledge, values and behaviours should be standardised and officially defined as 'legitimate' (Apple, 2001). Thus, this section contains a micro-analysis of the teachers' narrations about their participation in extra-curricular/after-school activities with B.E.M. pupils and other pupils in their school/community. The key finding is that, as a pedagogical tool, B.E.M. teachers direct their efforts through their professional judgements of pupils' needs. While for some teachers this stance evokes criticism from colleagues, their primary concern is

the quality of the relationships they are able to produce. In chapters five and six I extend that by analysing how they draw on familiar cultural idioms (for example, youth culture and language) to communicate with B.E.M. pupils, as the teachers model their individualised mode of non-compliance within regulatory forces.

#### Extra-curricular activities

Participating in some form of extra-curricular activities is considered by all the teachers in this study as germane to their practice. In the teachers' narrations, the central issue is that of control, who decides what they should do; it is about the utilisation of their free time. The matter is whether participation is voluntary or obligatory. It appears most of them believe their participation is voluntary, and so they should have autonomy over how their free time is utilised. So how do the teachers reconcile pedagogical and/or philosophical imperatives with their school's management directives?

Nattalie believes organising activities for the pupils in her school is essential, particularly because it demonstrates a teacher's commitment: *I've always run after-school clubs to help kids on the work they're having problems ... that's what we do as a teacher*. Nattalie further justifies this work by referring to the absence of home support, but also indicates that not engaging could be professionally damaging: *it's no longer an appraisal target for me ... I just do it*. I read this as her guarding against an unpopular gaze in the school and suggest she regulates her pedagogical commitments using discourses of care. In other words, the effects of surveillance in her school manifest as judgements about her worthiness creating a regime in which the additional time a teacher invests must be visible and measurable.

*Nattalie: You should be prepared to stay behind after school, because I do see some teachers leave at 3 o'clock and they do suffer in the long run because it shows you're not organised. ... If you really care about them you'll stay behind and really organise it.*

Despite her relatively short time at the school, Nattalie explained that she is known for taking a lead in the school's reformed assessment policy. She has a penchant for statistical data analysis, which she uses to assess pupils and set performance targets. She added: *I already see myself as part of management team, so we have to lead by example, you can't expect colleagues to do it if you're not prepared too ... it shows I do care about the pupils*. As

a resource in the school, Nattalie has gained approval from her colleagues because she is able to push through initiatives, and give a fresh perspective on an old problem. She told me: *I was nominated for an award for excellent leadership*. I suggest Nattalie's professional identity construction requires that she not only presents a corporeal identity, but demonstrates her compliance to subject-content only (driven output) activities with pupils.

The logic of performance in schools, as Gray et al (1999) point out, encourages a tactical re-organisation of staffing to match targeted teaching groups. In contrast, for Josephine, the climate of performance management has had social consequences. She talked about how the year-on-year pressure to continually exceed previous targets for some teaching groups is at times unrealistic. Although Josephine descried how her initial investment in the school's projected goals, was met with enthusiasm, the stress of attempting to continually attain the aims had become intolerable. Josephine was negotiating a reduction in her teaching load because she felt that she was being used as effectively *'cheap labour'*: *I have two extra teaching periods so there's no way I can do any more than I'm doing already ... and that's something that I've already complained about*. Josephine's protests were motivated by a fear of potential deterioration of her productivity (or early 'burnout'). While additional teaching groups mean the possibility for Josephine to work with more B.E.M. pupils, the increased workload risks her usefulness as a resource or pedagogical tool.

Sherrine and Eileen resent the ongoing expectation in their school to commit to additional work. They had previously understood 'extra-curricular' to mean voluntary but saw this was shifting. Sherrine said: *I work hard enough at school. ... I always arrive here very early ... and only stay for meetings ... I've got a family who needs me*. As a department head, one of Sherrine's responsibilities is to organise the 'after-school' curriculum activities that are run by her staff but, due to time pressures, she rarely contributes to these directly. Despite her unpopular refusal to take part, a compromise was negotiated with the management team:

*Sherrine: As a department we pushed for them to be moved to weekly lunch time sessions, ... 'cause I've found these to be much more popular ... because most of the girls have to go straight home. ... They don't have that sort of freedom.*



Sherrine explained many of the pupils' parents (and carers) place restrictions on their movement to and from school and do not agree to them remaining after the end of the school day. This poses difficulty for these 'clients' when the expectation for academic 'output' is increasingly individualised. Sherrine reflected that advocating on behalf of pupils' home duties and responsibilities made her realise that the school had limited cultural empathy or understanding of the clients they are supposed to serve.

Eileen also said that the time she can devote to engage in after-school activities is restricted by her demanding familial responsibilities.

*Eileen: I'm a grandmother, that's an important job. ... That's more important to me. ... I can't commit to regular after school sessions but I usually just meet with any child on an ad hoc basis, they know where my classroom is, ... they know where to find me, ... and trust me, they do that a lot ... most lunchtimes!*

It appears Eileen's understanding of teaching is based in establishing relations with pupils and offering them safe spaces to voice their concerns. She self-regulates her time in the interest of the pupils, claiming that even though they seek her out on the pretext of support with their school work, more often the time is used to discuss private concerns or anxieties: *'they sometimes just need a listening ear, even though I'm not their form tutor'*. I read this as Eileen seeking to not only educate the child, but to promote a notion of parenthood that is culturally responsive (Irvine 1997; Ware, 2006). Eileen told me that such informal pupil-directed practices are crucial for supporting pupils' non-academic needs. Eileen continued:

*Eileen: the senior management are trying to make it compulsory for all staff. ... There was a time when I would even do unpaid holiday sessions but not now ... teaching is becoming more intense. ... I need my free time just ... to recuperate.*

Here Eileen is referring to the intensification of administrative tasks and the multifaceted expectations attached to monitoring; to quote Ball, 'the "reformed teacher" is conceived of as simply responsive to external requirements' (Ball, 2003, p222). Eileen claims her discord with her school's managerial style of controlling staff has made her evaluate her beliefs about pedagogy and why she continues to teach. Eileen adds: *I help them [the pupils] in other ways. ... A teacher's job is to develop all*



*aspects of the child. ... It's about quality time when they talk to me ... they need that one to one.*

Purposeful relations that address other key issues in pupils' lives are an investment, which for Eileen cannot be readily measured. Eileen understands that her discursive work is often dictated by the specificity and immediacy of a child's need. She feels that within the climate of the school, the pastoral dimension to pedagogy is not measurable and is therefore deemed inconsequential. Ball (2003) argues that an endemic aspect of the performative discourses in education is the reconfiguration of what counts as professional knowledge. He asserts that there are, in Foucauldian terms, 'knowledges inadequate for their task ... naïve knowledge, disqualified knowledge' (Foucault, 1980a, p81-82). For some teachers (like Kenneth and Ali), however, rather than attempting to negotiate their time, they chose to apply their professional knowledge in productive ways outside their school.

Kenneth claimed the needs of pupils and families are not fully recognised in his school's strategic development plan. He remarked:

*Kenneth: I don't want to commit my time to just to things inside the school cause I see that people who have responsibilities end up solely living the job. ... This only works if you can really make a difference by taking that route.*

He suggested that '*living the job*' is a mode of being where even casual conversations with pupils are based on their performance outputs. He also said that discussions with colleagues about pupils are predominantly oriented to output and less about their particular needs.

*Kenneth: It's all about making teachers feel bad when their classes aren't making these arbitrary ... sometimes impossible grades, targets within very tight deadlines. ... If they [pupils] aren't gonna get a C or above, ... for whatever reason then it's like they aren't important.*

Boxley (2003) argues that teachers' self-regulation of their pedagogy has become so internalised they are unaware that the very ways in which they themselves relate to pupils are being constrained by the expectation of performative measurability. Unlike the female teachers previously discussed, Kenneth counters the imposition of managerial directives towards extra-curricular activities by also offering voluntary off-site programmes, which he says demand a lot of his free time.

*Kenneth: I do a lot of culturally-related things connected to education as well as personal activities in the North London community. I do private teaching as well as activities and other things run by community organisations, such as giving advice to young people and their parents caught up in the system. ... They tend to be ethnic groups, my church, and other churches within the locale. We organise summer schools, or extra tuition outside of term time and other things like that.*

For Kenneth, the positive aspect of being a resource to his community is the temporary removal from his school's managerial gaze. He maintains very little overlap between his community service work and his school work. Kenneth's community-related activities allow him to combine his Christian vocation with teaching. Thus Kenneth's identity is a network of external relationships mediated by 'attachment to a common body of symbols. Kenneth explained that he has gradually formalised his approach in later years: *I've become more involved in outreach programmes ... some of them revolving around church related activities but also I've set up regular programmes where they can come and get additional lessons in some school subjects*'. Kenneth's choice to become involved in this work is for him a 'conscious decision', and he cites this as a reason for not seeking any posts of responsibility within his school. As a pedagogical resource, Kenneth's decision to also teach elsewhere (*in a voluntary school*) enables him to have autonomy. He can also co-create possible moments of educational friendship and relatedness with pupils and their families outside of his school.

Ali claims language continues to be the main barrier for some B.E.M. pupils in his school. Although varied EAL support is available, the implications of language are seldom fully appreciated. For example, pupils often have to represent their parents in correspondence with officials. As a pedagogical resource, Ali is often used as an informal translator by colleagues, which he interprets as being cost effective for the school. He explained: *I'm called a lot to translate so no-one can say I don't do my bit*'. Ali also offers advice on education to parents and gives informal tuition to children of secondary age. Ali began offering free tuition in his local community while he was still at university because of his own experience of not having support at home.

Ali told me that he gives priority to his community work, partly as a defiant stance because this approach has little credibility with the school's management team who seem unprepared to nurture parental involvement. Ali's community links mean

others seek advice from him. To illustrate this point, he added:

*Ali: there are kids who come from the community, one I saw who wasn't doing well in terms of his education. He was involved in gang violence, even he came up to me, you know and said 'how can I get out of this? You know what I can do'?*

Ali's perception of himself as someone *'who is just involved'* in the community, enables him to be positioned as a role model (and resource) who may be able to guide some of the recalcitrant local Bengali youths. I would argue that Ali's knowledge of gang membership in the community positions him as a form of resource for his community.

To conclude, the statutory system of performance management is a drive to shape teacher professionalism. In the neo-liberal era, the management focus is predominantly on teachers' behaviours rather than their dispositions and thinking about pedagogy (Evans, 2011). The shift is that teachers' professionalism replaces a service ethic with a performance ethic (Evans, 2011). The teachers talk about their inner conflicts and the need to validate the resources they bring to their pedagogical encounters. In all schools, pupil's qualitative encounters differ. The teachers are cognisant of B.E.M. pupils' 'non-synchrony' as a determinant of their experience in school. McCarthy (1998, p78) uses the term 'non-synchrony', to describe how 'different categories of pupils not only have qualitatively different experiences in schools, ... [but] are ultimately structured into different futures'. He suggests radical thinking, that teachers decide how and when they participate in extra-curricular activities rationalises from their own personal judgement. While at times this may conflict with their schools' imperatives, they continue to maintain a delicate balance between neo-liberal accountability and advocating against inequities in the treatment of B.E.M. pupils.

As a pedagogical tool, while they occasionally embrace the contradictions involved in asserting professional autonomy, there are also discontinuities related to their discursive work. By choosing to limit their participation in extra-curricular activities Nattalie and Josephine are subject to external judgements of their effectiveness. For some teachers, the option is either accept the legitimacy of their school management decisions, and with them better career prospects within the school, or acknowledge

their own professional judgements about how they can optimally utilise their skills. A consequence of Kenneth's community work is that he does not pursue a management career path which he could potentially use to raise the profile of B.E.M. pupils' needs in his school. Similarly, Ali's defiant stance could be read as counter-productive for the B.E.M. pupils in his school, yet beneficial to the pupils and families to whom he offers advice and guidance. Thus, I read the teachers' narrations about their chosen positioning as a pedagogical tool as elaborating strategies that maximise their potential to imagine with B.E.M. pupils (and parents and community) futures different to those that are 'given'.

### ***Concluding remarks***

Shared discursive history is a conceptual tool to understand the dynamics of B.E.M. teachers' role model relations as a process of subjectification. The positioning the teachers adopt in their narrations are both enabling and constraining, according to distinct social conditions. In short shared discursive history describes a field of intersecting power relations, which B.E.M. teachers navigate. In this chapter I have drawn attention to some of the generic themes emerging from the teachers' narrations, to develop three inter-related components of shared discursive history.

I began by illustrating the importance that all of the teachers in this study attach to relating with B.E.M. pupils based on mutual respect. I argued that, whilst such qualities are to expected of all teachers, empathy is constitutive of B.E.M. teachers' relations with B.E.M. pupils. The first component, shared marginality, describes the distinctiveness of their feelings of empathy which I argue derive both from their experiential knowledge of marginality and their understanding of the effects of epistemic crises on minority learners. I suggested the importance of contextualising this within the hegemonic social conditions of the teachers' work, and that B.E.M. teachers' empathy is motivated by their understanding of the effects of institutionalised labelling. I argued that we should consider 'critical events' in the teachers' narrations in terms of their re-engagement with discourse about how B.E.M. people are represented. Critical events are read as instances that require these teachers to modify or reformulate their actions, practices or beliefs.

Identification is the second component of shared discursive history which I developed by examining the teachers' understanding of the influence of significant

others. I suggested B.E.M. teachers' identification with role models are with the qualities they would like to have and practices they would like to acquire. The personal qualities most relevant relate to communicating with others alternate visions and representations of self and having the capacity to make an impact on the social world of others. As a prelude to the remainder of the thesis, which attends to performing as a role model, I examined signifying practices. I argued that signifying oneself to an audience as having authenticity (Rollock et al 2011) is complex because the process is also about correcting false images. In the final section I examined a feature of the teachers' social climate – their deployment as a pedagogical resource. Here I illustrated the importance that the teachers give to their experiential understanding of B.E.M. pupils' needs. My micro-analysis of the teachers as a pedagogical tool suggests a dialectic tension between their professional accountability and utilitarian justifications for their actions.

Shared discursive history explains the way B.E.M. teachers understand the relations they establish with B.E.M. pupils, and how discursively-produced knowledge informs these. I have drawn attention both to the subjective and the inter-subjective aspects of the subjectification process. In other words, I considered both the micro-politics of B.E.M. teacher-pupil interactions and the macro-politics of role model relations in terms of other dominant regulatory forces. Thus, given the different modalities of role model (power) relations, shared discursive history describes B.E.M. teachers' role model relations as complex asymmetric power relations. As with all power relations we can think of them as negotiable, contestable and strategic. The teachers' positioning strategies are dependent upon the social relations they are able to forge and the type of interactions permissible. Having outlined role model positioning and how shared discursive history offers dynamic interpretations of these, the subsequent chapters consider how role model performances are gendered. In this way, another layer of complexity is added to their positioning's and strategies to give depth to our understandings of these teachers' discursive role model practices.

## **CHAPTER SIX: BELONGINGNESS AND MALE TEACHERS**

### ***Introduction***

In the previous chapter, I argued that analysing how B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models to B.E.M. pupils requires a holistic interpretation of the social dynamics involved. In this and the next chapter, my concept of shared discursive history is further developed through the lens of gender. The notion of a gender identity can be problematic, particularly, if this evokes a fixed inner essence. I draw on Foucault's later work on practices of the self for understanding gender as an active process of enculturation (McNay, 2013). Shared discursive history develops to describe both the types of power relations formed and the factors that support and inhibit these. I include stories illustrating where resistance functions within role model relations and the positions made available to the male teachers. The chapter is organised in three sections to correspond with the three components of shared discursive history which, as I previously argued, are inter-connected and not mutually exclusive. The sections examine: sharing marginality (how B.E.M. male teachers relate with to pupils); performing a role model identity; and deploying cultural resources.

Sharing marginality concerns B.E.M. male teachers' understanding of marginality and their empathy with pupils. As I elaborated in the last chapter, sharing marginality requires giving attention to social, cultural and local imperatives that may enhance or impede modes of relating with B.E.M. pupils based upon empathy. In this regard, I examine each teacher's personal story to show the impact of social conditions on their subsequent mode of relating. An emergent theme is that the teachers' empathy with B.E.M. pupils is linked to their ideas about bi-cultural affinity and to implicit rules around comportment or cultural membership (McGee, 2013). I examine the teachers' interpretations of epistemic crises, at the individual and community level, to illustrate the complexity of cultural belonging. As a common theme, I argue the male teachers attach significance to cultural expectations and modes of behaviour (in comparison to their female counterparts) and these are organising principles guiding the ways they relate with B.E.M. pupils.

Performing as a role model to B.E.M. pupils influences both the male teachers'

ongoing identity construction and the type of messages they signify to others. In the literature review chapter, I argued that, for any B.E.M. role model, their social authority derives from forms of engagement with others where the aim is to counter forces of normalisation or oppression (Fisher, 1981). Bauman's (2004) ideas about identity construction are helpful for analysing B.E.M. male teachers' performances. Bauman (2004, p20) posits that, for many B.E.M. people, their identity construction is 'born out of the crisis of belonging' and yet at the same time their 'identity is often expressed in terms of belonging' (Robards & Bennett, 2011, p310). Taken together with the above, the teachers' narrations about how they perform describe influential factors that facilitate and inhibit the action of pupils. The teacher's experiential knowledge of the effects of epistemic crises (individually and at the community level) creates situations where they intervene, excluding or proffering alternative perspectives. My argument is that the male teachers' performances as role models are premised on developing pupils' criticality and discernment about cultural representation of B.E.M. people. The teachers perform their role by alerting pupils to ingrained assumptions and/or by questioning beliefs they hold about what in their culture constitutes acting 'manly'.

The third component of shared discursive history considers how B.E.M. teachers utilise available resources to sustain and further enhance their role model relationships. For this I draw on research on youth subcultures (Hebdige, 1979) and neo-subcultures (Maffesoli, 1996; Muggleton, 2000; Robards & Bennet, 2011) and apply their understandings to teachers' expression of masculinity, individuality and lifestyle choices. I examine how one teacher's deployment of/knowledge about youth culture becomes a pedagogical tool. I analyse how a B.E.M. teacher's beliefs about professionalism and style enable a reformulation of his self towards activities that can be read as entrepreneurial. One result of this teacher's self-fashioning is that he creates convivial spaces for contradictory inter-textual readings around masculinity by young people in his school. Generally, I argue that, for the male teachers, such re-configurations or adaptations always happen through negotiations with normalising processes, and contain contradictions for the teacher.

I begin by introducing the male teachers and the meanings they attached to their self-descriptors. I then analyse the events they indicate as significant in enhancing and/or constraining their attempts at relating. I provide context for their critical events to



illustrate the effects of inter-group and intra-group dynamics.

#### B.E.M. male teachers: Self-defining

The male teachers in their talk appear to place more emphasis on their bicultural identity than the female teachers. Bicultural identity is defined as extending one's ethnic identity and sense of belonging to two or more different cultures without losing one's original cultural identity (McGee, 2015). Biculturalism here does not infer a psychological state of being 'between two cultures' but rather a sense of disrupting one's thinking about what it means to belong to a culture. The B.E.M. male teachers as with the females are not a homogeneous group. The male teachers self-define along nationalist lines, yet retain dual self-classification since they also consider themselves British. The teachers' self-descriptions suggest movement physically, cognitively and emotionally between cultural domains. The male teachers are: Ali, Kenneth and Nigel. Ali (British/Bengali) says: *I'm second generation Bengali too so I understand what it's like ... where it's going with them [the pupils]. I think we're in between, not quite British ... and Bengali mix*'. Kenneth (Black/British) describes himself by saying: *My parents are from the Caribbean, so that's home to me even though I was born here ... I'd say I'm Black, it's a political stance, when I "choose" to be classified on official documents then it's Black British*'. Nigel (Nigerian/British), on the other hand, says: *I'm British because I was born in this country, but I see myself as Nigerian because I grew up there and spent a lot of my time going back and forth, I've got the best of both*'. Ali and Kenneth describe themselves as having working-class backgrounds and both were educated in the UK. In contrast, Nigel describes a middle-class background; as the child of a diplomat he travelled extensively so some of his education was privately funded and/or overseas. For both Kenneth and Nigel, there is also some nostalgia attached to their parents' country, here I read home as the 'lived experience of locality' and their homeland is taken as a place of diasporic imagination (Brah, 1996, p192). Perceptions about belonging in diasporas are not assumed to be unitary, rather their ideas contrast, conflict or clash with other competing discourses about Britishness (Pasura, 2015; Wemyss, 2009). Thus I expect variations about what belonging means for the male teachers. I now contextualise each teacher's story to show that collectively their discourses about relating with B.E.M. pupils centre upon assumptions of loyalty and expectations to conform to dominant mores and values.



The remainder of the section examines the teachers' stories to reveal the ways that their positioning strategies are based around criteria demonstrative of belonging to a cultural group. I argue that, while the male teachers express feelings of security within the pedagogical spaces they inhabit with their cultural group, their membership is under constant negotiation due to other imperatives. An overriding implication for their mode of relating is that to belong within/to their cultural group evokes territorial and exclusive sentiments which they have difficulty reconciling. The first of the teachers I discuss below, Nigel, speaks about the dynamic of belonging and the effects of exclusionary practices by B.E.M. pupils.

### ***Sharing Marginality: His-stories of belonging***

A culture forms itself on the basis of what it rejects. (O'Farrell, 2005, p91)

Sharing marginality examines the positions the male teachers adopt in their narrations on relating empathetically to B.E.M. pupils. In the previous chapter, I argued that a feature of sharing marginality is the teachers' understanding of the hegemonic conditioning imposed on them in schooling and society and of its effects on B.E.M. pupils. I described critical events as varied forms of epistemic crisis that can precipitate B.E.M. teachers questioning their own ingrained assumptions and re-modifying their actions. I suggested teachers' experiential knowledge from these critical events creates empathy towards B.E.M. pupils' subjectification and is an important factor in the way they relate to B.E.M. pupils as role models.

In this section I examine the teachers' stories and what they say about how they navigate aspects of their social world that are conditioned by cultural hegemony. As previously stated, culture is understood as a discursive practice: 'as fluid and performative, but produced in discourses infused by morality and desire that delineate "truth" and fixity' (Francis et al, 2010, p102). I argue that while relating with empathy to B.E.M. pupils gives them a sense of belonging within their culture, this can also create conflict. Furthermore, the male and female B.E.M. teachers manage the contradictions this poses differently. All the male teachers talk extensively about the kind of external events that they encounter. A significant theme to emerge from each of the male teachers is that they interpret critical events (externally or otherwise) through ideas about cultural membership and exclusion.

The female teachers speak about how they relate to B.E.M. pupils in terms of perspectives on women's subjugated position in schooling and society, whereas the male teachers focus on their cultural group as the marginalised entity. A distinguishing feature arising from the male teachers' accounts is their emphasis on relating to B.E.M. pupils who *belong* to their marginalised (cultural) group.

#### His-story of Belonging: Nigel

Nigel taught in three quite varied schools, the first of which was a supplementary school in South London. I begin with Nigel's account of his experience teaching in that school because he says it greatly influenced his decision to make a career change to teaching. Despite Nigel's lack of experience of teaching as a graduate, he says was highly regarded in the school. Recognition and status not only enhanced Nigel's self-worth but were instrumental in his subsequent perceptions about relating and interacting with pupils. Nigel reflects upon his time at the school by saying: *I really felt valued there ... the parents and boys knew I'd get them good results ... I could offer specialist knowledge that was really needed at the time*'. Supplementary schools are generally understood as oppositional to the mainstream schools in terms of, for example, curriculum content, pedagogy or the regulatory ideal of 'compulsive Eurocentrism' (Hall, 1996, p16). The cultural hegemony of the school can be reasonably assumed to adhere to dominant traditions, which emphasise patriarchal notions of deference. The supplementary school's main function is to support children's learning in state schools. According to Nigel:

*Nigel: Some of the boys that attended [School X] were frequently being excluded from the mainstream school that they attended and some of them had even been permanently excluded. But during the sessions we had with them in terms of teaching and tuition it was very, very difficult to distinguish between those children that were excluded frequently and those who didn't have much problems at school.*

Nigel's difficulty recognising the pupils labelled as 'excluded' could be due to their capacity to construct learner identities not inscribed by past educational failure (Archer & Yamashita, 2003). Nigel sees the indistinguishable behaviour patterns the boys exhibit as also due to the school's ethos of respect and kinship. He adds: *I think being in that all black environment they didn't feel they were being picked on. ... Maybe there was*

*some kind of fairer treatment in place*'. He makes a claim for the authority to talk about the boys in this way since his position as a member of staff is to uphold the school's mission statement centred upon holistic educational development. Nigel explains: *'of course you're helping them with their school work, but at [School X] there's the added extra that when you're with them it's about showing them our ways ... so they feel good about themselves*'. Thus Nigel's induction into teaching is marked by the emphasis on non-judgemental treatment of, or assumptions about pupils, together with the view that relating to pupils is based on having shared cultural values.

Nigel illustrates empathy with the pupils by saying: *'they relate to me because we come from the same background where education is the key and ... there's discipline involved*'. Here Nigel positions himself as someone who forges amicable relations with the pupils. The school emphasises respect, *'traditional'* values, and unquestioned obedience (partly due to parental expectations). Nigel's teacher position is such that compliance, respect (as an elder), or at least deference from the boys is expected. Despite the disciplinary regime, Nigel concurs with this form of relating since both parties adhere to the expected rules: *'barriers are broken down so when it comes to learning, ... being yourself really helps and aids learning*'. Moreover, even though asymmetrical relations between them may not be evidently coerced, Nigel inserts discursive authority in his talk by adding: *'we can be ourselves*'. Furthermore, according to Nigel the promotion of traditional values is productive:

*Nigel: There's a strong cultural identification because there are children of similar backgrounds. ... You know the foods we eat are the same, the way we relate to our parents would be the same ... at home we're the same and that can be an important factor for them getting along.*

Nigel positions himself in his accounts as someone who, through the promotion of a collective identity, endears himself to pupils. To illustrate his point Nigel gives other examples of class discussions about cultural issues and practices (for example, the Nigerian film industry, traditional 'ceremonies' and language use or lexicons) that he says: *'makes them proud of being Nigerian*'. His allegiance with them is also evident in his talk where he frequently switches to the collective *'we'* and *'us'*, giving weight to the argument that the school's inclusive environment provides Nigel with a sense of belonging. Membership allows Nigel to inscribe himself within the school

community and thereby to base his notions of relating with pupils on assumptions linked to cultural affiliation. The effect of the disciplinary power in the school is to inculcate beliefs around obedience, respect and cultural allegiance. Thus, the significance of the experience for Nigel is that he assumes and derives from it a unique mode of relating with B.E.M. pupils.

#### His-story of Not Belonging: Nigel

Nigel reflects on contrasting events that occurred when he moved to his second school, where the teaching workforce, as in most European schools, is almost exclusively white and middle class (Ross & Hutchings, 2003). The social conditions precipitate an epistemic crisis since Nigel encounters alternative truths about relating to B.E.M. pupils and has to re-assess and re-evaluate his assumptions linked to empathy. Nigel has to navigate, and learn how to contest, a very different disciplinary regime. Nigel recalls that his attempts at managing his teaching groups were initially confrontational and emotionally frustrating. Nigel's difficulties may be partly due to his inexperience, and as such typify experiences some teachers have adjusting to new schools and teaching groups. Nigel says he chose the school because he believes that any school is a potentially transformative site for the *'empowerment of pupils ... regardless of their cultural heritage or background'*. There were very few African/Black pupils attending the school. Nigel occupies a less powerful position within the hierarchy of the school and is surprised to find that he is estranged from the B.E.M. pupils. Below Nigel comments on the attitude and behaviour towards him by many of the Nigerian boys in his teaching groups:

*Nigel: Once they are in the same environment as the other children they become different. They are not willing to relate to you. ... They're just totally different ... despite both of you being of the same cultural background and [they are] totally aware of that. [they] don't really want to be identified with you.*

Clearly, Nigel's assumption of 'culture-matching' is interrupted and so too his understanding of how to relate to the group of Nigerian boys. There is a realisation that teacher-pupil relations, that reflect his notions of belonging, are deeply context related. Nigel is viewed and treated as an 'outsider' by most of the Nigerian boys when they are in *'the same environment'*. Nigel can no longer draw on the commonality

of heritage to gain the boys' approval. His positioning strategy of adopting parity with pupils based upon his knowledge and experiences of cultural hegemony in the supplementary school has no value. Nigel's assumption of automatic membership into the Nigerian peer group, indicative of his concept of belonging is challenged. The boys reject Nigel's assumption that they would show deference. Nigel's disciplinary power within the classroom is limited due to the pupils' resistance, and so too is his ability to enact previously productive modes of relating.

Nigel says that the categories of group allegiance that the Nigerian pupils chose were mainly defined along lines of ability, friendship, or locality. He rationalises the boys' alternative allegiances saying: *'because obviously ... it shows a difference between them and the others [pupils]. ... They feel ... that they have to act differently'*. It is possible that the pressure for the boys (positioned as 'other') to conform to a more dominant (or compelling) mode of relating may be the reason they reject Nigel. In that case, the classroom environment operates to re-produce different alliances and exclusive boundaries. Nigel's assumption of a shared marginalised positioning with the Nigerian boys is disrupted. In fact, Nigel was now a teacher and an excluded Nigerian man. Within the school context, the power of the teacher role is more pertinent than the power of sharing a culture. By denying him the authoritative position from which to relate, Nigel's estrangement from the Nigerian boys is clear – he does not belong.

Thus Nigel's contrasting experiences, while couched in a discourse of belonging, point to an *inter-group* epistemic crisis. The events Nigel describes culminate in a turning point in terms of his appropriation of particular truths and assumptions because it highlights the fragility of seemingly-cohesive bonds based around 'traditional' expectations. Nigel says that his views about relating with B.E.M. pupils were irrevocably changed by the events in his second school. The experience led him to radically depart from the belief that belonging to the same culture is a sufficient condition for relating with empathy. He is forced to re-appraise the veracity of his earlier claim of empowering all pupils regardless of their backgrounds. In essence, although Nigel considers the Nigerian boys to be the marginalised group in his school with whom he has an automatic affinity, it is the cultural group that chose to exclude *him*. In other words, belonging is conditional and can be revoked. Nigel is subject to an attack in the form of expulsion by the group. In this instance, the

group's exclusionary practices and membership rules are enacted against *him* – a B.E.M. teacher who does not conform.

Having considered shared marginality in relation to an epistemic crisis occurring *within* a cultural group and impacting on a teacher's positioning strategies, I now examine other external effects. I examine other instances where being hailed into belonging, and thereby conforming has its own pressurising effects. I develop my concept of shared marginality to show that male teachers' negotiations within spaces to which they attach notions of belonging affect how they relate to B.E.M. pupils. Here I consider another teacher, Ali's, active participation in expected cultural norms and his accountability across a range of domains. My aim is to illustrate the intersection of space with this teacher's discourses of belonging.

#### His-story of Belonging: Ali

Ali attended primary and secondary school and university in Tower Hamlets. He now teaches at a secondary school in the borough. Tower Hamlets is one of London's most densely populated areas, with one third of the population being Bengali, the largest such community in the UK (Young & Wilmott, 2013; Hutchinson & Varlaam, 1985). The borough is noted for its socio-economic conditions with above-average levels of poverty and unemployment (Murshid, 1990; Tomlinson, 1992). I suggest that this context means that there are cultural and social imperatives that are ingrained in Ali's mode of relating. To illustrate this, I explore the various spaces that Ali inhabits to show that, across these domains, there are consistencies in his mode of relating. Ali talks about how he relates socially to different members of his community that I interpret as discourses of belonging.

Ali begins by saying: *'I'm just a person who I would say is involved in this community'*. The term 'community' is contested and ambiguous (given its different interpretations within various disciplines); there is no agreed meaning (Howarth 2002). Here I apply Back's (1996, p.238) interpretation that 'communities do not exist *sui generis*, they are instead imagined and created on a, more or less, daily basis'. Being renowned for the various activities in which he has participated, and a local teacher, adds to Ali's status. He explains this kudos as a cultural phenomenon because normally teachers are held in high esteem by the community: *'it could also be that they see me as someone representative of the local community being serviced by my school, ... so in that respect I do have*

*some standing*'. Ali's positioning within his narration is as someone well known within his local area. He says for example: *'the younger generation do see me and they know me, who I am and where I'm from'*. In another part of the interview he remarks: *'after school as well ... so they do see my face around, they know how I was before'*. Here Ali also alludes to having a reputation although he does not make his former life explicit, instead he uses generalities by saying: *'they know what I do, that I'm a teacher... and they realise ... he's walked the steps ... the path ... we are walking now ... So let me see where he's going'*. Ali's belonging is multi-layered, since he 'achieves membership and recognition at both an individual and social group level' (Millings, 2013, p1). Ali comments on the frequency of his community encounters: *'all the time ... everywhere, I can't really go undercover'*. To illustrate the point Ali cites several examples of the way families/parents of pupils relate to him: *'when I'm walking around the community ... they will come and approach me, ... ask me how I'm doing. ... It's always the case'*. Ali's interactions within his community are understood as a discursive experience about belonging (Delanty, 2006), where he relates to pupils *through* his interactions with their extended family. I suggest such informal encounters for Ali reproduce familiarity with his community, and re-affirm his attachment to the spaces he inhabits. Ali's *involvement* within this social domain is a discursive positioning as the community hails Ali into discourses of belonging. I now examine another domain he inhabits where normative modes of relating cannot be easily resisted.

To be part of a community of faith gives the human being a sense of belonging and a feeling of being 'rooted' in a place (Baker, 2014). Living close to and interacting with people of similar faith, on occasions requires Ali to demonstrate customary modes of behaviour, such as, salutation. Ali says, although he is approachable, there is nevertheless an expectation for him to be continually available *and* to interact appropriately: *'when they see me in the street, they'll come and talk to me. Not so much the mothers ... it's not really [silent pause] but the dads they are always stopping me'*. The accepted protocol for gender relations and for the behaviour required of men, women and children remains a contested arena for debate by religious scholars and communities worldwide (Wario, 2012). Ali's talk suggests there may be conventions, and/or privileges attached to the act of speaking. I interpret Ali's silent pause as him conveying ambivalence, preferring not to reveal whether informal discussions with women are condoned or that he does so himself. Furthermore, Ali positions himself



as someone who cannot refuse or ignore approaches made by parents of his pupils. To further illustrate the point Ali gives examples of his interaction with some of the fathers:

*Ali: They see me in the mosque you know, I go and pray and everything. ... They ask for advice. ... They are always coming up to me and saying 'this is my child I'm very worried about her'. ... 'Please look after him'. ... 'If she needs anything just shout ... Allah willing'. and everything.*

Ali also points to power dynamics at play, with privileges and obligations conveyed through these speech acts. The salutation between male members in segregated social areas may dictate, to some extent, the possible forms of informal interaction. Here he relates to the fathers in gendered spaces (Bhimji, 2010; Pickett, 2015). Ali's continual negotiation creates an accountability to his community. In doing the everyday, relating to the fathers of pupils in his school, Ali is unwittingly 'a product of the historically contingent discursive tradition in which he is located' (Modood, 2005, p32). Thus, there are dominant cultural, and social conditions, which dictate how Ali relates to B.E.M. pupils (and their families). These conditions are premised on adherence to expected cultural norms, which Ali has learnt not to transgress. Even within his community, these collective spaces, constructed by imagined belonging, disguise the fissures and the borders within them.

#### His-stories of Spatial belonging: Ali

So far I have shown that Ali's mode of relating extends towards other community members. Sharing marginality is defined in terms of the social imperatives operating on teachers which affect the efficacy of their empathetic relations with B.E.M. pupils. I argue that B.E.M. male teachers also understand the *community* as an entity under-going a form of epistemic crisis. To illustrate this view, I examine Ali's talk in another domain, that of masculine notions of toughness, being macho and belonging to the street. In Ali's accounts he constructs a life world that he shares with B.E.M. pupils where his manoeuvres through the community can also be precarious. Research shows that struggles of resistance and urban myths of gang violence and territorial aggression towards and among Muslim men are common (Alexander, 2000; Dwyer, 1999; Pynting & Mason, 2013; Tufail & Poynting, 2007).



Ali discloses his knowledge of Bengali people's marginalised position to give discursive authority to his talk. At the start of our first interview Ali recounts an incident where he was subjected to an unprovoked racist attack, which I read as an example of an epistemic event. This event is significant because the encounter imbues Ali with the knowledge that safety cannot be assumed, since the attack occurred in the early evening and he randomly was singled out. The event he describes alerted me to my outsider status early in the interview (see methodology chapter). More importantly, Ali made me aware of his insider knowledge of the distinct experiences some young Bengali men encounter when he later adds:

*Ali: You see this area and you think it's all Bengali people so everything's OK, but it's not. ... There's a lot you don't realise ... or you're on the outside looking in at us so you don't know what it is really like living here ... it's not that safe for us! It's not just me, random stuff happens to loads of guys I've known.*

I read Ali's positioning within his narrations in terms of a collective identification that is not only geographical, but that carries the stigma (positive and negative) attached to the area. Ali locates himself as a potential target of '*random stuff*' in spaces he understands to be home. Ali positions himself as someone with territorial knowledge, which gives him access to the reality, tensions and fissures of the borough's social conditions. Ali assumes the position of 'bearer of selective truths' which he suggests are not topics for public consumption. Ali illustrates his empathy with young people by commenting on the absence of spaces for them to interact, saying: '*most of us live in flats. You can't stay there all the time. ... You've got to walk the streets sometimes. ... Now I'm older and wiser I'm much more cautious*'. Ali is not only modified by the epistemic event, but he appropriates truths about the latent potential for any member of his community to randomly experience an attack. Territoriality derives from a close affinity to an area, yet it also limits mobilisation possibilities and/or access to other social opportunities (Pickering et al, 2012). Together with his earlier story of an unprovoked racist attack, Ali constructs an account of himself as someone who has experiential knowledge of 'street culture which is male dominated and highly macho' (Hopkins, 2006, p338). To '*walk the streets*' suggests not only Ali's sense of belonging within the community but carries masculine connotations. Thus, a focus on the sharing marginality dimension of shared discursive history exposes the

complexities of intra-group dynamics and the gendering of some of those interactions.

Thus for Ali, relating to pupils (and their families) who live in his community is to show empathy with their social conditions. The hegemonic conditions are such that there is limited delineation between his professional and personal life. Ali's discourses of belonging suggest that relating with community members is imbued with its own codes of interaction and participation that at times may be non-negotiable. Sharing marginality can be understood as a way of being hailed into a sense of belonging by others who impose community expectations and/or membership rules. Ali's discourses of belonging also highlight his need to be cautious and vigilant within geographical spaces due to the particularity of his local community. I read his talk as indicating that Ali is at home within his community, where he obtains recognition and familiarity. However, these social conditions exist in tension with expectations of random attacks, which threaten to disrupt the community's cohesion.

In the final personal story from Kenneth an additional dimension of shared marginality shows that modes of relating and notions of belonging are linked to symbolic violence against cultural/marginal groups. Kenneth relates with empathy to some of the marginal groups of pupils in his school because he is subject to similar forms of dis-empowerment. Here I develop sharing marginality to argue it must be understood not only in terms of reconciling the effects of shared exposure to potential physical violence (as for Ali), but also to symbolic violence.

#### His-story of Belonging: Kenneth

Kenneth, unlike the other male teachers, has taught in only one secondary school in London. The pupil population in the school is diverse including Turkish, North African, Somalian and Vietnamese young people, with white British and African-Caribbean working-class pupils in the minority. Kenneth describes his school as a place where one is: *'exposed to such a wide range of cultures. ... There's always something new to learn about them .... but more importantly about yourself as a so-called educator'*. Kenneth says that engagement with the *'differentness'* of the school culture is a strong motivator for him to remain. While this *'engagement'* may appear to be a position of aloofness, I read it as strategic since Kenneth's primary concern is with what he calls *'children*

*culture*'. By this, he means the social interactions among the pupils in the school: *'they never cease to amaze me ... just observing the way they interact among themselves'*. Establishing a good rapport with pupils is a crucial part of role model relationships. Kenneth explains: *'it's because I'm a teacher that the majority of the children will say is approachable and can talk to you about anything'*. Kenneth says his propensity to relate to these groups of pupils is because he is demonstrably interested in individuals' aspirations in practical supportive ways. Kenneth says that he relates to pupils by showing *'a sensitivity to the cultural and spiritual needs of the children in my school'*. Kenneth sees himself as a necessary counter-model to most teachers' mode of interaction with pupils, which increasingly devalues pastoral care.

In his narrations, Kenneth's position is as someone *within* the (pupils') cultural group, where he makes claims based on his monitoring of events, that carry discursive authority. Kenneth claims he relates to B.E.M. pupils because they like them, he is subjected to the devaluing of his 'different' knowledges. A significant epistemic crisis for Kenneth is in the form of externally-imposed violence, which he says is foisted on the school's *'children culture'*. Kenneth says he chooses to be, at times, a *'silent witness'* to procedural changes he observes that impact on pupils' experiences at school.

#### Silent/silence witness: Kenneth

The ongoing events Kenneth describes centre around who should belong in the school. They highlight the disparities of power in his narratives that positions Kenneth as a muted observer of hegemonic practices. According to Kenneth, following the appointment of key personnel, selection procedures have been amended in order to re-configure the school's pupil demography. Kenneth claims part of his school's revised vision is to attract *'alternative'* clientele, that is, white middle-class pupils. The school intends to raise its academic profile, and enhance its market position by 'cream-skimming', attracting pupils who bring with them particular forms of cultural capital (Lack, 2009; Whitty et al, 1998). Kenneth comments on the school's *'regime change'* by saying:

*Kenneth: It is an issue for me because I would assume that in any school there is always a cultural baseline from which to teach kids and how you interact with children, and if it is*

*not empathetic within the cultural context within which the school is placed ... located ...  
then you are going to have confusion and disparity there.*

Here I interpret Kenneth's stated confusion as a form of epistemic crisis because he foresees selective unfair exclusion of local pupils within the catchment area. He rejects the dominant view of the school and positions himself as part of a future marginalised group. The discourses around the regime change raise the issue of legitimacy – who should/should not belong. I interpret the change that Kenneth describes as fuelled by a collective memory of Britishness (Hesse, 2000). In other words, there is an imagined future of a particular type of pupil population which rejects the local reality of increasing racialised diversity. Kenneth's '*conscious decision*' not to advance to managerial posts (due to other commitments) means that he is not in a position to advocate alternative perspectives to the school's 'vision'. In effect, he is powerless, and can only observe the disparity. Kenneth's critical event is about decisions made by others that curtail selection choices. Kenneth further adds that the significance of the event is that hegemonic practices manifest as attitudinal indifference towards certain cultural groups. By way of illustration, in the excerpt below, Kenneth is responding to questions of relating with B.E.M. pupils:

*Kenneth: If people are from different cultural groups then teachers should at least show an interest to learn. If you're that kind of person who wants to teach but not receive anything from the children, then I think you are in a position ... a weakened position. The kind of behaviour and attitude you are expecting from you pupils you are not exhibiting yourself. You're a hypocrite straight away!*

The everyday cultural transactions, which allow teachers and pupils to express, and to some extent shape, each other's values, actions and meanings, are a moot point. Kenneth distances himself from some of his colleagues' attitudes by adopting what he deems to be a less '*hypocritical*' position. According to Kenneth, a '*so-called educator*' is someone who models respect in the form of mutual reciprocity. They relate by being '*receptive to learning from all pupils because they have something to offer you*'. For Kenneth, relating with pupils in his school requires teachers to demonstrate interest in and to value pupils' cultures. In his talk, Kenneth positions himself as a member of the collective '*people of different cultural groups*' (black) who are recipients of a one-way dialogue. Thus, to belong in the school community is a source of tension in

Kenneth's professional life, because he can neither embrace nor alter the trajectory of the school. He is in a state of flux. Kenneth observes the envisioned reformulation of the school's demography, and the prior devaluing of B.E.M. pupils' contributions by some colleagues.

#### Belonging within porous borders: Kenneth

In the final excerpt below, I offer another example supporting my argument that shared marginality refers to both teachers' social conditions and their empathetic understanding of othering. Here Kenneth talks about his accrued observations of his colleagues' interactions around the school and about incidents disclosed to him by B.E.M. pupils:

*Kenneth: When I look at how my white colleagues interact with the black kids I see them enforcing a culture upon black kids without any dialogue with them. Or blatantly, in fact, rejecting and ridiculing it, 'oh that's stupid ... I think that way is nonsense ... this is the way'. It's as if there is some universal blueprint about how people should behave. That's what I see, big time!*

At the most fundamental level, control over the production of knowledge – the ability to naturalise silence – allows powerful groups the ability to determine what is appropriate behaviour. In the case of B.E.M. pupils, Kenneth's account suggests they are inducted into mimicking silence/compliance. Symbolic violence concerns the ways in which people in positions of power maintain the dominance and subordination of others through various practices (Bourdieu, 1986). Although Kenneth does not use the term, I apply symbolic violence (which is usually linked to class) to the forms of racialised insults directed at him. Following Hall (1978, p394), I assert that, for black people in British society, 'race is the modality in which class is lived'. Kenneth positions his colleagues as '*cultural bullies*' who impose hegemonic perspectives of preferred forms of comportment and behaviour (Alexander, 1996; Wright et al, 1998). In his talk, the wounding comments and ridicule that Kenneth observes can be read as forms of symbolic violence perpetuated on B.E.M. pupils. Kenneth's '*issue*' is with its continued prevalence. He later adds: '*I always feel that my colleagues are always pushing on black children. ... "You should change. I'm alright you should change". I have an issue with that and I think that's a difference between my interaction and theirs*'.

I read symbolic violence surfacing in the sentiments Kenneth expresses for B.E.M. pupils since he is also vulnerable to his colleagues' embodied discourses. Kenneth continues by saying: *'it's the manner and the tone in which things are said. Too many of the interactions I've seen are condescending and to be honest with you, they're rude ... and you know our kids are not having it these days'*. Kenneth is adamant the demands made by some of his colleagues of black pupils extend beyond the boundaries of normal disciplinary practice. Consistent with Foucauldian understandings of bio-power, as with some pupils, Kenneth's body is also a site for symbolic violence.

Kenneth is precariously positioned because there are limitations to how far he can alter the dominant attitudes and views. At the same time, Kenneth cannot choose passivity without distancing himself from the B.E.M. pupils whom he represents. I read Kenneth's predicament as indicative of a dis-empowered black man in his school. His everyday practices describe competing power relations that he must constantly negotiate and selectively deploy. Kenneth's discourses about relating with B.E.M. pupils reveal his affinity with the pupil culture and his dilemmas over intervening in the cultural hegemony of his school. Kenneth belongs and does not belong in both groups (colleagues and pupils) simultaneously.

Kenneth's positioning can be either as a silent witness who seemingly condones the dominant culture, or as an active challenger of what he observes. I prompted Kenneth to disclose how or if he navigates this divide given that his positioning is at the 'interface'. Kenneth says:

*Kenneth: Talking to the pupils, hearing their point of view often gives me the chance to either speak on their behalf or talk to them about what they would do next time. ... Some get it, but dealing with provocation can only be understood in hindsight.*

Conflict resolution requires both parties to reflect upon previous actions and to develop strategies for imagined/future events. Kenneth says an overwhelming barrier for him is his colleagues' ingrained fear. He adds: *'they are worried of black pupils ... scared'*. This fear of confrontation with black pupils, about which Kenneth speaks, supports his position that power relations based on disrespect are problematic. He adds that in many such situations, *'the black boys are more concerned about losing face. ... Respect is a two-way street as far as I'm concerned, ... some staff definitely need to be re-educated*

*culturally*'. Kenneth's dilemma echoes that of a B.E.M. female teacher in Delpit's (1995) study of 'silent dialogue'. The absence of exchange of information between white and black teachers about forms of pedagogy based in respect serves to maintain the status quo.

Shared discursive history, for the male teachers, allows an empathetic understanding of attacks on B.E.M. pupils as an epistemic crisis, but does not empower them to reverse or modify these pupils' situation. Herein lies a frustration which cannot be easily reconciled, and highlights limitations to the notion of empowered B.E.M. teachers as agents of change in school.

#### Sharing marginality: concluding remarks

To conclude, sharing marginality is central to my conceptual frame of shared discursive history as a way of understanding how B.E.M. teachers relate to B.E.M. pupils. Sharing marginality allows me to give an account of the teachers' knowledge of social conditions and about how these are experienced by B.E.M. pupils. They speak about empathy and I focused on the epistemic crises they experience and, for Ali and Kenneth, their impact on a cultural group/community. The male teachers' stories suggest that relating with B.E.M. pupils is complicated by cultural and other dominant and local social imperatives. Belonging is by choice (i Berdún & Guibernau, 2013), and acceptance by the collective group may require loyalty and create expectations or pressure to conform. The male teachers' discursive construction of belonging and not belonging in their talk illustrates the fragility of their border crossing. The cross-over into unfamiliar territory also exposes the consequences of group expulsion. For Nigel and Ali, discursive construction of reputation has symbolic authority, their articulations could be read as merely 'situated accomplishments' (Speer, 2005, p70). Movement outside their 'comfort zone' necessitates a re-appraisal of how they relate with B.E.M. pupils, and evokes either 'imagined' futures or disjuncture. Relating for these male teachers requires a broader remit than the safety of cultural belongingness. Kenneth on the other hand is confronted everyday with the realities of symbolic violence and otherness that to some extent align him with the pupils' sense of powerlessness. Kenneth's discourses of belonging emerge within dialectic relations between his discursive practices and the school's social structure. Relating to B.E.M. pupils based on notions of belonging



may protect male teachers from the estrangement of being ‘othered’ yet pressurise them to cultivate exclusionary border work.

I now turn to the second component of shared discursive history, which considers B.E.M. male teachers performing their role, signifying this to others. Here I begin with the teachers’ hyper-visibility within their school’s dominant culture since it is pivotal to their subsequent modes of intervention.

### ***Male Teacher: Performing as Role Models***

The second component of shared discursive history concerns the multiple positions B.E.M. male teachers adopt when they perform or self-identify as role models for B.E.M. pupils. Previously, I suggested that the teacher’s performance is not only interconnected to shared marginality, but is contingent upon the audience and their mode of signification. All teachers perform their role amid other interactions within the social and cultural life of schools, classrooms and other spaces. These interactions reflect constant shifting tensions between teachers and pupils over control and the power to resist. Performing as a role model to B.E.M. pupils describes certain types of discursive acts. In this thesis, a guiding principle emerging from the literature review is that analysing how the teachers perform means identifying the mechanisms operating on the teachers’ knowledge/power production that they feel will incite pupils to act in particular ways.

In this section, the male teachers’ performances are first linked to popularity since this is a means by which we can recognise their hyper-visibility. I then examine the teachers’ rationale and the assumptions guiding their performances in relation to their work. This is followed by my focus on the teachers’ understandings of the significance of their hyper-visibility by analysing their assumptions about B.E.M. pupils’ criticality. In particular, not only are the teachers’ cognizant of being the subject of pupils’ gaze, but their discursive acts can be read as promoting counter-hegemonic discourses about cultural groups. Here I use examples of interventions and of the outcomes arising from confessional talks with pupils. I argue that the male teachers’ performances, whilst rooted in bicultural perspectives, are aimed at unsettling B.E.M. pupils’ thinking about what it means to belong to a cultural group.



## Popularity

To be recognised or have a reputable image is to some extent, an everyday aspect of *teacherly* life. In schools, teachers assign themselves (and are assigned) to a myriad of attributes or qualities which give them some notoriety or hyper-visibility. All the male teachers ascribe their successful interactions with pupils mainly to their popularity. For example, Ali says: *'at the moment my form are trying to nominate me for the Jack Peachey Award and I'm saying "no, there's other fantastic teachers out there, I think they deserve it a lot more than me"'*. Kenneth comments on a survey conducted by the senior leadership team: *'apparently I was top of the poll of teachers that showed respect and are liked. ... It's quite flattering really having kids come up to you and saying, "Sir you're the best teacher in the school"'*. In contrast, Nigel is more deliberate in his intentions, here he speaks generally about his interactions with pupils in his third (current) school: *'I pride myself on the fact that I stand out. It gives them a reason to just come up to you and start a conversation about anything'*. The male teachers' popularity in their school is a feature of their positioning within the pupil milieu. Any teacher's ranking by pupils (according to some criteria of their own making) arguably relates to *how* they perform their role. These teachers' acts of self-promotion, whether by gaining prestige, or through regulatory practices, are inventive, mobile and productive.

Second, and linked to recognition, the role of pupil surveillance is significant. The teachers are aware that their hyper-visibility in school arouses pupils' interest in them. The teachers comment on being subject to pupils' gaze and on how they respond to this. For example, Kenneth talks about his hyper-visibility by saying: *'As a black man you get singled out. ... They want to know if you are someone they want to relate to'*. Kenneth says he capitalises on his hyper-visibility by constructing a role model persona that emphasises his identification with the pupils: *'it's deliberate ... firstly to show I am them ... [someone] who has chosen a particular path in life, but I am them. I'm not like them; I am them'*. In other words, Kenneth understands that crucial to how he subsequently performs his role is the need to demonstrate, in some way, cultural parity with B.E.M. pupils. Ali recalls overhearing a group of boys in the school corridor talking about him, he made them clarify their remarks and their response was to say: *'Sir, the new kid was saying that you're the safest teacher in the school'*. In all the male teachers' accounts they make reference to such unsolicited judgements that they receive from B.E.M. pupils. Moreover, these personal acknowledgements from

pupils occur more often in spaces (such as corridors and the cafeteria) where the school's disciplinary power is less intrusive. Further illustrating the confluence of pupils' interest, safe spaces and recognition, Ali comments:

*Ali: You get it from kids wanting to know [how you've walked the steps] and how to do it and they see you as one of their role models or they see you as their peers and they look up to you. ... They come to you to and ask for help.*

A possible explanation could be that pupils seek out teachers merely for curiosity, or that they seek out culturally-relevant teachers or those renowned as having empowering pedagogical practices (Sefa Dei & James, 1998; Simon, 1995). Ali's observation supports the findings of other scholars that minority pupils come to the classroom with cultural terms of reference about their B.E.M. teachers, which may affect interactions (Johnson, 1995; Simon, 1995). Simon (1995) uses the term 'image text' to describe the discourses that minority teachers have constructed about their competency by their students. Nigel talks about his high profile and popularity at his current (third) school by noting: '*some of these things are subliminal ... and in this school I'm talking about reaching children of a different racial background to myself*'. Here Nigel is referring both to his body as a visible marker and to an image text he creates which clearly distinguishes him from his colleagues. In another part of the interview in relation to the image the teachers erect of themselves Nigel says:

*Nigel: Even in your everyday going from here to there, somebody is watching, seeing your demeanour, seeing your outlook and wanting to relate to you. ... It's almost a bit scary ... cause you're not aware of them but they are aware of you. ... So it opens up debates about their needs. ... Are you the right person? So there's a responsibility there about the way you carry yourself.*

Two inter-related points emerge concerning the male teachers' hyper-visibility and recognition that I suggest underpin the male teachers' rationale for how they perform their role model identities. First, Nigel's observation concurs with the other male teachers who are aware of pupils' ongoing surveillance of their actions and behaviour. To be the object of the pupils' gaze does not mean that the interpretations the pupils attach to a teacher's role model identity will be consistent or remain fixed. Identities have an immanent fluidity that allows the teachers to

adapt their performances to disrupt views B.E.M. pupils may hold about them. Second, the teachers see themselves as accountable for the quality of the interactions they have with pupils. As Nigel subsequently points out: *I think children are very smart, I think it is often underestimated what you give to children, ... even in your silence?* In other words, rather than assuming the pupils are not astute, the inference made is that pupils critique their teachers' verbal and (non-verbal) communications. Taking these points together the male teachers' views about pupils' judgements of them can be read as productive and premised on the notion of the pupils' (burgeoning) criticality.

So far I have shown from the narrations that the male teachers' popularity, recognition and hypervisibility are features that can be taken to constitute parts of their role model identities. Furthermore, I suggested that an awareness of how they might signify themselves to others, whilst not necessarily intentional, has implications for their accountability. If, as suggested, the teachers assume a responsibility to consider how they self-represent, then we need to examine the production of their counter-hegemonic discourses and their effects on pupils' criticality, beliefs and/or actions. In addition to the assumptions influencing the teachers' performance, equally important to this thesis is the issue of biculturalism. Gordon (2007) postulates:

At the heart of the idea of bi-cultural socialisation is the understanding that people living in a culture not developed with their interests in mind need to be socialised in two cultures: a culture of origin and the culture of residence. (Gordon, 2007, p116)

I now examine the teachers' narrations where they discuss interventions and the disclosures made to them by pupils.

### Interventions

All teachers in various ways engage with issues associated with pupils' resistance. In this thesis the teachers talk about how they seek to raise with pupils their attitudes or beliefs about the representation of B.E.M. men and women in hegemonic discourses. They all talk about the manner and assumptions that guide their interventions with B.E.M. pupils. However, there is a difference in how the male and female teachers perform intervention and the type of narratives they engage in with B.E.M. pupils. Whereas, as I show in the next chapter, the female teachers' pedagogical

performances can be read in terms of an 'ethic of care' (Collins, 1991), the male teachers' performances are more easily read as attempts to promote and develop B.E.M. male pupils' criticality about representations of B.E.M. people. The male teachers model and/or perform to pupils' alternative expressions of masculinity that they see as having cultural relevance. I make this argument through analysing the teachers' intervention strategies wherein pupils are prompted to question their beliefs and understandings about representations of cultural groups in discourse and expressions of masculinities.

Kenneth earlier said that he adapts his self-image to signal back to his audience his authenticity as a black male teacher in ways he deems '*appropriate*' to his audience. He cites other reasons for this based on pupils' resistance, saying: *'I hear too many stories, where basically the children don't have a good relationship with dad ... or step dad ... with the kids hating males, therefore I'm starting off in a position where I'm being thoroughly disrespected'*. The position Kenneth assumes is as someone representing the 'missing' and in some cases as a target to channel their angst. As with all teachers, taking the role of the surrogate parent is not uncommon. Kenneth later clarifies his view by rejecting the stigma of having an absentee father, offering examples of many pupils who are a product of successful single parenting: *'it's about having healthy relationships with dads ... rather than them being absent'*. Rather Kenneth believes that the disrespect some pupils have is due to the belief that black men are *not* interested in fostering genuine relations. He re-iterates the point by asserting not only is he approachable but, in his school, there is the need for pupils to have a '*safe space*' to air their problems: *'in this school having a black male to whom they have been allowed to offload ... who at least you can have a positive interaction with is important for them'*. Kenneth's interventions can be regarded as actions that open spaces for him to generate counter-narratives. He claims he invites pupils to question ideas about what it means '*to be real*', and, in the process, authenticates himself as a black male/teacher. Kenneth's positioning can be read as adaptations to his context, whilst enhancing his reputation and the quality of his intervention work.

One reason Kenneth gives for his intervention work is to attune to pupils' needs, another is linked to their opposition to his ideas. He asserts: *'they need you to prove that you are not another "Uncle Tom" in order to be accepted by the boys'*. For Kenneth, the way he performs his role needs to manifest as a version of masculinity not negatively

assigned to black men (Allen & Taylor, 2012; Connolly, 1995; Rollock et al, 2014). Kenneth's reference to *'Uncle Tom'* is a common derogatory categorisation applied to any black man who is viewed as excessively obedient or accepting of (white) domination. Those who are categorised as such may be subjected to insults, ridicule, and exclusionary practices within the pupil culture in schools and black communities in general. The choices Kenneth makes about his interventions are based on signalling authenticity, which he deems necessary to avoid such potential stigmatisation. Kenneth elaborates by saying: *'black boys have a difficulty with black men. It's not that they are going to challenge them, but definitely in how they view them. They need to see me as something different'*. Thus intervention is based on the teachers' experiential knowledge about B.E.M. pupils' life-worlds in terms of culturally-embedded categorisations of black men. The point made here is that B.E.M. male teachers' interactions with pupils are multiple, designed to be interpreted by pupils as *'being real'* and not to be read by pupils as servile.

Continuing the idea of culturally-embedded notions of what constitutes manly actions, in the next example, teachers discuss their performances aimed at developing pupils' criticality. Ali responds to a question where he is asked to elaborate upon actions through which he signifies his role model status among the pupils, saying: *'first of all I have a basic understanding of most of the Asian pupils in the school. I do understand how their life works and where their life has started off from'*. Like Kenneth, Ali positions himself as someone knowledgeable about B.E.M. pupils' life-world. Here the purpose of Ali's intervention is to shift pupils away from their pre-conceived ideas about the need to follow their peers: *'one of the boys told me there was going to be a big fight happening. 'Cause I've seen it all my life when I was growing up'*. Here Ali is illustrating that, within the pupil milieu, he is chosen as arbitrator whilst inferring that his pupils' experience resonates with his own as a pupil. He continues his account of this fight by saying: *'I kinda like got in the middle of it ... and spoke about the rights as a human being: "Is this right? Is this wrong? Do you think it's going to be acceptable"'*? All teachers have a duty of care so Ali's intervention is a justifiable exercise of disciplinary power. Clearly the situation necessitates the assertion of moral leadership. His actions are undeniably what one would expect of any teacher in such a situation. However, Ali asks the pupil to make a responsible choice. To 'back down' within the pupil milieu may be constructed as an 'unmanly' act and as shameful. Ali positions himself

(physically) *within* the body of the spectators and exploits this by rationalising choices and consequences, based upon notions of human rights. He continues:

*Ali: I tried to calm him down ... and just speak ... on a level where they understand you and don't see you as a teacher then, but as a friend and they kinda understood. And I'm like saying 'look ... is it worth it? Who's going to be on the losing side'? ... I just try to explain to them that ... 'yes ... think about your actions'.*

Amid a potentially volatile scenario, Ali is attentive to the generation of appropriate counter-narratives. At the same time, he is sensitive that the event is critical to the particular pupils. The choice has cultural connotations, opposing potentially honourable and dishonourable actions. I interpret masculine power in this situation in relation to control over the distribution of alternative ideas. I read Ali's articulation of ideas here as a practical mobilisation of his teaching philosophy. Ali's counter-narratives provide openings for contestation because 'loosing face' is read culturally as akin to femininity and cowardice. Rather than simply immediately demanding a halt to the fight, Ali *models* to the spectators, the art of critiquing one's previously held views. I read his intervention as modelling to pupils how to rationally (or strategically) manage conflict. Ali speaks about his intervention as productive because it disrupts pupils' views on masculinised expressions of discord. Ali's intervention also has a (potentially) transformative effect on the spectators. A space is made available for the spectators to critique views about belonging in terms of the 'macho-ism of street culture', aggression and safety (or un-safety), asking whether they are warranted. Performing his role through intervention involves acting to change pupils' normative views about what membership entails both inside and outside the school community.

Interventions, to promote counter-narratives to pupils' views about culture, are, according to Kenneth, a compelling aspect of his role. He identifies two groups of B.E.M. pupils. The first are pupils who he says are: *'quite proud of their cultural heritage and will cling onto it but tend to use it aggressively, against the culture that is in the school'*. Rather than exhibiting cultural pride, some B.E.M. pupils perpetuate the stereotyping through which black boys are frequently labelled (Delamont, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Sewell, 1997; Vincent et al, 2012) or the 'loud' or sexual scripting attached to black girls in dominant discourses (Fordham, 1993; French, 2013). Common findings

from these research studies are that pupils' resistant stances are expressions of, and responses to, the hidden injuries of racism and sexism and other forms of categorisation. Kenneth argues that the manner in which some B.E.M. pupils attempt to prove their assertiveness can be counter-productive. By acting '*against the culture*', Kenneth claims B.E.M. pupils' behaviour is symptomatic of their unarticulated angst. The second group he identifies are those embarrassed by how their culture is represented in dominant discourses. Kenneth explains by saying: '*they think it's inferior whether in the intellectual sense ... or in the cultural sense, in comparison to the main culture that's in the school*'. Kenneth says he often opens discussions with B.E.M. pupils because: '*their understandings about culture are misguided*'. Kenneth feels that other more deep-rooted issues relating to representation of culture need exploration, and that these apply equally to either groups of pupils. As I highlighted earlier, B.E.M. male teachers' performances can be selective and strategic. I prompted Kenneth to explain how he deals with the different views pupils hold.

*Kenneth, I ask them why they think this, ... where's it coming from. I discuss and show them sometimes that the choices that cultures have made are historically based or indeed ad hoc and there's nothing underneath it that gives one culture more merit than another, it's just the way ... and for them to become more aware, and when reports on this culture or other cultures are made, they look at the culture from another point of view. The term I use with these kids is Eurocentric, that the views and criticisms of their culture are Eurocentric, because they [the speaker/writer] are not in that culture ... their views of it are biased. That's why they have a problem with it. ... I'm mostly provoking their views on a one-to-one basis but I do assemblies ... with the tutor group too.*

The power of minority groups to represent themselves within dominant discourse is complex and diverse (Van Dijk, 2008). In *Fearless Speech*, Foucault (2001, p15) uses the Greek word 'parrhessia' to describe true speech where the subject is articulating sincere convictions that they authenticate by their public actions in a context where the act of 'parrhesia' itself pre-supposes an asymmetry of power. I draw parallels between Kenneth's speech and Foucauldian 'parrhesia'. Kenneth performs his role by promoting counter-narratives both to individual pupils and in the public domain of assemblies. His audience includes colleagues from whom his opinion may risk reprisal, but he is empowered to 'speak a truth' (Foucault, 2001, p15). Shifting the



cultural hegemonic perspectives operating in Kenneth's school involves questioning attachments to the notion of a hierarchy of cultures. Questioning attachments to particular forms of non-European representation is a strategic challenge for B.E.M. teachers (Hesse et al, 1997). For example, there is the challenge of critiquing the simultaneous accommodation of ethnic groups as an economic necessity, their celebration as cultural diversity and their derision as racial excess (Hesse et al, 1992). Thus, Kenneth's understanding of performing authenticity requires exploiting available spaces to make public his notion of respect for different cultures, and the paradox of multicultural discourses. Kenneth's performance here is read as signifying *back to* pupils his affinity with their positioning in situations where hegemonic discourses can be said to erase or demean minority cultures.

### Confessions

Continuing the idea of developing pupils' criticality and the promotion of counter-narratives, the male teachers' role model performances also occur within private, individual confessional spaces. Taking a Foucauldian perspective, the technology of confession is a technique of behaviour modification, justified in terms of conflict resolution, the inculcation of specific attitudes and imbuing normalised values. In the ritual of confessional speech, 'in the inducement to speak, ... the speaking subject is modified in the sense that it has spoken and learned a truth about itself' (Foucault, 1980a, p61). B.E.M. teachers' knowing' or professional knowledge is arguably acquired through accumulated confessional interactions with pupils. Pupils confide in teachers and occasionally divulge secrets. Teachers are often privy to many aspects of pupils' life-worlds, their personal difficulties, joys and anxieties. The pupils' disclosures enable teachers to give counsel, at times offering 'diagnoses' or revealing actions done to themselves or to others. For example, Kenneth emphasises the importance of:

*Kenneth: having a black male who is real, ... who at least you can talk to about anything, ... and giving them the space and place to be able to talk to an adult and interact with an adult without being judged.*

Kenneth sees performing as a role model as involving being consistently available to pupils as a confidante. Kenneth's interactions with pupils may be read as selective



multiple positioning premised on facilitating a wide variety of confessional talk. Regardless of whether information is deliberately offered or coerced, the pupils' confessionals are potentially 'bonding' moments with their teachers. Confessional dialogue as an intervention is important for its outcome as it offers the scope to re-configure pupils' attitudes and actions.

Nigel describes his interventions with a group of B.E.M. boys who were constructed as 'anti-social' or 'trouble makers' by some of their teachers. Although Nigel did not teach these boys, they had often attended school-wide detentions he managed. The observation notes made by their teachers consistently referred to the boys' disruptive behaviour. For reasons of anonymity, the boys' unusual circumstances are too personal to be included, except to note that none of them had previously confided the complexity of their situation with their tutor or Curriculum Leader. Nigel explains that the confessional dialogue occurred during different detentions over a protracted period, and that each of the B.E.M. boys shared with Nigel pertinent personal issues. Although I must omit the details, what I can include here is Nigel's account of the outcome of his endeavours:

*Nigel: In this example (boy X), the Head of Department came to me and said he's almost like a different boy, last year he wasn't into his studies, ... he was always in detention but for some reason it seems he seems to be listening to whatever you've said to him. ... The boy was said to have commented on me being his favourite teacher.... I've seen that I've made an impact on their lives in some shape or form by the way they come to see me, talk to me about what's troubling them. If I'm on my way from one lesson to another, greet me, their willingness to ... maybe carry books.*

The disclosure involved in confession generates knowledge about pupils that is codified and classified and may produce new constructions of them or affect change in their behaviour, attitudes and beliefs. Nigel's pedagogical objectives are perhaps to enhance the pupils' social experience of school and their emotional literacy. Two points related to the outcome are important with regard to this critical event for the pupils. First, Nigel performs his role based on an accumulated knowledge that his interventions have long-term effects on pupils. Within the privacy of the confessional, Nigel explores with them their feelings around processes of othering and their resistance to 'anti-social' behaviour, while advocating personal choice. By

opening up confidential spaces, the boys' feelings of alienation become objectified and inverted (perhaps even feminised). What is clear is Nigel's conclusion: *'I personally witnessed a difference in their personae by the end of the year'*. He saw a shift in the boys' interactions with staff (himself included). He adds:

*Nigel: If one of them saw me in the corridor he'd say, 'sir can I help you carry your books', or they'd just say something that was friendly. ... They didn't care whether others heard or if they were seen as sucking up to me.*

The outcome of confessional dialogue is that Nigel enables the boys to confront and critique their ongoing masculine (learner) identity constructions. Second, the boys' original expression of masculinities to their peers and others is usurped. The boys are re-classified, thereby altering colleagues' perspectives and knowledge about them. Although Nigel subsequently shares the relevant information with appropriate colleagues, the incident was significant to him *because* the boys chose alternative peer group memberships where inclusion did not signify them as 'troubled'. As with Ali, Nigel's intervention enables those particular boys to extricate themselves from membership within a peer group without losing face.

To conclude, I argue that male B.E.M. teachers' performance is built on the assumption of pupils' developing criticality, which the teachers exploit whenever they are empowered to do so. The teachers' motives for their actions are directed towards intervening in constructive ways to help pupils understand aspects of their social conditioning. They describe performing their role with a long-term view in mind, and with intermittent pupil resistance to their authority. They are reliant on pupils' inter-textual reading of them and therefore believe themselves accountable for the quality of the interactions they have with pupils. Performing their role is evaluated in terms of the messages the teachers convey. This needs the teachers to confront pupils' ideas about culturally-based expressions of masculinity. I have shown how the teachers intentionally alert pupils to ingrained assumptions and/or question the beliefs they hold about themselves and others. I have shown that performing their role requires them to draw on culturally-embedded experiential knowledge around markers of derision. The teachers claim their mode of intervention has its own distinctiveness. For example, Ali's inter-subjectivity and the localised specificity of the fight collide to allow him to disrupt pupils' collective

understandings around dishonour and masculinity. While such interventions may be read as atypical, the events have salience both in terms of their outcomes and as illustrations of attempts to pre-empt pupils' epistemic crises. Intervening through confessional talk requires developing pupils' criticality about their conduct within both the pupils' milieu and their interactions with teachers. Confessional dialogues enable the teachers to explore with pupils their epistemic crises. Furthermore, one could argue, technologies of confession operate through revelations that enable pupils to reconfigure their learner identities. The outcomes for which the male teachers are working are the promotion of pupils' criticality and disrupting their views about how to express their masculinity. The male teachers 'speak back' to pupils, and in the process, offer counter-narratives about what it means to belong to a cultural or social group. Thus B.E.M. male performances can be characterised as negotiated practices entangled in narratives about masculinity and aspects of bi-cultural subjectivity. As I will show, the female teachers' understandings of performing as role models are also not suggestive of mimicry per se but rather their aim is to promote pupils' resilience to the conditions that thwart their autonomy.

In the final section I examine one teacher's professional knowledge, Nigel's, with reference to youth subculture and how he is positioned as having sub-cultural knowledge, challenging the symbolic order of the school community.

### ***Male Teacher: a pedagogical resource***

People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does. (Foucault, personal communication, cited in Dreyfus & Rabinow 1984, p187).

The third component of shared discursive history considers how B.E.M. teachers utilise available resources to sustain and further enhance their role model identity. Here I examine how one teacher's deployment of knowledge about youth culture becomes a pedagogical tool. Previously, I argued the social context for all teachers is within a performance culture infused with neo-liberal principles and ideals. As Hamann (2009) points out, neo-liberalism encourages human beings to engage in self-forming practices while being conditioned and constrained in contexts characterised by increasing competition. One effect of neo-liberalism is to make competition among human beings appear 'natural' or a matter of 'common sense' as

a result of its active interventions in the social realm (Hamann, 2009, p52). Given that teachers' identity constructions are in constant flux within increasingly competitive conditions, the question raised is: What adaptations are possible or might be justifiable?

This final section is a micro-analysis of a male B.E.M. teacher's intentional communication of self being deployed as a pedagogical resource. The analytic focus is on how that is operationalised predicated on ideas about professionalism and expressions of style popular in youth culture. For brevity, only one teacher is examined in depth, however the issues raised have general significance. Specifically, a teacher's strategies to gain affinity with pupils through semiotic modes of communication can promote paradoxical forms of individualism. I examine the interplay of professionalism, competitive manoeuvres and a re-configured B.E.M. 'entrepreneurial' teacher-self. In the process, I highlight some contradictions, conflicts and tensions raised when considering the dialectic between 'cultural dope' and neo-liberal individualism. I consider two aspects in Nigel's narrations where he talks about: professionalism and mathematics, and style and fashion.

#### Professional and Mathematician

At his third (current) school, Nigel is one of five minority teachers. The school catchment area is predominantly the local housing estate. The school has a high proportion of pupils from low-income backgrounds. Due to his previous experience, mentioned earlier, Nigel was forced to re-think his praxis and the relationship dynamics with B.E.M. pupils. Out of practical necessity and as a result of reflexive maturity, Nigel tells me that the adaptations he made were primarily in terms of his professional image:

*Nigel: I take pride in knowing that I've spent time producing interesting lessons that the kids remember and look forward to. ... I'm not just saving my best for observations ... I wanna walk tall and ... just try and do everything to the best of my ability.*

Prior to joining the school, Nigel participated in as many Continuous Professional Development (CPD) seminars, conferences and other subject-related forums as possible. Nigel claims his previous school were unwilling to finance or release him to attend particularly if they occurred during term time. He adds, regarding his early use

of electronic whiteboards: *I remember when I was first learning the software a lot of my colleagues would make comments like “that looks slow, ... waste of time, ... just use the board, ... why bother”?* Also Nigel claims, that by thwarting his efforts to upgrade his professional skills, in the future the school could use the excuse of his limited skills as a barrier to his career advancement. An individualised responsibility to invest in oneself is a hallmark of neo-liberal subjectivity (Hamann, 2009; Hursh, 2005). Nigel says:

*Nigel: I realised early on I wanted some sort of career, so I knew I would leave the school soon, but to stand any chance of getting where I wanted to go, I had to make myself ... different, marketable, stand out from the pack.*

Although Nigel does not make this explicit, conditions in schools, their social values and practices, are increasingly structured along neo-liberal lines. As Hamann (2009, p38, original emphasis) points out, ‘neoliberalism strives to ensure that individuals are compelled to assume market-based values in *all* of their judgements and practices in order to amass sufficient quantities of ‘human capital’ and thereby become ‘entrepreneurs of themselves’.

At his new school Nigel comments on his projected image by saying: *I pride myself on my professionalism. ... I’m known by my colleagues as a someone who is au fait with technology, the software, managing classes. ... It’s the way I present ideas, ... it’s got that professional feel now’.* To further emphasise his point about his ICT skills he says: *‘the mere fact that even today I had some teacher asking me for software advice after having walked past and seeing the lesson ... let’s me know I’m doing something right’.* He then adds: *I had to learn through dedicated practice, ... they need to do it for themselves too’.* I read this statement as significant, first, because it exemplifies Nigel’s negated sense of collegiality. He justifies his stance by saying:

*Nigel: If it was the other way round ... do you really think he would use his spare time to teach me? No. ... I like to stand out. ... Maybe this is due to past experience cause I feel like I go through great lengths, ... they should go through that same learning curve.*

For Nigel, it appears that a competitive edge is gained by being prepared to make an ongoing investment in the self. I read his individualism operating when competitive market-led values, as a strategy, take precedence over collectivist-led values or

sharing. I suggest Nigel's professional persona is rationalised as a form of entrepreneurial self with him increasing his 'human capital', which consists of 'both his innate genetic qualities as well as his acquired skills, tastes, values and knowledge' (Hamann, 2009, p43).

Nigel claims that in addition to his exemplary use of technology to support his teaching, he also reflects a great deal on his classroom management and his interactions with pupils:

*Nigel: Kids are also looking to see if you're professional. ... By this I mean not only good using ICT ... but, ... OK, in class, yes there's rules, OK and I mean I'm kind of strict ... definitely do not like kids talking while I'm talking ... and they need to get on with their work. ... But they are certain things that I do to make it interesting ... relevant to their lives ... humour... and the type presentations that are genuinely interactive, peer to peer or me. ... This cements what you've just taught the kids ... they see that and they like it. ... I relate to them so very different now.*

Nigel explains his investment in an alternative pedagogical approach contributes to his confidence in managing and interacting with pupils. It also appears that Nigel's incorporation of ICT into his teaching offers flexibility to the teaching and learning processes. He comments on the positive effects of his adaptability:

*Nigel: My colleagues ... they have, ... I believe they have respect for me. ... They see me as someone who's popular with the kids and justifiably so as well. ... Again I think one of my strong points would be ... the way my lessons are prepared, ... and not to make a big deal out of it, ... but I do stand out.*

A feature of entrepreneurial activities is that they are purposeful, otherwise they would be read as mismanaged and lacking due to the individual's own failure. In that case, one can read Nigel's narratives on hyper-visibility as productive, as he reconfigures external judgements into self-marketing. The discourses attached to his adaptive professional persona not only concern pupils' and colleagues' gaze but are also subject related.

Picker and Berry's (2000) study investigating pupils' images of mathematicians failed to include or consider anyone of B.E.M. descent. The historical erasure or amnesia

about the contributions made by cultural groups to the curriculum is outside the scope of this thesis. The absence of B.E.M. people within the history of mathematics exemplifies the Eurocentric curriculum previously discussed by Kenneth. Nigel explains that he frequently he hears variations on the comment: “*Sir ... you don’t look like a maths teacher they’re are normally old and boring*”. ... *I turn it back on them. ... I ask, “don’t you realise you’re a mathematician too”?* Nigel chooses discursive practices that subvert pupils’ expected representations of who can regard themselves as a mathematician. This is pertinent given that in the contemporary UK, a school’s mathematics results are generally used to assess standards and evaluate success. Nigel however merely says his overriding intention is to dispel myths about *‘mathematicians as being “uncool” especially with the stigma maths has got. ... It’s usually not seen as something we do’*. One reading is that, in decoupling images of mathematicians from their former associations, Nigel has an ulterior motive. Nigel remarks: *‘at least I’m doing something positive for the subject so if that’s the case, ... if you’re a good teacher, ... a teacher first, and they relate to you, ... you can bring them into the fold’*. Nigel’s previous story about himself as a protégé wanting to ingratiate himself to his role model is relevant here. For Nigel the experience was ultimately productive. In these present scenarios, Nigel is canvassing learners to revise and possibly re-configure their mathematics learner identities. Nigel invites oppositional readings. Nigel continues: *‘so in a way I feel like I’m flying the flag for maths in that sense’*. Nigel’s body is a site that can be read as a professional and a mathematician by pupils, something he perceives as potentially productive. This raises the question: Given the status of mathematics and of qualifications in it, what messages does Nigel’s entrepreneurial, self-assigned position as role model convey?

I now move to consider other textual readings of Nigel’s body where the emphasis is on his attention to his physicality. Muggleton (2000) argues that youth subcultures should be regarded as a product of individual choice, arising out of heightened reflexive consumerism. Following this perspective and given our neo-liberal era of consumerism, individualism and choice, I examine the passages where Nigel’s talks further about his external image. I attend to places where inter-textual readings of Nigel’s professional mathematician persona and/or his entrepreneurial self-collide with style and fashion (often linked to youth culture).

### Style and Fashion



Lifestyle describes the sensibilities of people who choose certain commodities and patterns of consumption and articulate these cultural resources as modes of personal expression (Chaney, 1994, 1996, cited in Bennett, 1999). Nigel actively constructs and projects a personal style in order to represent his individuality. His self-presentation choices maximise the ways in which his personal style stands apart to direct attention to itself: 'it gives itself to be read' (Hebdige, 1979, p101). Nigel's choices about his assemblage of style have intentions to communicate. A comment from Nigel, cited earlier, is relevant here: *I pride myself on standing out, being different, not your usual looking teacher*'. Nigel's narratives are saturated with discourses about his physical demeanour and his insistence on *'looking smart'*. Nigel tells me that, although the school's staff are expected not to deviate from its corporate dress code he makes *'more of a concerted effort'* regarding his sartorial choices. Having already discussed Nigel's assumptions about the symbolic significance of skin colour, I begin with his talk about masculinity and bodily physique.

Nigel's commodification of his body can be described as a form of 'neo-liberalist' entrepreneurial activity. Nigel says he is a keen sports person; he regularly participates in staff sporting events. He claims to have a reputation as an athlete among the pupils because they frequently comment on such matters. Nigel says pupils repeatedly draw attention to his physique: *"Do you do marathons running sir"? ... "Are you in training for body building sir"?* Nigel says the questions are often from pupils with whom he has no direct connections through his teaching groups. Nigel assumes that the frequency of the discussions about his body's physicality affirms his recognisability even from afar. To further illustrate the frequency of these interactions involving pupils' textual reading of his body, Nigel says: *If I could get a pound for the amount of times kids have said to me ... "sir, shouldn't you be a footballer"?* Given the stereotypes linking black men with sport, one effect of his commodification could be to reproduce dominant discourses around black masculinity.

Nigel says that although the pupils initially ask questions about his involvement in sport, their discussion invariably moves to other areas. Feminists have pointed out 'the definition and shaping of the body is the focal point for struggles over power' (Bordo, 1993, p183). The potential for dialogue, in this case around lifestyle, is ever present and exploitable:



*Nigel: So there's a child who wants to talk about boxing, football, good shape, ... go beyond the mathematics that I'm teaching. They've seen my persona, my character or myself as a whole that they like.... They like to be identified with me. ... In some cases, they want to be like [me] ... and on this particular occasion, I'm talking about children of a different racial background to myself.*

There is an extension to Nigel's power relations, which is not exclusively tied to B.E.M. pupils in his school. He reflects on the positivity of these interactions, saying: *I felt that some of the young boys they kinda looked up to me*'. His claim that pupils identify with him suggests Nigel makes himself into a commodity of interest and intrigue to all pupils. At the very least, Nigel's body as a text engages pupils vicariously in discourses about what they could become. Further, Nigel's informal talks with pupils give support to the assertion that a male role model's strength lies primarily in their reliance on friendship networks and informal social ties (Murrell & Zagenczk, 2006). Thus, Nigel's masculine power could be read as immanently both disruptive and normalising. However, one needs to also consider patterns of consumption linked to his lifestyle.

Maffesoli's (1996) concept of 'tribus' in studies on identity construction within post youth culture is relevant here because it resonates with forms of collective sociality in schools. Bennett's (1999) discussion of Maffesoli's work points out that rather than assuming the notion of fixed consumer subcultures, we can see that loose identity associations are built around aesthetic and stylistic preferences. These preferences coalesce around leisure and other social divisions such as music, style or fashion, rather than being class-based (or culture-based) systems of signification. Maffesoli's (1996, p30) points out that 'above and beyond individualism empirical social life is no more than the expression of a succession of feelings of belonging'. In light of this, how might one interpret Nigel's penchant for emphasising his individualism, appearance and strategic networking with pupils in his school?

In his talk, Nigel's places emphasis on his appearance, saying: *I'd like to say there're some things I take pride in. ... I'm very conscious of how I look slightly fashionable, and I like to go to the gym*'. Nigel's cultivation of a personal style could be construed as indicative of the importance he places on his image. Style is a mode of self-expression and identification, used to signal belonging, friendship or personal taste. But it is more

than fashion; style is a mode of signification and, like any cultural practice (Pomerantz, 2008), it is the public face of the body acting as the body within social space (McNay, 1999). Nigel sees his clothes as a social skin that can speak to, and be read by others and he wants, through his clothes, to communicate a particular individual style that he thinks the pupils will relate to. 'I speak through my clothes' (Eco, 1973, cited in Hebdige, 1979, p100).

*Nigel: I've found these out by trial and error, ... when you come into class you're prim and proper, ... you stand tall, you're well dressed, ... you deliver well, ... you're using the latest technology to deliver your lessons. ... The way I dress to go to work, ... these things don't come overnight. I go through great lengths to look good.*

One interpretation is that Nigel's style preferences convey culturally-coded meanings in a subtle manner. His style can be read as having its own communicative power. From his narrations it appears that, for Nigel, 'becoming' a role model in school requires him to offering forms of expression recognisable within youth subcultures. In that case, Nigel's sartorial choices – fashionable or 'designer labels' – are a mode of signification, denoting membership of a particular lifestyle. By appropriating commodities of significance in some youth subcultures, Nigel is replicating processes young people undertake when they attempt to express their individuality. It is widely recognised that clothes, style and fashion form a 'key element in young people's expression of their own collective and individual identity' and remain the most visual form of 'symbolic cultural creativity' (Willis, 1990, p85). One could read Nigel's intentional dress as articulating his affiliation with aspects of contemporary youth subculture.

Maffesoli (1996, p31) critiques aesthetic-based attitudes, arguing the attraction by others (such as, pupils) to identify with emblematic figures generates 'a quasi-mystical communion, a common sentiment of belonging'. He argues such participation invariably creates an 'atmosphere of insouciance' encouraging 'indifference to the consequences of their actions' by these figures (Maffesoli, 1996, p28). I am interested in whether such discursive practices (and sartorial assemblage) might be perceived as ineffective or merely as a repeated stylization of the body (Hebdige, 1979). I questioned Nigel about whether his expressions of a particular style might be misconstrued.

*Nigel: You're right, appearance isn't everything, you're quite right. But the kids are quite smart they know the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher: ... what messages are you giving? ... Opens you to a lot of thoughts ... to what's going on. ... I suppose it's about connecting with them in a way that shows them you can always change, ... improve on yourself and be pleased with the result, ... without totally forgetting who you are, yes, never forget you're still ... unique.*

Nigel's style could be regarded as a 'temporal imagination negotiating its embodied experience' (Bordo, 1993, p181) that he re-configures in ways that he deems complement his notion of professionalism. In that case, his adaptations are significant because he constructs himself as recognisable and thereby, to some extent, invites attention. Nigel's adaptations can be read as attempts to cross the cultural divide of 'ethnicity' and thereby forge personal links with all pupils in the school.

An alternative reading is that Nigel is a 'dupe of consumerism'. One cannot discount the ideas that his self-image is itself a product of normalisation. However, this would do him a disservice, since within the performance culture and neo-liberal principles infiltrating schools only certain types of subjectivities are possible. Instead, I read Nigel's deployment of style, derived from his experiential knowledge of pupils' interest in youth subcultures, as allowing him to distinctively and purposely engage in informal critical dialogue. His intentional adaptations are always understood as shaped by prevailing and popular discourses operating in the school. By taking up a unique style, Nigel engages with the everyday practices of the 'neo-liberal mind-set' often associated with young people's aesthetic preferences. To quote Butler (2005, p1086), 'in order to change things, we have to be prepared to confront ourselves, to become undone in relation to others, and to accept moments of unknowingness'.

#### Male Teachers – concluding remarks

To conclude, shared discursive history provides a unique way of understanding the varied positioning strategies of these male role model teachers. A distinguishing feature arising from the male teachers' accounts is their emphasis on relating to B.E.M. pupils who *belong* to their marginalised (cultural) group. Their contextualised stories illustrate that to navigate cultural hegemonic conditioning is vital to the

modes of relating that they are able to sustain.

Shared marginality enables an understanding of both the context within which the teachers operate and how they respond to forms of epistemic crisis as they arise. In this chapter, I have examined the effects of critical events (both inter-group and intra-group) to show the centrality of expectations of deference and of conforming to cultural norms to how teachers relate with B.E.M. pupils. An overriding implication from their mode of relating is that belonging within their cultural group carries territorial and exclusive elements which the teachers have to reconcile. For example, Nigel's denial of unquestioning obedience forces him to re-appraise his original beliefs about culture matching whilst exposing the fragility of border-crossing. Pickering et al's (2012) discussion of territoriality – a form of cultural capital passed generationally – echoes Ali's depiction of the epistemic crisis around security experienced by his community. Sharing marginality recognises that sentiments linked to belonging have an exclusionary effect. Kenneth likewise, shows how empathy is evoked due to the social practices in his school that effectively exclude B.E.M. pupils.

In the section on performing as role models I considered what the teachers do, and the function of their counter-narratives. I explored specific types that the teachers identified as atypical. I examined the teachers' narrations about their popularity and other forms of intervention. The main focus of my analysis was on how the assumptions the teachers held about B.E.M. pupils manifest through their actions. My argument was that the male teachers perform as role models premised on developing pupils' criticality and discernment about cultural representations of B.E.M. people. The teachers perform their role by alerting pupils to ingrained assumptions and by questioning beliefs they hold about what in their culture constitutes masculinity. For example, Ali's intervention in the fight, had a potentially transformative effect on the spectators. He creates a space for the spectators to question their views about belonging in relation to the macho-ism of street culture. In the process he challenges normative ideas about responding to peer pressure. Likewise, Kenneth signals his authenticity by speaking back to his audience about culturally-embedded representations of black men and the role of cultural biases. These teachers' performances, while reflecting shifting patterns of control and resistance, are underpinned by a long-term perspective wherein pupils engage in

critical interpretations of events.

The final section of this chapter shows teacher identity construction as fluid and responsive. Contemporary ideas about individualism are hallmarks of the performance culture in schools. For young people, asserting and expressing their individuality is a condition of the transition from childhood to adulthood. You recall, subjectivation describes the ways that human beings govern and fashion themselves into subjects (Milchman & Rosenberg, 2009). I used Nigel's narrations to illustrate how stylistic aesthetic patterns from youth subcultures are a form of currency and can be a positioning strategy that B.E.M. teachers use to develop an affinity with pupils. In the next chapter, I further develop shared discursive history by examining the female role model B.E.M. teachers' positioning strategies.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: RESILIENT FEMALES

### *Introduction*

In the previous two chapters, I have developed shared discursive history to conceptualise the workings of power in role model relations between B.E.M. teachers and pupils. In this chapter I examine the female teachers' positioning strategies adopted in their narrations, and foreground where they differ in comparison with their male counterparts. As with the male teachers, similar questions are posed: How are relations developed, sustained and understood? How do B.E.M. female teachers envision, signify and perform their 'role model' identity? How do the teachers use pupil resistance as a basis for pedagogic intervention? The aim is to understand the factors affecting the formation, and maintenance of these power relations. The female teachers emphasise the influence of education on their learner identities so I have structured the first part of chapter accordingly. Overall the chapter is organised into three sections following the three dimensions of shared discursive history.

First, sharing marginality refers to the contextual circumstances that lead these teachers to have feelings of empathy towards B.E.M. pupils. For each female teacher's 'herstory', I illustrate how their previous experiences as learners inform their mode of relating with B.E.M. pupils. Whereas for the male teachers the emphasis is on resistance in terms of affinity with their cultural group, the female teachers' focus predominantly on resistance through their experiential knowledge about subjugated women. My key argument is that the female teachers' empathy with B.E.M. pupils is premised on the need for them to develop resilience to externally-assigned labelling and stereotypical expectations from others. The female teachers perceive the notion of self-reliant learner identities as the basis for sustaining role model relations with B.E.M. pupils. In contrast with the female teachers, the male teachers relate with B.E.M. pupils premised on their ideas about bi-cultural affinity and notions of cultural belonging. The male teachers discuss their relations with B.E.M. pupils in terms of the hegemonic mechanisms and regulatory forces operating on their learner identity constructions.

Performing as a role model to B.E.M. pupils describes the types of interactions that are formed and sustained by the teachers and the counter-narratives they generate aimed at changing pupils' attitudes and actions. I draw on ideas from Black feminist

thinking (Collins, 1990; hooks, 1984; de Lauretis, 1986) and poststructural feminist pedagogies (Archer et al, 2001; Davies, 1997; Pitt, 1997; Tisdell, 1998) to understand the ways that the teachers perform their 'role model' identities. I argue the female teachers perform according to ideals based upon an 'ethic of care' (Collins, 1990), specifically promoting pupils' agency by advocating self-determination.

The deployment of cultural resources is the third overlapping component of shared discursive history. Both male and female teachers utilise available cultural resources as a pedagogical tool to validate their informal bonding with B.E.M. pupils. I chose one teacher, Eileen, as an example of the inclusive boundary practices and identity politics at work. I examine her use of shared language register of patois with B.E.M. pupils to illustrate her personalised mode of communication, by drawing on collective memories of cultural identity (Reynolds, 2005).

The final section summarises the key arguments developed by applying shared discursive history as a conceptual frame for analysing how B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models to B.E.M. pupils. I compare and contrast the male and female teachers. I then discuss resistance in terms of the 'active struggle teachers and/or pupils engage in to deal with the contradictory and indeterminate nature of their social life' (Hughes, 2002, p8).

### ***Sharing Marginality***

Sharing marginality refers to B.E.M. teachers' empathetic understanding of the social conditions B.E.M. pupils navigate in schooling and wider society. Sharing marginality concerns the effect of critical events in the teachers' lives that led them to question assumptions about themselves and others. Previous examples of critical events have included stories about rejecting or appropriating 'ingrained truths' about the teachers' social reality. The teachers' positioning's, both adopted and assigned within their discursive work, are illustrated by instances where they discuss how they manage relations vis-à-vis B.E.M. pupils' resistance.

The section begins with the female teachers' self-descriptions and backgrounds. For each teacher I include a situation or event that they recount as being noteworthy. Their 'herstories' provide insights into the transformative beliefs that they incorporate into their learner identities. The remaining analysis sets these understandings within the circumstances in their school to illustrate how a resilient

stance guides the relations they form. Relating empathetically with B.E.M. pupils is based in the teachers' experiences of practices designed to challenge normative expectations (in some instances on gender). The teachers' herstories sometimes resonate with, and at times conflict with, their perceptions about pupils' needs.

### Female Teachers: Self defining

The four female teachers are not a homogeneous group. As Mirza (2009) points out, women's expressions of what constitutes femininity differ significantly when viewed through the lens of culture. Their differences are revealed in how they self-identify along lines of nationality, ethnicity and social class. In response to questions about her identity, Josephine says, *'Jamaican mother and teacher'*, while Eileen responds with, *'the label is Black/British, but I see myself as a grandmother who is still working, hoping to protect our children'*. Both women are from working-class backgrounds and choose to link their teacher identity with their maternal status. Sherrine is also a mother but does not include this in her self-classification rather stressing (as does Nattalie) her national identity. Sherrine (Egyptian/British) and Nattalie (Sri Lankan), on the other hand, have middle-class grounds. For part of their schooling both these women benefited from private education. Hence one could suggest that these women are better equipped with the appropriate 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) to manage their transition into the UK education system.

Despite their different self-definitions, interestingly, neither of them expressly referred to themselves as feminists. A unifying depiction of these women would be to describe them as 'contingent choosers' (Ball et al, 2002). Their career choices were made 'within limited horizons, because they knew that teaching was a good job for a woman' (Maguire, 2005, p8). The inference made is that they were able to 'achieve their own emancipation from restrictions of class and/or gender' (Mann, 1998, cited in Maguire, 2005, p8).

### Herstory: Sherrine

In Sherrine's personal narrative she constructs herself as someone who rejects the notion of passivity and differentiates herself from the dominant discourses of Muslim women's femininity. Sherrine says she dismissed her family's suggestion to become a teacher and instead began her working life after graduation as a



commercial finance manager. She reflects on her early decision, saying: *I think it was the rebel within me, I'm not like my dad. But as you get older you realise, I'm exactly like him*'. Sherrine says she admires her dad because, despite being the oldest of nine siblings and expected to work on the land to provide for the family, he rejected these expectations. She points to his rebellious spirit by saying: *he had to really fight to get an education ... he had to work all through the summer to get money to pay for his books at school*'.

Sherrine's father's insistence on rejecting filial expectations instilled in her the importance of education in providing her with social mobility and choices. She validates the power of credentials by saying that although his lowly background contributed to him feeling ostracised by his fellow undergraduate, he later became a lecturer at a prestigious Egyptian University. She adds: *in my eyes he's the most successful person ... And influenced me a lot, ... I see this now in myself*. For Sherrine adopting a resilient position is indicative of a learner's self-determination. Sherrine adds that, as an adolescent, *my parents were strict. ... They didn't want me to go out but I fought my way and got it*'. Sherrine's insistence on self-determination is also evident in her personal life, she states: *I can be still be a Muslim woman, I can do what I like, I can take care of my family ... and I'm independent. Do what I like ... If I want to book a holiday for myself my husband won't bat an eyelid. ... That's how it should go*'. Here Sherrine rationalises her independence and autonomy as a learner and as a woman in terms of the need for self-determination.

#### Herstory: Eileen

Eileen recalls her secondary education where she was only one of four black girls (including her two sisters and a cousin) at the girls' school she attended. She describes the experience by saying, *they looked down on us. ... We weren't expected to go there ... so they made us feel inadequate. ... We weren't expected to do well*'. Eileen's experience supports findings in the research literature where black girls talk about being subjected to racist discourses in UK schools (Fuller, 1984; McKellar, 1989; Phoenix, 2009). She says her parents never supported her by challenging teachers who she told them had made negative comments about her. She reflects on their reluctance to question her teachers' motives or attitudes, saying:

*Eileen: At the time it did annoy me ... but that's how it was at that time. ... It's not like now when Afro-Caribbean parents are more clued up ... and have a voice in how they*

*think their child should be educated ... treated in school ... and the sort of encouragement they need to do well.*

Eileen ascribes her parents' lack of advocacy to their West Indian and working-class background:

*Eileen: Unless I was actually beaten or caned I don't think they would contemplate going into school. ... So I learnt to ease my frustrations by silently talking to myself, ... making up affirmations. ... I wasn't blatantly outspoken but verbally I got really creative!*

Eileen says that her teachers' negative expectations motivated her to succeed and believe in her own ability. Eileen's position accords with other research showing that, compared with their male counterparts, black girls are less likely to resist teacher racism in ways deemed to be challenging (Fuller, 1984; McKellar, 1994; Phoenix, 2009). Eileen's resistance, while accommodating her situation, is exemplified by her distancing herself from what she deemed unfair treatment from teachers: *I'd just doodle and draw cartoon illustrations to amuse myself, ... and each one would remind me of a time when I really wanted to tell them about themselves!* As a strategy for containing her annoyance and not speaking out, Eileen's drawings were a source of inspiration. One reading could suggest that her conformity is a strategy for surviving in situations she construes to be discriminatory. On the one hand, Eileen denies her teachers the power to make her react in unproductive ways (*tell them about themselves*). On the other hand, selectively suppressing her voice equips Eileen with agency, albeit constrained. Eileen manages the contradictory meanings this creates for her. I read Eileen's account of her positioning in response to her teachers' low expectations of her as a form of resilience. In another part of the interview she says:

*Eileen: Going back to low expectations white teachers have about black kids, the expectation was you're not going to do anything when you leave. ... I remember in fact when I saw my careers officer I told her I wanted to be a stewardess and it was like 'you can't be a stewardess'. ... And it was, 'well you can go into nursing or you're going to be a secretary' and that was it ... those were the only two options. I thought, 'are you serious'? ... I said, 'is that the limit set you for me? I'll choose my future thank you very much!'*

Eileen's resistance to the racialised and gendered stereotypes demonstrates her power. The guidance given to Eileen could be viewed as directing her towards typical

options for young women in the 1970s, which were based on the assumption of 'shortened' careers. Here I concur with Mama's (1995) post-colonial perspective that black women's rejection of the identities society positions them to occupy is born out of a 'developed consciousness through personal struggles with the contradictions and subjugation they face' (Phoenix, 2009, p6). Setting her own agenda for life through self-determination, despite some teachers' low expectations, informs Eileen's thinking about the appropriate guidance for learners.

### Herstory: Josephine

Josephine was educated in the West Indies and says the experience had an indelible influence on her thinking about learners. She says: *'first and foremost you had to be respectful to your teachers, you don't argue back, never mind swear at them or tell them what you think, so it's a totally different world'*. In her narration Josephine says: *'I always tried to be a good student. ... I wasn't bright, but I wasn't going to be like some of the other girls who skipped school or messed around. ... I knew I only had one chance'*. Education was available free up to secondary school age, but parents paid for their child's exercise book, textbooks and other expenses. Josephine says she was indoctrinated by her parents into the belief that she should be a *'good schoolchild ... always respectful to teachers and older people, ... be grateful that you were getting an education ... so don't waste the opportunities you're given'*. Josephine's Christian background instilled in her a Protestant work ethic, she says:

*Josephine: I've always loved working with children. In my other life, when I was 14 or 15, I was teaching in the Sunday school ... and I used to even teach in the summer and the parents used to pay me pocket-money to teach their kids.*

As a model pupil she paid back to the community by voluntary informal teaching. Josephine explains that she differentiated herself from her school friends. She recalls that despite not being a *'bright'* pupil academically, she had the wherewithal to plan for her future. Despite her passion for teaching, Josephine's qualifications only enabled her to obtain a civil service administrative post when she migrated to England. Josephine was a working mother, and yet eventually graduated through part-time study. She says she relied heavily on her husband for emotional support: *'I was blessed he helped me get through my studies at the OU. ... I don't think I would have finished without his encouragement; I just couldn't give up'*. Josephine's personal history is one of accountability, first to her parents who invested in her education, then to her church

community and later to her family. In her talk Josephine positions herself as a studious learner, one who views education as paramount. Josephine's position as a *'good school child'* is complemented by her view of education as an essential platform through which to realise her potential.

#### Herstory: Nattalie

Nattalie left Sri Lanka at age 16 and completed her A levels and higher education in the UK before embarking on her teaching career. Nattalie says: *'I was brought up in an environment where the teachers were very strict. ... I don't see it's always the case in this country, ... but then teachers are respected by everyone'*. Nattalie reflects on her education in Sri Lanka where she says the teachers expected the girls to always contribute to the school, *'we didn't have cleaners or stuff like that. ... We [the girls] were responsible for making sure our classroom was tidy ... that was normal'*. Nattalie says expectations about comportment were customary even outside of school:

*Nattalie: When you see a teacher in the distance you would stand-up to greet them. ... That's a big difference. ... There's no respect. ... Another thing, when you're told you've got a test coming up, we revise for it, ... we spend ages fretting about it, ... about the expected responsibilities cause we have to do well, ... do your best.*

Nattalie says that the *'fear'* that her parents would be disappointed was overriding: *'our parents train you to respect teachers, ... everywhere you go teachers are ... pillars of society. ... It's not like in this country where you look up to bankers or footballers'*. Later in her critique of the didactical teaching approaches used in her homeland, Nattalie describes learners by saying: *'if you didn't do well it was because you didn't apply yourself enough. ... It wasn't the teachers fault'*. Nattalie compares this with her education in the UK: *'when I went to sixth form it was easier for me ... cause I already had the discipline to study independently ... it wasn't such of a shock for me'*. Nattalie later adds:

*Nattalie: The thing that stood out the most for me is that the onus isn't on the students to organise themselves. ... They take their education for granted ... here, they're too relaxed ... and are quick to blame their teachers rather than saying 'what can I do to make sure I understand?'*

Nattalie's account of her learner identity formation foregrounds expected compliance and the understanding that she takes responsibility her learning

trajectory. In this regard, her learner identity can be read as being derived both from family and community expectations about normalised pupil behaviour.

### Herstories: So what?

Collins (1990, p224) in her discussion of the power of self-definition, argues that 'becoming empowered through self-knowledge, even within conditions that severely limit one's ability to act, is essential'. The female teachers' reflections on their early learner positioning's can be read as both resistance and compliance. Sherrine and Eileen emphasise their rejection of being typecast by going against the grain of what was expected of them as women. Sherrine says she had to *'fight'* to be a rebellious type of girl and so she consciously resisted expectations of passive femininity. In her case, this meant re-negotiating the boundaries of acceptance and conformity operating in the ideals of a Muslim daughter. Similarly, Eileen's resistance to the career trajectory presented to her initiates a determination to construct an alternative professional identity. Conversely, Josephine and Nattalie, despite their different class backgrounds, can be read as conforming to the expectations of others. They both reconstruct patterns of diligence, obedience and studiousness in school, characteristics associated with femininity (Archer et al, 2007; Jackson, 2006; Walkerdine, 1989). Nattalie's learner identity, while culturally embedded, is constructed with *'fear'* and an awareness of her *'responsibilities'* to be studious. These herstories reveal the varied social conditions that influence their 'being and becoming' gendered learners. However, I do not read these women as merely victims of circumstances. I read their herstories as showing their resilience to the given identity positioning while purposely actualising their goals. To understand how these female teachers relate to B.E.M. pupils as agents of change, I now move to illustrate their attempts to inculcate their pupils with resilient attitudes. In this regard I examine their stories about the context and structures in which their agency is located. Whereas for the male teachers, their entanglement with cultural norms dominates how they relate with B.E.M. pupils, the female teachers' relations with pupils are directed towards them attaining personal goals.

### Herstories: Empathy & Resilience

Living life as Black women requires wisdom because knowledge about the dynamics of race, gender, and class oppression has been essential to Black women's survival. (Collins, 1990, p208)

Sherrine is the only teacher in the study who taught in single-sex schools. so far in her career she has taught in two otherwise very different secondary girls' schools. At her first school there were a mix of middle and working-class girls, with white British pupils making up about 60% of the intake, and the remaining 40% coming from African-Caribbean, Afghanistan and African backgrounds. She said: *'what I loved about the girls was that had their own opinions. ... They would voice their opinions forcefully ... and make them heard'*. Reflecting on the school environment and the teaching staff, Sherrine said, *'it was like I'd found my calling. ... It was all about individuality, ... "girl power" and the rights of women'*. For Sherrine, working in a school which had a strong feminist ethos, meant that:

*Sherrine: I could relate to the girls easily; they were like me. ... I miss the girls because they had a bit more sense of humour... you could laugh with them. ... When I planned with my tutor group to do an assembly ... it would always be radical or talking about different ways women are exploited in society.*

In contrast, at Sherrine's second school, there are predominantly Muslim girls, many of whom have quite different views about femininity.

*Sherrine: In my last school the girls had more of a voice, they felt that they could change things, sometimes to the negative, but when they felt that something was against them they would protest, ... fight for what they felt was right ... and I really miss that. Whereas here, ... they're still lovely, it's just ... most of these girls are just obedient! The girls have been taught to accept whatever they are told without questioning ... and it's taken a long time for me to get accustomed to that!*

Sherrine's discourse about the girls in her first school is about rebellious self-determined, opinionated, and spirited women. Her comparative positioning of the girls in her first and second schools are as protesting and obedient respectively. She evidences the contrast by describing how the girls express their opinions and question authority. Sherrine's second school does not immediately resonate with her own sentiments or appear to facilitate opportunities for the girls to experience, as Sherrine put it, *'being radical'*. Sherrine says her own beliefs about *'wanting the girls to gain independence'* are challenging because of the ideologies that dominate the girls' home life. Sherrine explains:

*Sherrine: They see mother is at home cooking, cleaning, bearing children ... and the father, boys, brothers are outside doing what he likes ... either getting married a second time, or just having a great time while the mother is at home.*

Sherrine continues: *'I know that some may say there's nothing wrong with unpaid domestic life ... but, that's my job I think, as an educator, I need them to think differently about themselves and their potential'*. Sherrine says that reconciling her beliefs with the girls, many of whom hold traditional views about a women's place, replicates her earlier experiences. She nonetheless tries to disrupt their thinking. To illustrate her point, Sherrine describes a situation where she responds to a group of girls having overheard their discussion:

*Sherrine: So I said, I'm a Muslim and that's not how it goes. Their faces were shocked ... because I wasn't wearing a hijab and I don't look like a typical Muslim in that respect so, I said to them: ... I do my prayers. ... I do fast. ... I do everything that needs to be done ... but I can live my own life. I'm not degraded in any way. ... I can do what I like. ... And that's what you should be aspiring to!*

As Dwyer (1999) shows, wearing a hijab is a contested signifier for Muslim women. She cautions researchers to tread delicately between acknowledging the *possibilities* that might exist to rework the veil as a symbol of resistance and recognising the ways in which it might be part of patriarchal practices of domination. Sherrine's power to relate with some of the girls is tenuous, since, within the pupil population, the hijab is the normative dress. The girls' perspective in this regard is disrupted, but they may not readily reject filial obedience to a dress code accepted by the school. Although Sherrine attempts to express a middle ground from which the girls can envision alternatives, she feels that she is read as a contradiction. Sherrine's representation of a hybrid Muslim woman evokes *'shock'*. Sherrine may be able to relate to some of the girls, but she is made aware of the tensions it poses for them. Doing what one likes may not be a viable option for some of the girls. Sherrine says she often relates to the girls through *'talks'* in which she can articulate her notion of the *'rebel within'*. Although Sherrine believes her contributions are justified, she will inevitably exclude girls who, for many reasons, cannot aspire to her ideals. Sherrine's attempts to shift the girls' consciousness are, at other times, she says *'quite subtle'* because she knows such talks need to be grounded in the realities of what she perceives to be these girls' life-worlds. Sherrine's sense of ongoing agency as a feminist educator appears



thwarted. While she does create discursive spaces in which she can justify her rebellious positioning, she is also a realist. Sherrine later remarks: *'as a whole class nobody is going to show they openly disagree with your viewpoint, ... but I've got faith that some of the girls will eventually be inspired by what I say'*. The question of relating for Sherrine concerns how to exploit what she reads as the girls' unquestioned obedience, while attending to her ever-present vocation to instil in them her notion of autonomous independent young womanhood. Thus, sharing marginality requires attendance to the social context within which the teachers work and how the teachers reconcile their visions of ideal learner identities with the pragmatics of relating.

Eileen has taught in several secondary schools during her career. She describes her current inner city school as having: *'a wide mixture in terms of culture. ... I would say it's a very challenging school but once you get to know the students, and you have a certain amount of authority, the students aren't a problem'*. Eileen reflects on her career:

*Eileen: I've been teaching children for a while now... but in every school I've worked in I've tried to make the students know that it doesn't matter whether a teacher likes you or not, ... you're here to give yourself a future that you want.... It doesn't have to be glamorous ... but make sure it's your choice.... Maybe they [the teacher] shouldn't have chosen to be a teacher ... but what do you want to do with yourself?*

Eileen emphasises her point further: *'I tell them all the time ... always keep that belief in the front of your mind'*. In her talk, Eileen positions herself as someone who has the right to proclaim self-actualisation to pupils because: *'the students need to know that there are teachers in the school championing their cause, ... that see them as actually having the potential ... and that they should follow. No I expect them to follow their dreams'*. In several parts of the interview Eileen justifies her stance as necessary due to the deficit model of learners she feels is often projected onto them by colleagues. For example, Eileen refers to advice she has given to pupils during her career and how it is remembered by them: *'the thing that always amazes me, when I meet one of my ex-students, is that they'll remind me of a story where I was encouraging them to do something or praising them'*. The memories of such encounters evoke other sentiments: *'it does make you feel proud sometimes. ... You don't realise how many of those "throw away" remarks you've said over the years have made a difference to a child'*. To further illustrate the point, Eileen recalls a leaving party organised by pupils in her tutor group:



*Eileen: I was so shocked. ... Every one of them wrote on the board different things I used to say to them: ... 'you must be an A\* student' ... and ... 'Miss will have nothing less than you're best'. ... 'Have the courage to take one step and then it gets easier'. ... 'I know you've got what it takes'. ... And I thought: 'do I really say all these things all the time'?*

Eileen's extract is suggestive of Black feminist writers' perspectives, which 'place the power to save the self within the self' (Collins, 1990, p113). Eileen's philosophy, on the power of self-determination, is crucial to how she relates to B.E.M. pupils. To illustrate her conviction to making her ideals explicit to pupils, she adds: *'if they [the pupils], don't think you believe in them then you're not doing what's right. ... It's about getting them to see their inner strength. ... It's so important'*. Eileen claims that being a black woman has advantages: *'I find they relate to black teachers a lot better... I treat them as I would treat my own children and they appreciate that cause they see you as "auntie" and treat you accordingly'*. In many African and African-Caribbean communities, the term 'auntie' is used to address *any* woman (senior in age), regardless of whether she is a blood relative or not, thus her use of the term has connotations of respect. As she later continues: *'it's not that I'm harsh or extra strict, it's that they know how to behave around me. Even when they see me outside of school, they're respectful. ... No way would they try it on!* I read Eileen's positioning as embodying the notion of a strong matriarch who expects and receives respect from pupils. Eileen's maturity possibly carries some gravitas and may have a bearing on how pupils interact with her. However, unlike the male teachers where assumptions of deference are entangled with cultural expectations, Eileen earns her pupils' respect through the advice she gives them. Eileen relates with empathy to pupils because she has also experienced situations where stereotypical assumptions about her potential could have constrained her choices and opportunities.

Josephine's career change to teaching occurred when her oldest child moved to secondary school. At her current school the pupil population is ethnically diverse with a large transitory immigrant group. In Josephine's description of the pupils in her school, she says: *'there's quite a lot of Muslim children here, but a lot of them enter and leave at different phases in the schooling, ... but I see all children as my own'*. Josephine takes an inclusive view of the pupils in her charge, and positions herself as someone responsible for expanding their knowledge base. Josephine explains that educating

the pupils necessitates that she exposes them to a wide repertoire of ideas. To illustrate her point, Josephine says: *'there are times when I read poetry to the class, ... when I look at some of their faces, it's as if nobody else talks to them like that'*. Her empathy with B.E.M. pupils is partly due to her view that they have limited access to varied sources of academic knowledge. Although she is a mathematics teacher, she sees inducting pupils into literature as a way of disrupting their expectations of lessons and as having a compensatory and motivational effect. In her interview she recites: *'The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companion slept, they were toiling upwards through the night'*<sup>2</sup>. This quote from Longfellow is an example of Josephine's attempts to instil perseverance into learners, and acquaint them with the benefits of hard work. As she sees it, *'it's not about finishing fast at the end you got to be working all the time'*. I read this statement as drawing on experiential knowledge about the advantages she gained through her studies. Josephine expresses her meritocratic philosophy in her interactions with pupils. She recounts motivational talks to pupils:

*Josephine: I say things like someone's investing in you, someone's bought you a uniform and given you your lunch money [laughs] and send you to school. ... You need to sit down and learn and get the grade, make yourself proud and your parents proud ... and get that good grade.*

Josephine acknowledges that she uses *'guilt'* to varying effects as a motivational ploy. Here I read her emotive discourse as disciplinary and productive, in a Foucauldian sense. To illustrate this point, I use Josephine's discussion of her talk with a B.E.M. boy who, due to personal circumstances, became increasingly disruptive in several of his other lessons. Her strategy was to help him get beyond feeling discouraged, and to continue in spite of his present circumstances and difficulties, Josephine recalls: *'we had the conversation with me saying ... "do it for yourself when you get that result and see that grade B or grade A against your name you're going to feel that success"'*. She positions herself as someone who understands the pupil's feelings of frustration, while sharing with him potential feelings of success. To illustrate her position of affinity with B.E.M. pupils and how it is embedded in her practice Josephine adds: *'I do say to them ... "this is from the heart, ... I'm talking to you, ... this is as one of you"'*. Josephine claims her heart-felt

2 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Ladder of St. Augustine*, st.10, from *Birds of Passage*, 1858. This is not the exact quote.

talks are necessary because: *'it's just getting these learners to see the best in themselves and I see that ... is another one of my strong points, bringing out the best in them'*. Josephine rationalises her investment in pupils' academic growth by commenting: *'you've got to have a long term view ... cause most them want to be good students ... you just have to keep going'*. For Josephine, relating to pupils is tied to her emotional investment in their future and she modifies her practice to incorporate what she deems a repertoire of transferable knowledge. Her empathy towards pupils connects with her belief that through perseverance, they can attain their goal. Josephine's motivational talks are justified by her recollections of: *'always having to be a 'good' student ... I had to!* Demonstrating her affinity with pupils using emotive strategies is productive but, as I show later in the chapter, is also met with resistance.

To conclude, sharing marginality foregrounds both the teachers' interpretation of the social factors impacting on their relations with B.E.M. pupils and their feelings of empathy towards them. In the previous chapter, I discussed empathy in terms of epistemic events and disruptions to their understandings of their learner identities. The female teachers in this thesis recall herstories about their emergent learner identities to illustrate some of the challenges associated with their own education process. I read their herstories as collectively resilient. Their narratives include stories where they are engaged in struggles which, to some extent, they overcome. As obedient, compliant learners, they steadfastly pursue their educational aims. In various ways their learner identities were constructed by formulating resilience to the given circumstances.

The argument I make is that the female teachers' relations with pupils are premised on cultivating resilient attitudes in their pupils as a strategy for them to achieve their goals. I illustrated this mode of relating is always subject to pupils' resistance. While the female teachers are often undeterred, there are other factors in relation to which they are powerless. For example, Sherrine says she had to *'fight'* to be a rebellious girl and thereby to consciously resist the notion of passive femininity. While Sherrine cannot determine the extent to which the girls in her school can resist the dominant expectations in their lives (such as, contemporary views about women's place in society), she perseveres. She perceives her relations with pupils as tensile; while empathetic to their circumstances, these do not deter her from encouraging self-determination. Thus sharing marginality, while overlapping with other dimensions of

my concept of shared discursive history, draws attention to the peculiarities of the teachers' social contexts and their adaptations to them.

In contrast to their male counterparts, female teachers talk predominantly about their earlier experiences of learner identity construction in order to understand how to relate with B.E.M. pupils. Their stories are about transcending expectations for their future or about how they re-configure compliant identities to benefit themselves. The male teachers relate with B.E.M. pupils in terms of cultural belonging and allegiance, while the female teachers are more concerned with pupils' self-actualisation. Thus, although the female teachers relate to B.E.M. pupils in ways distinctively different from their male counterparts, their mode of relating can be accounted for in my conception of sharing marginality. The female teachers relate with B.E.M. pupils by formulating (imagined) bridges and, through their interactions, they encourage pupils to discard outmoded and/or given learner identities and to pursue alternatives. I now turn to examine how the female B.E.M. teachers perform their role. Throughout I acknowledge that B.E.M. teachers' identities are anchored in their social practices as role models (Ball, 2005; Brookfield, 2003; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998).

### ***Female Teachers Performing Role Models***

The second component of shared discursive history refers to how B.E.M. female teachers perform and signify their 'role model' identity. As with the male teachers, performance is understood as evolving out of the previously discussed female teachers' interpretations of sharing marginality. My analytic focus is on identifying some of the mechanisms operating in the teachers' power/knowledge production and the counter-narratives (if any) that they generate. In this section, I draw on the thinking of Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins and her discussion on the 'ethics of care'. She asserts that 'empathy, personal expression and emotions are central to the knowledge validation process' (Collins, 1990, p215) and the politics of empowerment.

Having already discussed empathetic understanding and relating, I begin with some of the ways that the teachers talk about demonstrating care, and the stories they draw on to speak themselves into existence as role models. I then analyse the teachers'

performing their role to consider both their actions to promote pupils' individuality and the emotive regulatory forces at work. This builds on the previous section where I argued that the female teachers' relations with B.E.M. pupils be read as varied forms of resilience. To develop the argument that an ethic of care is central to how the female teachers perform their role model identity, I focus on extracts from the teachers' narrations where they describe incidents where they promote pupils' individuality and/or challenge pupils' resistance to their ideas.

### Demonstrating Care

Demonstrating care is the most significant theme to emerge from B.E.M. female teachers'<sup>3</sup> talk about role modelling. The extracts below are taken from their responses to my requests to indicate what it is they do or say that leads them to self-define as role models. My focus is on the rules governing their actions, applying a Foucauldian lens to B.E.M. female teachers' discourses of caring. I read these extracts, or 'atoms of discourse', for how their statements function, and what they *do*. Reading their discourses of caring requires attention to the dialectics at work; normality (in their views about caring) is dependent upon whilst seeking to exclude the 'abnormal'. I examine their discourses by first highlighting some of the *possible* binaries (caring/uncaring), to introduce understandings about B.E.M. female teachers speaking themselves into existence. So what are the messages the teachers convey about caring? What do they say that they do and do not do? How might performing as a role model change the action of others? I begin with Sherrine who says:

*Sherrine: I am always very aware of what I say and how I say it, cause it ... means a lot to them, ... it's more of a caring nurture to them, so they see you as a teacher... Caring, as well, I'm not too nice, but I can relate to the kids. I can be on their side and I can make them feel safe. It's OK to get things wrong but we don't laugh at each other. If you get something wrong then I can learn something from that and talk about it a lot more.*

Sherrine's other stories include releasing the rebel within, so what might this mean for her when she performs her role? Sherrine understands caring to include:

3 On only one occasion does the word care occur in all the male teachers' narrations (Kenneth) whereas care/caring is repeatedly spoken and/or inferred by each of the female teachers.

mindfulness of speech (or not being rude); championing pupils' causes (or not being indifferent); naturalising personal errors (or mistakes are normal); and a sense of humour (but without cruelty). The extracts below are representative of the other female teachers' discourses of caring:

*Eileen: I make them know that I really care about their welfare as individuals ... and I'm not just doing a job. That's something I pride myself on ... especially with the one's who want to prove you're not for real. ... It's just me. ... they've [the pupils] been an important part of my adult life. ... teaching is caring.*

*Josephine: What do I mean by being caring? It's that I don't give up on learners. ... I give everyone a fair chance ... they know that ... and if you slipped up and you know I will forgive you and give you another chance ... then that's what I mean.*

*Nattalie: They need caring, ... you don't do it for the sake of doing it, not for the money. ... But I would say, if you don't care about them then it won't work for you. ... It just won't work.*

#### Ethics of Care: Promoting pupils' individuality

Having suggested that demonstrating care underpins how the teachers perform, I examine what the teachers say about how they promote pupils' individuality and autonomous expression. As with the male teachers, I also examine what the female teachers understand to be the inhibiting and supporting factors. I have already suggested that collectively there is a fracturing of B.E.M. teachers' discursive work. The fissures occur within the dynamics of relating and performing their role. These teachers encounter resistance to their work by B.E.M. pupils and others. For the teachers, such encounters may have a momentary or cumulative effect, and may also generate counter-narratives or reverse discourses about their social reality. For the female teachers I examine their talk about such encounters to illustrate how their resilience works to redefine their ethics of care. For example, on several occasions Eileen talks about the need for teachers to have and demonstrate: *'high expectations for pupils'*. For Eileen, *'caring and always trying to see themselves as self-reliant is how I know myself as a role model'*. She compares her approach with that of her colleagues, saying:

*Eileen: They [B.E.M. pupils] know I have expectations of them, ... whereas some of the white teachers may not have the same expectations of them. ... The students want to do the*

*best they can, ... I wouldn't say for me, ... I've always pushed them to do it for themselves. ... It's just so important for them.*

Eileen insists that rather than a platitude about a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Rist, 1970, p1), it is her observed reality that teacher expectations and care are interrelated. Eileen is quite adamant of the truth of her perspective. She rejects my inference that high teacher expectations for B.E.M. pupils are normalised in most schools by saying:

*Eileen: Yes, you may say it's a cliché, of course, ... But I expect them to do well, that's normal. ... I go beyond what they [the pupils] feel that they can achieve. ... I always tell them you can achieve this but can you achieve more? It's just instilling a certain attitude into them.*

Eileen emphasises that her discursive work encourages pupils to redefine their potentiality. However, her intentions are also resisted and discounted by pupils as a form of defence: '*especially the ones who want to prove you're not for real*'. Eileen believes that enabling pupils to prove their value to themselves is of paramount importance. She is highly critical of colleagues, whom she sees as unwilling or unable to engage in meaningful discussions with pupils about their long-term potential. Eileen feels that her colleagues rarely actively promote to the pupils that they care about their welfare. To illustrate this Eileen gives an example of a B.E.M. '*at-risk*' girl in her tutor group who was labelled '*a problem*', even before she joined the school, and despite Eileen's efforts, became increasingly isolated from peers. Eileen recalls:

*Eileen: On our last lesson of the year, X stood up and said 'Miss you're the only person that expected me to do well'. ... And that really touched me ... because she was finally speaking up ... about how she saw herself in the eyes of others.*

For Eileen, having high expectations for all pupils is how she differentiates herself from her colleagues. Eileen also understands her performance as a role model in terms of how she signifies to pupils their potentiality. In her talk, Eileen is reluctant to specify how she relays her understanding of her pupils' needs to her colleagues. Daley (2001, p126) found that for some black teachers, inhabiting various subject positions, meant they had to 'choose to act or not act in relation to their racialised selves since, contrary to their white colleges they do not carry the same



responsibilities, demands and contradictions'. Eileen has to balance pupils' expectations for her to demonstrate solidarity with them, while at the same time repress the knowledge that she is unlikely to change her colleagues' attitudes. Eileen has to balance her expected professional response to the issue with her personal angry self who would express to her colleagues some home truths. Eileen has to balance the girl's account with the possibility that the girl may be too sensitive. She retorts: *'let's not go there 'cause it's too frustrating. ... The blatant indifference of some staff is a big problem in many of the schools I worked in'*. Eileen tells me that not only are forums for staff to discuss issues around anti-racism no longer available, but: *'you get singled out ... they want to pretend they're colour blind'*. Eileen's frustration and the absence of an inter-collegial exchange of 'knowing' fit with what Delpit (1988) refers to in her germinal article *The Silenced Dialogue*. Delpit (1988) argues the knowledge that B.E.M. teachers brings to the classroom is silenced or ignored, by colleagues when it comes to the issue of 'race' and thereby 'enables normative understandings by those in more powerful positions to dominate' (Delpit, 1988, p284). In a similar vein, Dickmar (2008) reports on some of the underlying elements that influence the nature of racial discourses in classroom. The scholar also reports on pupils' willingness to speak about racial issues with teachers of similar cultural background. Eileen's classroom discourse illustrates how by promoting self-determination to pupils, child X comes to understand herself as marginally positioned. I read Eileen's role model performance as inherently resilient. While to pupils she signifies self-reliance, she also meets resistance in her discursive encounters with some of her colleagues.

In Sherrine's narration the promotion of pupils' individuality draws on the perspective that being a role model teacher: *'is about not creating a ceiling for them [the girls]. ... We set no limits'*. Eileen and Sherrine's discourses of high expectations have points of commonality. Sherrine explains that she performs her role by inculcating within the girls an idea of their limitless possibilities, but at times is dismayed: *'because so many of the girls obtain high grades and have the potential to really do something exemplary with their lives ... but when you talk to them about their future they say "I haven't decided Miss"'*! Sherrine believes the girls' indecision is partly due to the absence and silencing of their expectations and personal ambition. However, contained within Sherrine's discourses that promote *'pupil-directed'* learning are points where she talks about pupils' resistance to the notion of autonomy. She sees her role as repeatedly reminding them that: *'education is your key to freedom, and claiming control of your life in ways*



*that you may have not thought likely, ... or probably wanted right now*'. Her liberatory discourses, arguably Freirian in nature, are an articulation of her praxis. However, Sherrine's talk also contains the potential to be oppressive and exclusionary. Sherrine says that, for the most part, the girls are *'very obedient and not confrontational'*, however, the girls' compliant nature causes her anxiety. Sherrine says: *'it's scary for me, that they can be told anything outside ... and they'll believe it. ... It's all that internet stuff that really scares me. ... It makes them really susceptible'*. In the extract, Sherrine is referring to what she sees as the closed and segregated life of many of the girls structured by the sex-role division of labour. She adds: *'Western life is alluring to some of them, ... that can be dangerous, and then ... you've got the girls who are downloading recipes to learn how to be a good wife, child-bearer and cook ... that's worrying too!* To perform her role, Sherrine is caught between two conflicting and equally important, yet contrasting expectations and perspectives. Sherrine knows that filial expectations often override her own based on notions of autonomy and feminism. She elaborates on this situation: *'the thought of travelling away to go to university is quite daunting ... and many of the girls' parents won't allow them to live away or even go outside the Borough. ... Outside us in the school there is little incentive for them to do otherwise'*. Sherrine's espoused resistance to 'another' person having control over one's life is contested. In her talk Sherrine positions herself as someone whose discursive encounters with the girls are premised on the notion of expressive individuality: *'releasing the rebel within'*. Although the girls may not choose to act or embrace Sherrine's liberation discourses, her advocacy does open up spaces for argumentation. Sherrine signifies a feminine identity suggestive of a radical departure from the girls' (and their parents') norms and expectations. Hall (1992) points out that diasporas are characterised by the transformation and reworking of cultural identities through processes of syncretism and fusion. Following this perspective, one can read Sherrine's 'role model' performance as acts of re-conciliation exposing other equally-valid truths and understandings. Her performance is one of shifting critical encounters, a balancing act through which she generates other knowledges for the pupils of 'traditional' and 'alternative' femininities.

### Ethic of care: Emotions

Emotions are a key dimension of an 'ethic of care' (Collins, 1990). I now build on my conceptualisation of shared discursive history to indicate its inter-relation to the emotional dimension of teachers' work. The emotional experiences attached to

teachers' discursive work is another key theme to emerge from this research. In analysing this, I attend to the ways in which emotion is expressed and regulated by teachers within their interactions with pupils. The affective dimension in education, and pupils' emotional literacy are generally recognised by scholars as a basis for active pedagogic intervention (Puurula et al 2001; Watkins, 2006; Zembylas, 2006). I view emotions as being collaboratively and socially formed rather than as individual, private and autonomous traits (Harding & Pribram, 2004; Zorn & Boler, 2007). I acknowledge the cultural dimensions of emotions (Beatty 2000; Hargreaves 1998), while noting that culture has historically portrayed emotion as feminised weakness (Zorn & Boler, 2007).

Ahmed (2004, p25) suggests that emotions play a crucial role in the 'surfacing of individual and collective bodies. ... Emotions are not simply the 'within' or 'without', but define the contours of the multiple worlds that are inhabited by different subjects'. She posits that 'emotionality involves an interweaving of the person with the social, and the affective with the mediated' (Ahmed, 2004, p28). Following this perspective, the teachers' emotions are understood as tightly bound up with how they inhabit the world with others. In relation to the notion of caring, Josephine says: *I think one of the things that I'm always being commented for is the fact that I'm calm, ... my lessons are calm because I try to give them a sense of well-being*'. Regulating the emotional environment is of course an expected part of teachers' discursive work. In Josephine's case, she reads the contours of this work fluidly. Following Ahmed (2004), I suggest Josephine models and experiences fluctuating modes of performing her role by expressing both her inner and outer feelings, thereby opening up spaces for emotional argumentation. For example, in her talk about how she aims to instil self-pride in pupils, she describes shared moments with them that are experienced bodily:

*Josephine: Sometimes I can see their eyes welling up with water and mine welling up with water but, you know, its just getting them to understand that it's not an easy world out there and once you get out there you're on your own but if you've got good grades, ... life can be a lot easier and they take that on board.*

I draw attention to the emotional dimension to Josephine's work because it highlights how 'non-logocentric discursive spatiality produces such electric moments

of “recognition” (Brah, 1999, p.8). Her reference to the *‘welling of the eyes’* with tears that she shares with pupils during some of her interactions with them can be read as her modelling emotional literacy. Josephine opens up spaces for herself to be laid bare, while attending to pupils’ potential to not *‘get good grades’*. This reciprocity of emotional display can be viewed as a ‘feminised’ facet of her performance, where Josephine is able to regulate her emotions in ways that are constructed as weak.

Josephine contrasts such encounters with B.E.M. pupils with other situations that are devoid of emotional reciprocity or cultural affinity. To perform her role she is also challenged by other (equally valid) emotions that co-exist, and are ingrained in the social fabric of her teaching environment. The cumulative effect of juxtaposing emotions and regulating their surfaces in the classroom is experienced at the level of the body. By way of illustration, I use Josephine’s account of several instances of abuse being directed at her by a small group of B.E.M. boys in another of her classes:

*Josephine: Don’t think I want to repeat some of the words of what I have been called, I have had picture of obscenity left in my drawer, obscenity drawn on the test paper that I’m going to mark you know, and I just feel ... like crying sometimes.*

Clearly one cannot discount a myriad of pedagogical factors that could motivate this, for example, pupils’ ‘learning difficulties’, anti-social behaviour and inability to access the curriculum. However, Josephine bears the force of the boys’ frustration. Josephine was visibly upset when she recounted the incident and she hesitates in the extract above indicate where she had to re-compose herself before continuing with her talk. Josephine is the target for the boys’ abusive interactions, however she cannot publicly demonstrate to them her own feelings. To perform as a leader in this emotional context there can be no *‘welling of the eyes’*. The situation is such that the usual emotion cannot be expressed. Josephine’s power to regulate the ‘emotional contours’ of the classroom is usurped. Josephine suggests that the fragility of her relations with the (Afganistani) boys may be partly due to their view of Black women as inferior. To illustrate her point, she compares her experience of them with a male English colleague with whom they are: *‘sitting quietly but still not doing any work. ... Yet with me even though they are Year 12, when I challenge them they are very, very disrespectful, ... it’s only them not the rest of the class’*. While her colleague is able to perform his role, as the boys are silent (although not compliant), she cannot as her performance is met

with disrespect. Her teaching environment is one where there are open displays of aggressive emotion by these boys, and a disregard for the emotional etiquette that would create a more caring environment for all. Her comparison of the boys' behaviour in her colleague's lesson indicates how their (gendered) dividing practices regulate emotional communication.

Conversely, one could read the boys as discounting her view of worthwhile knowledge, or just as lads acting out at her. Or it could be that Josephine performs in ways which she assumes are universal, but are not 'normal' for the boys. Regardless of their motivation, for Josephine, her notions of what constitutes a 'good' student are at times met with resistance. Walkerdine's (1993) exploration of power, and how it is produced is relevant here when one considers who has the power to regulate emotions. For Josephine, the boys achieve (emotional) power over her, by repositioning her 'out of an adult authority role' (Mauthner & Hey, 1999, p69). I would argue that the boys enact this power shift because of Josephine's 'materiality' as a woman (Walkerdine, 1993). Josephine later remarks that the abuses she experiences can feel overwhelming, and her encounters with these particular boys are challenging for her. To emphasise her point, she adds: *'there's so little respect for black female teachers here: ... you have to work twice as hard to gain their respect and it's just an uphill struggle'*. Josephine's performances illustrate nodal points of affinity and disjuncture, thereby illustrating the indeterminate nature of her practices. Furthermore, these nodal points describe situations and their (sometimes traumatic) effects; they signify silent and amplified expressions of emotions. There is also an accumulated effect on Josephine's performance which means, on occasions, her emotional expressions are modified, overtly or covertly. I read Josephine's performances as forms of resilience where she mediates the affective domain of her discursive encounters while attempting to give meaning to pupils' resistance.

I now return to an earlier teacher's account to further illustrate the overlap with emotive discourses and performing an 'ethic of care'. This re-reading serves to raise two points, first, building on Collins (1990), we can see Eileen's performance as also about her classes' appraisal of the ways knowledge claims are presented. Second, we can see the fluidity attached to emotional expression both by Eileen and her pupils.

Eileen previously described an incident about a particularly quiet and introverted '*at risk girl*' who unexpectedly spoke '*truth*' about the negative expectations held about

her by her other teachers. Earlier I suggested that the girl's public emotive speech evoked a mutual understanding between her and Eileen about what it is like to see oneself *'through the eyes of another'*. Eileen reported being *'really touched'* by the experience. I argued that the incident allowed Eileen to 'construct points of interpellation' between her own identity and location and that of the girl (Archer et al, 2001, p55). The event was significant to Eileen because of the class members' collective response which she described as a silent acknowledgement of girl's pain:

*Eileen: No one said anything they just nodded ... like mute dolls ... and then suddenly everyone just started shouting out and naming teachers. ... It was, ... how can I put it, ... shocking, heartfelt, painful ... all rolled into one!*

My re-reading illustrates the interactive nature of emotional dialogue on her teaching environment. The class appraises the girl's speech and reacts, appropriately/inappropriately, to her dialogue. I re-read the event as one where performing and signifying care is mediated through a climate of emotional transparency. The girl's openness to share her feelings with Eileen and the class made an impression on Eileen. Several black feminists argue for the need to address the current realities for Black women and, in the process, examine 'how representation and images can be simultaneously empowering and problematic' (Jamila, 2002, p392). Eileen claims her response was partly due to her own frustration with her colleagues. It may also be the case that, by creating a climate where emotive dialogue between teachers and pupils is legitimate is a necessary condition for B.E.M. teachers to perform as role models. In Eileen's case, she tells me that such events are a constant reminder of her disavowal of her colleagues' 'colour blindness' and the covert effects of this on some B.E.M. pupils.

Eileen's performance empowers her to disclose emotional argumentations (Ahmed, 2004) residing in the contours of her classroom. There are shifting interpretations interweaving or colliding, for example, about appropriate reactions, and herein lies her frustration. Eileen reflects on the contradiction this poses for her: *'the kids are thinking ... "oh good there's a black teacher here, she's on our side", ... In a sense you've got lots of different sets of expectations about what you can or cannot do'*. Eileen's resilience then is understood in terms how she encounters such instances that inscribe her social reality. Eileen may signify public solidarity with the girl's emotional account of her

invisibility, or she may signify to the class her dis-identification with the ‘colour-blind’ thinking embedded in the psyche of her school. Reading Eileen’s performance through the Foucauldian notion of bio-power, suggests that advocating on pupils’ behalf about, for example, covertly divisive practices in her school, is always contingent. As an agent of change, giving meaning to how she performs her role model identity requires understanding inter-contextual resistance and preparedness for the surfacing of that resistance on all her emotional landscapes.

### Concluding remarks

To conclude, in order to conceptualise how B.E.M. female teachers perform their role, I examined their actions and the generated counter-narratives. A common theme in teachers’ narrations about their role model identity is ‘discourses of care’. I examined an atypical sample, whilst acknowledging that a ‘true’ representation of the teachers’ social reality is never possible, nor can it be dis-entangled from mimesis discourses. Rather than suggesting that their performances are ‘weak’ forms of feminine expression, I argue that resilient forms of expression are central to how they perform.

I have shown that the female teachers perform their role in ways that reify aspects of their femininity. However, their performances, based upon an ethic of care, require active engagement with pupils’ resistance. The teachers in unique ways mediate emotive discourses that require them to demonstrate resilience to pupils’ opposition. While the teachers experience abnormal restrictions (including abuse) in various guises, they all hold important long-term perspectives about how to attend to the needs of B.E.M. pupils. For the female teachers, their teaching environment can on occasion be a ‘site of invisible hurt, of discrimination, of constant negotiation of a changing world, of our attempts to live’ (Yuval-Davis, 2013, p10). Furthermore, the ‘materiality of their signifying practices requires the teachers to accommodate the constant disruption of tradition and the production of the new’ (Yuval-Davis 2013, p10). This is illustrated by the forms of liberatory discourses the teachers articulate in an attempt to disrupt pupils’ stereotypical ideas about what constitutes a B.E.M. ‘learner identity’. The teachers perform their role model identity often in opposition to the perspectives of others, yet perceive this marginal position as a vantage point from which to relate based upon a distinctively caring pedagogy. From their talk it appears that the contours of their teaching environment can be on occasions

frustrating, hostile and receptive, yet underpinned by ideals around the power of education. This second dimension of shared discursive history where teachers perform their role can also have an exclusionary effect. I suggest shared discursive history moves beyond notions of ‘mimicking’ adults towards pupils embracing alternative modes of self-determination. I argue the teachers’ performance of role modelling requires them to open up spaces for argumentation with pupils where the potential for critical discussion is ever present. To further develop shared discursive history, and consolidate some of the points discussed, I now move to examine other micro-interactions between B.E.M. pupils and teachers.

### ***Female Teachers: pedagogical resources***

If women actively always seek to avoid confrontation, to always be ‘safe’, we may never experience any revolutionary change, any transformation, individually or collectively. (hooks, 1984, p64)

This final section examines a female teacher’s deployment as a pedagogical tool. I argue that the female teachers draw upon available resources for their pedagogical interventions in ways that encourage notions of sisterhood. B.E.M. teachers are able to consolidate their relations with pupils and also foster critical literacy around gender – what being feminine means for them. This section, similar to the parallel section in the last chapter, consists of a micro-analysis of one teacher, this time focusing on language usage. We are reminded that teachers’ language usage is a product of the symbolising systems of the culture in which they are located (MacLure, 2003).

hooks (1984) points to a sense of sisterhood that embraces difference while at the same time being united by shared interests, beliefs, and struggles to end sexist oppression. Her view of solidarity around common goals, I suggest, in varying degrees, permeates the female teachers’ discursive work and their deployment of language lexicons.

Sherrine signifies her distinctiveness as a female role model by emphasising the place of women in our social world. She says that by discussing women’s issues, and relating them to the curriculum, she tries to make them relevant to the girls:



*Sherrine: I'd use statistics to get the girls to see how we as women are under-represented or show the frequency of violence on women, ... to get them to think about the lives of some women and not to make the same mistakes.*

Drawing attention to social issues through the curriculum is not unusual among teachers, however Sherrine claims that for her particular audience, it *'is vitally important because they need to be constantly reminded of what they could become in this world'*. Not only does her approach enhance her relations with the girls, but Sherrine believes it is vital to counteract stereotypical ideas about her subject. Her reasoning aligns with other researchers' findings that mathematics is gendered (Mendick, 2005, 2006). Sherrine adds: *'I say to them "we are all mathematicians in this room, and we can solve our problems together, ... everyone can contribute"'*. This signalling of collective thinking is further illustrated by her remark: *'I say to them, ... "if we can do this ... then we can become and do other more challenging stuff"'*. Thus, Sherrine is also attending to social discourses about discrimination within mathematics education. Sherrine believes her identification as 'Muslim woman mathematician' is a powerful signifier to the girls. She claims that her pedagogical approach is based upon the *'no ceiling'* attitude, centred on promoting the idea that the girls *'have the potential to really do something exemplary with their lives'*. However, Sherrine feels that she is constantly struggling against the girls' low ambitions. She says: *'even though many get very high grades, hardly any of our girls think to be doctors ... none of my year 13. That's shocking!'* Her concern about their lack of ambition is, as I have mentioned, partly due to the cultural background and the girls' perspectives about their future. Her interventions into the girls' discussions are based on desire to get them: *'to look outwards and believe that there is nothing they cannot learn if they have an interest'*. Sherrine explains she needs to constantly remind the girls to re-envision alternative futures for themselves. To illustrate her point, elsewhere in the interview, she talks about another intervention:

*Sherrine: A few Year 13 girls were going on about who's got married in the last two years, ... and I said to them ... 'you have nothing without your education, you sort that out first, ... then you can deal with the boys'.*

Sherrine acknowledges that speaking about future trajectories is not unusual for any teacher. However, for her such interventions model to the girls an attitude of self-determination. Sherrine believes her interventions are justified to offset the



compelling traditional positioning of women. Thus, Sherrine's insistence upon collective thinking – '*we can*' – inculcates in the girls the idea that, as a group (or individually), they can find the courage to face challenges.

The female teachers inhabit their professional role as teachers 'yet they do not operate outside the identity as black women' (Daley, 2001, p124; see also, Mama, 1995; Rassool, 1999). According to Linehan and McCarthy (2000, p442), teachers and pupils have 'a degree of agency in how they position themselves in interactions but this agency is interlaced with the expectations and history of the community'. Eileen often mentions in her talk that positive affirmations are an essential part of what she believes makes a role model. She says that, at times, her discussion with B.E.M. pupils requires a more personal approach: '*there will be times when I'll break out into patois ... just to make a point but only when it's just me and them ... underneath I'll always be one of them*'. So while Eileen avoids speaking patois when addressing the whole class, she occasionally does so in less formal settings. Eileen says she selectively draws on a familiar (Jamaican) dialect in her communications with pupils to demonstrate allegiance. In the interview, she touches her skin to indicate that colour still matters, making assumptions about researcher 'insider knowledge', as I discussed in the methodology chapter. I prompted Eileen to elaborate because her approach has multiple connotations, given the social stigma attached to using patois. In many situations her articulations could be read as black female working class and uneducated. However, Eileen believes that her actions are justifiable 'rules of engagement' (Rollock, 2012, p517). She qualifies her actions by saying:

*Eileen: They [the B.E.M. students] need adults they trust and whom they believe give them advice in a way that they can hear, ... that's grounded in acceptance of them with all their foibles because most of the time that doesn't happen.*

Eileen was keen to stress that her informal talk allowed her to demonstrate to the pupils their common points of reference. To emphasise her point she refers to other incidents, as in the extract below where she describes her response when pupils confide a concern to her:

*Eileen: Sometimes when I'm talking and listening to their problems, ... a girl ... boy, ... particularly with the older black children, I'd think of one of my mum's old sayings or paraphrases from Louise Bennett like 'walk good' ... and repeat it back to them. ... We'd*

*laugh ... and what could have been troublesome for them, they see it in a different light, ... mostly though in informal settings, ... after-school or Saturday classes.*

I selected this extract because it ‘exemplifies some of the nuanced complexities of raced and classed identity politics and stereotypes’ (Rollock et al 2011, p1087). Eileen’s gendered discourse gives us an insight into how she performs and embodies aspects of her cultural capital. I suggest that Eileen’s agency can be understood by the way she uses patois as her language of choice. I suggest that this has a bonding effect that allows her to relate in a distinct way. Her agency is what Bhabha (1994, p226) refers to as ‘a transgressive act of cultural translation’; the translation of western sensibilities to patois draws on ‘the performative nature of cultural communication’. I argue that that this is a creative use of alternative resources. Drawing on popular, cultural or colloquial idioms associated with patois enables her to establish points of affinity with pupils. I read Eileen’s statement as ‘speaking back’ to the black children. She uses familiar ‘old sayings’ or other knowledge and in this way embodies ‘sensory memories of childhood’ (Mirza, 2013, p137). Eileen communicates a rooted sense of diasporic belonging, which allows her to deploy her cultural capital appropriately. Eileen’s articulations are what Lacy (2007, p75) refers to as ‘inclusionary boundary work’ whereby similarities are emphasised. I read Eileen’s counselling approach as inclusive and thereby resistant to being defined as the other in relation to it. ‘That is, they are being ‘themselves in this other language’ (Clemente & Higgins, 2005, p30). This ‘being themselves’ is gendered as well as ethnicised. Louise Bennett was a Jamaican poet, folklorist, writer and educator who was renowned for using patois and the language of the everyday to critique post-colonial social conditions (Donnell & Welsh, 1996). Many of her poems were about contemporary issues around the inequalities prevalent in Jamaican society. Here, Bennett’s famous catchphrase ‘walk good’ refers to a transcendental attitude of mind expressed to another when departing. By drawing on these ‘old sayings and catchphrases’, Eileen’s dialogue with the B.E.M. pupils models critical literacy and offers spaces where she ‘re-describes’ the pupils’ situations in ways deemed palatable. She frames her linguistic acts strategically and, in the process, resists being defined as the ‘other’ in relation to them. In other words, they are being ‘themselves in this other language’ (Clemente & Higgins, 2005, p30).

Eileen is adamant that her deployment of herself as a cultural resource distinguishes

her from her colleagues:

*Eileen: As a black female teacher, I feel I have to be a social worker, sister, mother. I have to help them make the transition to adulthood. ... Remember we are preparing them for survival in a world that's so different to what it was like for us. ... We have equal rights on paper only ... they're our chance for it to be a reality!*

Eileen and Sherrine feel they need to exploit spaces within the pupil milieu where they can draw on resources that can be construed as 'doing gender' (Butler, 1990). My point here is that shared discursive history enables one to conceptualise the teachers' use of the cultural commonwealth as gendered. The female teachers' exploitative acts enable them to begin to build upon and develop their distinct gender and cultural critique. I suggest their actions allow them to provide a commentary on the social conditions that the pupils inhabit. Sisterhood is taken as a space where the teachers build upon or further develop their own gender critique and feminine identity. Although, only two examples have been presented, all the female teachers in various ways embody their gender and cultural cloak when they assume the mantle of role model. I now make some concluding remarks summarising the main arguments developed in the three analysis chapters while highlighting gender differences.

## **CONCLUSION TO THE EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS: SUMMARY OF KEY ARGUMENTS**

In the preceding empirical chapters five, six and seven, I set out and made the case for shared discursive history as a conceptual frame for understanding the dynamics of role model relations between B.E.M. teachers and pupils. I argued that structuring shared discursive history into three loosely overlapping and inter-related components allows differences between male and female teachers to be explored and addresses the thesis question: How do B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role model teachers to B.E.M. pupils?

I examined role model relationships of power (and resistance), and the regulatory forces operating, as revealed through discourse (Foucault, 1984; Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005). I applied a genealogical approach to B.E.M. teachers' stories to read the (critical) events in their narrations. This approach considers B.E.M. teachers' stories as random 'atoms of discourses', which can be organised, juxtaposed, and contextualised to reveal their congealed and accumulated effects. This approach exposes the complexities in social interactions. Many events point to the contradictions and conflicts that generate particular truths, for example, the ways in which teachers interpret judgements of B.E.M. pupils, or how they reconcile binary discourses (normative/abnormal) about B.E.M. males, or expose how an unpredictable incident opens up spaces for the teachers to perform their identity work. The teachers' stories are read as containing discursive events that disrupt their everyday common-sense truths, and require them to modify or reformulate their actions, practices or beliefs. In this way I expose B.E.M. teachers' understandings of themselves, and their reconciliation with the contradictions and conflicts attached to the events they describe. By giving context to B.E.M. teachers' positioning strategies, I illustrated the precariousness of the teachers' agency and the cumulative effect of resistant events. Rather than assuming an originating source, I contextualised the relevant issues to show the ways in which past events and disciplinary forces impact on their present situations. I revealed the strategies available (and permissible) for them to generate 'reverse atoms of discourses' (counter-narratives). I also examined the teachers' interpretations of resistant events to understand the effects of their statements.

In short, by interrogating and presenting the empirical data in this way, I have given prominence to B.E.M. teachers' voices. My purpose is to reveal their inner conflicts, how they justify their agency, their positioning strategies, how they reconcile and mediate the various regulatory forces – how they understand their discursive work.

**Sharing Marginality** describes relations between B.E.M. teachers and pupils, centred on empathetic understanding of their marginalised positioning. A significant theme emerging from the teachers' narratives is that they share with B.E.M. pupils experiences of 'othering', and that these are a condition of their social world and affect how they relate to pupils. B.E.M. people occupy shared landscapes of marginal social arrangements where the discursive re-production of truths about them is naturalised and politicised. I argue that, while B.E.M. teachers may recognise and contest the dominant social conditions to which they are subjected in school, they also recognise the limitations within which pupils can challenge these.

Empathy arises from the teachers understanding the poignancy of the effects of the discursively-produced truths that the pupils encounter. I argue that whether these are internalised, rejected, or treated otherwise, for B.E.M. people the effect is of an epistemic crisis. I argue B.E.M. teachers' knowledge of these disrupted discourses is pivotal to the power/resistance relations they develop with B.E.M. pupils. For example, silence can create inner conflict for B.E.M. teachers in situations where their colleagues judge and objectify B.E.M. pupils. The disciplinary power acting within the spaces that B.E.M. teachers inhabit necessitates that their positioning is strategic. While all the teachers develop empathy towards B.E.M. pupils, the male and female teachers apply different strategies to relate with them.

A key theme in the male teachers' empathy with B.E.M. pupils is bi-cultural affinity. Their relations with B.E.M. pupils are underpinned by expectations linked to cultural hegemony and their interactions are understood in terms of cultural membership. I examined male teachers' empathy with B.E.M. pupils in a range of contexts (including community and supplementary schools) to illustrate the operation of cultural hegemony on the relations they form. I argued that the male teachers express feelings of security in these 'cultural' pedagogical spaces, and adhere to the notion of belonging where culture matching facilitates this. I argued that the male teachers require a broader remit than the safety of cultural belonging. The normalising effects of cultural hegemony that constitute the male teachers' understandings of their

relations produce indirect routes to power for B.E.M. pupils. A case in point is Nigel. His discursive constructions of belonging are contested and his assumptions of cultural affinity trump the asymmetry of teacher-pupil relations. Culture matching, whilst evoking imagined harmonious relations, can also produce inter-relational resistance and disharmony as an effect of the normalising powers in their schools. Another example is Kenneth's story illustrating the effects of his school's hegemonic practices of symbolic violence shared by himself and B.E.M. pupils. Similarly, sharing marginality highlights the internalisation of a school's cultural norms by B.E.M. pupils and when and how strategic positioning by teachers is permissible.

In the case of the female B.E.M. teachers, I argued that they draw on previously internalised effects on their learner identity within their empathetic relations with pupils. The female teachers understand pupils as needing to develop strategic positioning skills to challenge the normalising power of hegemonic discourses about them as B.E.M. learners. The female teachers' strategic positioning is to relate to B.E.M. pupils in ways that seek to de-stabilise previous assumptions about the subjugation of women in society and that foster resilience. In contrast to the male teachers who position themselves within their cultural group for safety, the female teachers positioning models for pupil's resilience to dominant regulatory discourses. In contrast to the male teachers where their positioning strategies are read as advocating on behalf of their cultural group, the women seek to foster individual pupil agency.

I analysed Identifying and Signifying as a prelude to Performing as a Role Model. The generic themes emerging from the teachers' stories about their identification with role models related to personal qualities. I argued that the identification process is a pre-condition that affects how they subsequently perform as role models. Yet, the teachers' identifications with the role model discourses, out of which they are constituted contain the permanent possibility of re-signification. I proposed that the teachers' discourses of self-belief and self-reliance reflect those personal qualities they already exhibit themselves. Some of the teachers' discourses relate to them admiring others, most place importance on individuals who advocate and envision alternative teaching practices and/or educational structures. I argued that signifying a role model identity to others is salient for B.E.M. teachers. Their signifying practices attend to the politics of identity and to correcting false images that B.E.M. pupils (or

others) might hold. I argued that teachers are often in dilemmas about how they may be construed by others, and how their actions can be represented. I argued the teachers strategically self-represent by signalling other inter-textual readings of themselves to gain acceptance from their 'audiences'. I argued that whilst these intentional communications are unpredictable, the teachers understand that signifying, in a range of contexts is necessary, contingent upon their audience, and implicated in their identity construction. In short, the teachers strategically adapt what is said and to whom and thus generate counter-narratives that at times are contradictory but are aimed at changing the actions of another.

**Performance** concerns B.E.M. teachers' identity work and the quality of the counter-narratives that the teachers generate, produce and perpetuate. In this thesis, the analytic focus on how the teachers perform, identified some of the mechanisms operating on the teachers' knowledge/power production and the counter-narratives they generate. I argued that the male teachers base their performance on the assumption that they are subjected to pupils' gaze. The teachers perceive their role as engaging in dialogues with pupils that can empower B.E.M. pupils to read 'social texts' critically. The male teachers perceive pupil monitoring as productive, because interest in them is ignited and this creates potential moments of engagement with pupils. I argued that the male teachers' strategic positioning involves dialogues where ideas about culturally-embedded notions of manly actions are explored. These include ideas the pupils hold about the media representation of B.E.M. males, and about feminine and masculine acts within peer group situations.

I characterised B.E.M. male teachers' performances as negotiated practices entangled in narratives about expressions of masculinity and aspects of bi-cultural socialisation. The male teachers' strategies are aimed at unsettling pupils' assumptions about hegemonic discourses of male identities. They do so by drawing to pupils' attention instances where cultural masculinities conflict with other dominant expressions. The male teachers not only include themselves as text, but offer other representations of B.E.M. people for pupils' critical inspection. The teachers strategically create spaces to alert B.E.M. pupils to ingrained, naturalised assumptions. I argue that performing their role requires that these teachers draw on culturally-embedded experiential knowledge around markers of derision.

I argued that for the male and female teachers, rather than encouraging mimicry, the

teachers understand their role model status as being to create spaces for dialogue in order to facilitate pupils' criticality about ingrained, naturalised beliefs on B.E.M. people. The male teachers understand that performing their role requires that they model questioning strategies to pupils to challenge beliefs that they hold about what, in their culture constitutes as acting 'manly'. I argued that for the female teachers, their understanding of the purpose of role modelling is also not about mimicry per se, but rather their aim is to promote pupils' resilience to conditions that might thwart their self-determination. The female teachers perform their role underpinned by an ethic of care. Their discourses of caring speak their actions into existence. I argue that they understand performing as a role model to entail foregrounding the choices available to them as women. They model to pupils the importance of expressing one's individuality in spite of dominant conditions which could potentially limit their life experiences. The female teachers, as I have argued, draw heavily on experiential knowledge and discursive authority to influence pupils. The teachers are subjected to, and the subject of, emotive discourses that conflict with their actions and the contours of their pedagogical spaces. I argue that the teachers' performance of role modelling requires them to open up spaces for argumentation with pupils, and to share 'invisible pain'. These teachers understand their role as requiring them to be prepared for these contingencies so that they are always positioned to engage in critical discussion. In their own unique ways these teachers mediate emotive discourses, both in terms of their own frustrations and those of the pupils they teach.

Deployment as a resource concerns B.E.M. teachers' self-deployment as a pedagogical tool. This component explores teachers' agency, and how they understood their resistance when subjected to their school's disciplinary powers. I examined the dialectic of: their professional accountability and their personal identity; their school's performance culture and their own authoritative understanding of B.E.M. pupils' needs. I argued that the teachers' strategic positioning is predicated on their professional experiential judgement. The teachers make intentional choices about the spaces they inhabit to do their discursive work, and understand this as a form of resistance. The male teachers' positioning strategies include locating themselves outside their school's disciplinary power. The male teachers extend their sphere of operation, and thereby subject themselves to an alternative accountability culture, in this case that of the community. I argued that



they do not recognise this as subordinate to the performative requirements of their school. Rather they advocate a social rather than a deficit model of B.E.M. pupils' needs, and the associated resources.

In the two chapters looking in turn at the male and female teachers, my analysis of this dimension of shared discursive history focused on one teacher each. My purpose was to illustrate how teachers draw on resources that are specific to their cultural capital to model to B.E.M. pupils how to retain their cultural identity. Both these teachers' positioning strategies aim to communicate to B.E.M. pupils alternative representations. Here I argued that their counter-narratives about self-representation are intentional communication about, for example, appropriate ways of speaking. They express and validate their teacher identities as reverse discourses.

Nigel's positioning strategies can be read as indirectly communicating both his hypervisibility and his experiential knowledge of youth subcultures. In contrast, Eileen uses patois to disturb pupils' expectations of teachers. Neither of these teachers can predict the ways in which they may be read by others. However, the teachers chose positions involving complex articulations of B.E.M. teacher representations. I argue that by drawing on a cultural commonwealth – of youth culture, language and so on – the teachers develop stronger bonds with B.E.M. pupils.

Thus, shared discursive history as a conceptual frame allows the dynamics of social interactions between B.E.M. teachers and pupils to be understood. The overlapping components permit considerations of power and resistance, discourse and discursive practices. Shared discursive history points to the contextual and inter-contextual situations and circumstances of teachers and pupils, drawing attention to the localised and the culturally hegemonic. In my concluding chapter, I return to some of the debates in the literature discussed earlier to reframe our view about how B.E.M. teachers might act as role models to B.E.M. pupils.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7, I developed a conceptual frame that I applied to understanding the dynamics of the role model process. A summary of the key arguments and findings are given at the end of Chapter 7.

In this concluding chapter, I synthesise issues related to the main findings on the positioning strategies that B.E.M. teachers adopt in order to act as role models to B.E.M. pupils. First, I offer a reminder of my interest in the topic and of the ideas that led to the research question: How do B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models to B.E.M. pupils? I discuss how my work contributes to the existing body of research on role model teachers. I identify my contributions to the field in two strands: theoretical, by applying poststructural ideas to understand role modelling, and substantive, by addressing gaps in the research literature. I do so by considering both findings from the empirical data and the issues these raise for research in this field. I then conclude by reflecting on the study's limitations and scope, and by making suggestions for areas of further study.

### ***How do B.E.M. teachers position themselves as role models to B.E.M. pupils?***

My interest in the male teacher role model debate began with questioning the differential treatment rationalised for boys, in the guise of addressing underachievement. Much of the criticism of teacher role model debate is that it centres on gender, and the re-assertion of patriarchal power (Martino & Lingard, 2007). What was often silenced in debates around role models are the myriad of ways that normative ideas associated with the 'white male' are discounted or inverted by B.E.M. teachers. The research question is significant because it makes me think about how to articulate the multiple discursive and political positions that as B.E.M. teachers we occupy or resist in any given pedagogical situation. Liminal positioning is by definition a place where legitimate critiques to normative assumptions emerge. The black feminist Bernice Fisher reminds us that assuming the mantle of role model is 'rarely, if ever, a solely individual or completely social matter ... [what] ... seems to be a deeply personal act takes place in a profoundly political environment' (Fisher, 1998, p221).

The systemic effect of racism is crucial to how B.E.M. teachers are positioned, and

should inform role model debates. As a technology of power, race is central to how I understand the unfolding B.E.M. teachers' identities. I wanted to know how their role model actions manifest as legible to them, yet distinguishable given the peculiarities of their schools' socio-economic, political and cultural context. As previous scholars have argued, for some B.E.M. pupils and teachers their schools are one of many spaces where they protest their symbolic realities. Thus how varying forms of resistance are managed and/or understood within these contested spaces led to a research enquiry into the dynamics of role model relationships.

### ***Contributions to the field***

I identify my contributions to the field first in terms of applying poststructural ideas to offer a distinct perspective on B.E.M. role model teachers' positioning strategies. Building on these ideas enabled me to consider in tandem the relationship between teachers and pupils, aspects of their social world and their practices of making and reproducing meanings. The teacher's talk about facets of their pedagogy is intrinsically linked to how they see themselves as role models. The work of Michel Foucault presents an alternative to the classical categories for understanding power; it allows me to contextualise the teachers' experiences and thereby create multiple levels of analysis.

In the theoretical chapter I discussed bio-power as a technology whereby ideas permeate the social body of the (school) population. A case in point is 'creaming' which describes pupil selection procedures designed to replace a school's pupil population with a more 'desirable' group. The schools' rationale for 'creaming' is primarily economic since, by attracting middle-class pupils they will (potentially) improve the school's academic performance and its rating and ultimately, increase their funding. Given the location of the school (multicultural, working-class), racist thinking translated into a particular vision about preferred pupil intake. To implement and justify the vision requires a change in mind-set by staff whilst simultaneously making those who are unwanted experience their marginality more overtly.

In another example I illustrated the racist and sexist thinking permeating the contours of the classroom environment inter-culturally and affecting a teacher

(Josephine) bodily. She talks about the ingrained assumptions of a group of Year 12 boys, through which she was positioned as a human being who did not warrant their respect. While recognising the pupils' power to regulate her emotional response to their racist and sexist abuse, her main concern was the attitude of senior staff who trivialised her experience. Hook's (2005) idea of racism as an affective technology illustrates the circular causative loop, which invalidates Josephine's reaction and affects the quality of her relations with some colleagues and pupils in her school:

in opposition to the standard assumption that an emotion is given rise to by an external event, we need to bear in mind the possibility of a causative loop, the fact that a growing emotion may be amplified – or retroactively caused – by the symbolic registration of a particular event. (Hook, 2005, p90)

As a further illustration, a female teacher talked about the impact of differential expectations expressed as shared emotional outpourings by class members. The incident was noteworthy because she felt disempowered, and could merely listen. We can understand bio-power as sufficiently flexible to produce conflict between teachers and pupils thereby implanting deviance into discourses about pupils. In the example the male teacher (Kenneth) talked about the strained relationships many of his colleagues had with some B.E.M. pupils, of whom they were fearful. In other words, by demonising pupils and misinterpreting B.E.M. pupils' interactions, their colleagues are able to justify their excessive actions. What emerges in the teachers' talk are untenable situations where they are habitually called to rebuke ingrained ideas about B.E.M. pupils held by some of their colleagues. Taking a poststructuralist perspective, one can understand the teachers' stories, and acts of resistance as effects of technologies of power. The ideas mobilised draw on sublime aspects of notions of whiteness that influence pupils' and teachers' subjectivities. The teachers are producers of subjugated knowledge and strategically position themselves with B.E.M. pupils so that they can engage in particular types of counter-narratives. These types of narratives focus on encouraging B.E.M. pupils to aware of how they are represented (and pathologised) in discourse. As agents of change, these teachers express occasionally feeling overwhelmed and powerless to alter certain destructive entrenched attitudes and beliefs that are endemic in their schools.

### ***Shared Discursive History***

The originality of my work lies in the conceptual frame – shared discursive history –

through which I theorise about the social dynamics attributed to role model relationships. The fluidity of the concept is such that, shared discursive history is a powerful tool for analysing B.E.M. teacher-pupil social dynamics, whilst holding in tension the hegemonic forces in play. Shared discursive history is applied to illustrate both the critical/resistant and constructive/creative aspects of B.E.M. teacher identities. Shared discursive history is a ‘cultural identity’ in Stuart Hall’s (1990, p.225) terms, ‘which belongs to the future as much as the past’:

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found will secure out sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.

Shared discursive history offers a contextual account of the power relation dynamics at work and can be deployed to examine the nuances of B.E.M. teacher and pupil identity formation connected with my focus on B.E.M. teacher-pupil relations. In the penultimate section of this chapter, I argue that by re-framing the teacher role model concept using shared discursive history, researchers can re-engage with pedagogy.

### ***Gaps in the literature***

In the literature review of the field, the assumptions underpinning the role model debate concerned the appropriateness of female/male binaries. However, there are other binaries (e.g. racist/anti-racist) perspectives which are either rarely considered or at best conflated with gender arguments. Furthermore, I pointed to the noticeable absence of empirical studies on what role model teachers actually do. Nor are the effects of racist/anti-racist practices on those who attempt to position themselves as role models scrutinised. Taken together, the research question sought to reveal B.E.M. teachers’ perspectives on what the role meant for them and the constraining and enabling factors affecting their discursive work.

Earlier I referred to Sternod’s (2011) work that argued the official purpose of having black male teachers as role models is for them to become normalising agents. This entails B.E.M. teachers abandoning aspects of their cultural identity for a more reputable a voice of authority in the classroom. B.E.M. male teachers would be

expected to provide a strong disciplinary force to manage black pupils. From my empirical data, a rather different set of discourses emerges. Dialogue with B.E.M. pupils was preferable, and more pertinent to how they understand performing their role rather than implementing regimental approaches.

My findings suggest that hegemonic role model discourses based on mimicry, are contested by the teachers. B.E.M. teachers understand their role to involve promoting pupils' criticality with regard to themselves as learners and to dominant hegemonic representations of B.E.M. men and women. The teachers model to pupils how to respond to and interpret discourses that represent B.E.M. people. The teachers adopt a form of dialogue that enables pupils to further develop their criticality.

B.E.M. teachers' positioning is multiple, but as I have shown it is also strategic. Their strategies are directed towards pupils' survival in a society that might not be as supportive or willing to bridge the space between marginalised identities and identities assigned the label 'normal'. Their aim is to validate to pupils alternate aspects of their identity which they can mobilise. The B.E.M. teachers are positioned at the interface between restricting and enabling points of reference with B.E.M. pupils. They are both representative of a system that oppresses B.E.M. pupils and representative of someone who has acquired their own unique survival skills.

By way of illustration, in Chapter 6, a male teacher modelled to pupils this strategic mode of identity expression by presenting arguments based on human rights. Through his confessional talk with pupils, he offers strategies for avoiding the expectations associated with peer pressure. In another example, a teacher speaks back to parents and pupils to illustrate authenticity by his non-conformity to stereotypical depictions of the black male. The findings suggest that these teachers' utilization of private spaces to engage in these types of dialogue is an important aspect of how they perform their role. Pupils are thus encouraged to think critically about the possible ways of responding to events and, in the process, to generate reverse discourses to (culturally-embedded) ideas about their learner identities. From the findings, the male teachers' experiential knowledge of bicultural identity formation contributes to how they assist B.E.M. pupils to navigate, formulate and project their identities within their social contexts.

The female teachers interpret their previous experiences as B.E.M. learners as pivotal for understanding their pupils' subjectivation. The female teachers understand their role in terms of how they have overcome the trappings of cultural hegemony in their lives and developed autonomy. The female teachers invite pupils to envision alternate future identities or aspirations as achievable. It is interesting that, whereas cultural belonging offers safety for the male teachers to interpret the support that pupils require, for the female teachers safety is obtained by transcending forms of hegemonic oppression. In this regard they support pupils by offering them alternative visions of their learner identities.

Thus the male and female B.E.M. teachers interpret pupils' identity formation from differing positions, as one would expect, but both offer counter-narratives to pupils which serve as resistance strategies. The teachers understand that dialogue on the ramifications of their actions is vital for pupils to make sense of the subjectification that reproduces particular types of identities. These teachers understand their discursive practices as border crossers erecting a scaffold between learners' assigned identities and chosen alternatives. The findings from the empirical chapters show that these teachers perceive their role in terms of modelling strategic cross-over paths that have enabled their own identity construction work.

### ***Reflections on writing the research text***

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I was mindful of the issues of cogency and originality as they pertain to my contributions to existing bodies of research. This view invites me as the researcher to critique and synthesise a wide range of ideas, theories, arguments, experiences and perspectives. Here I return to the research writing process itself to discuss why I produced a text characterised by forms of writer-audience dialogue, and containing moments of critical reflection. Black feminists assert that our writings can be 'a praxis where theoretical positions and the criticisms interact with the lived experience' (Boyce, 1994, p55). From this perspective, my writers' voice is multiple and in constant dialogue with others (Mittlefehldt, 1993). Orthodox notions of objective critical detachment towards the research text are discounted, since this would validate the erasure of the researchers' subjectivity. The accepted norm is that such types of embodied writing are preferably invisible. Here I am reminded of the stance taken by many black feminist writers that subjectivity is inseparable from the world of ideas – from their interpretation and

analysis. Engaging in this form of embodied writing in the thesis, articulates the way in which some black feminists have applied and negotiated established theories (for example, poststructuralism and cultural studies) eclectically in their writings. The liberatory effect of this in their academic writing is to produce alternate epistemological mixes of ideas. It is within the spaces of writing and non-writing we create spaces to transgress (hook, 1994). In keeping with this genre of writing, my thesis is organised to emphasise the teachers' voices juxtaposed with theoretical framings around power and discourse. In other words, my eclectic writing style foregrounds teachers' accounts (atoms of discourse) in relation to contextualised issues (for example, symbolic violence) which are read through theory. The thesis reflects these as reciprocal movements between writer and evaluative audience – my aim is to create a textual voice to the truth claims in ways that resonate with readers.

### ***Limitations of the study***

As is common with doctoral thesis, my sample pool is relatively small. This also relates to my methodological choice. I was able to reveal inter-contextual issues significant to B.E.M. role model teachers in constructing their identities. However, in hindsight, not limiting the participants to mathematics teachers would have strengthened the research. It would be interesting to investigate other subject specialists (for example, in the arts and humanities) who are generally allocated less teaching contact time with pupils. It may be that developing and sustaining social bonds with B.E.M. pupils is more problematic when they do not teach pupils as much. In addition, it would have revealed the extent to which B.E.M. teachers' exploitation of informal social spaces is taken up. A second related limitation is that mathematics is considered a gatekeeper subject and given hierarchical status in many schools. In secondary schools it is not unusual for teachers to be ranked by pupils according to whether it is a subject favoured by pupils. Widening the sample pool could have explained whether being a mathematics teachers contributed to the B.E.M. male teachers' popularity.

I chose not to explore B.E.M. teachers' interactions with their colleagues or B.E.M. pupils' interpretations of their teachers. As explained in the methods chapter, constraints on my time necessitated decisions based on expediency. On reflection this additional data may have illuminated the complexity of role modelling. For example, in the literature review many of the studies suggest that it is the significant



adult in the lives of young people that they see as role models. To include B.E.M. pupils' perspectives would extend and reframe the debate about who/what constitutes role models/modelling. This would be more appropriate in a large-scale project as it would involve co-ordinating access to B.E.M. teachers and pupils in schools. In addition to practical considerations, one would need to address the ethical issues arising, for example, obtaining consent from a greater number of stakeholders. Such an approach would increase the complexity of the social dynamics but probably yield interesting data about other aspects of role model relations. I would have to mine the data extensively in order to address my research question's focus on B.E.M. teachers' experiences of positioning themselves as role models to B.E.M. pupils.

My small sample generated data with some discernible differences between the male and female teachers' interpretations of their practices. However, examining gender identities, for example, in terms of 'protest masculinities' (Connell, 1995) for black men would have reproduced previous role model studies that focus almost exclusively on gender binaries. For similar reasons, the debate concerning teachers' social class vis-à-vis role model was not explored or could be developed given to sample size. Rather, I felt that examining the effects of cultural hegemony, structural inequality and bio-power on B.E.M. teacher-pupil role model relations were more relevant lines of enquiry.

### ***Areas for future research***

My research suggests that studies examining schools' deployment of teachers need further review. First, studies that examine the professional development available to all teachers need to investigate where in their praxis normative assumptions manifest as judgements about B.E.M. pupils. My findings suggest that we need a space for dialogue between teachers where they explore their biases. As I have shown there is a dearth of education research studies with an impetus for engaging with anti-racist thinking and exchange of practice. With the demotion of pastoral duties in favour of the academic, as well as the Eurocentric bias in the school curriculum, it is imperative that all teachers have the critical skills to self-audit.

Linked to the above is the deployment/allocation of teaching time and responsibilities. Within a climate of neo-liberal ideas in education, a teachers' autonomy to develop their professional skills is increasingly subject to managerial

control. My findings suggest balancing promoting academic performance with time allocated to pedagogical aims grounded in pupils' holistic development.

If our aim is to equip pupils with the skills they need to enter a culturally diverse, global, unknowable twenty-first century, then teachers who purport to be role models may need to reframe their thinking about what it is they do and how they might contribute. The symbiotic leader-follower model might indeed be beneficial in corporations but it is not fit-for-purpose at such a crucial stage of young people's lives. Research shows that B.E.M. pupils are generally astute and sceptical of aspiring to the 'normative' representations on offer. If the desire to be a role model teacher is based upon notions of mimicry, then B.E.M. pupils' disaffection with schooling is likely to increase. The findings of this thesis suggest that teachers that self-define as role models do so by cultivating worthwhile dialogue with B.E.M. pupils. They promote pupils' criticality by alerting them to dissonant representations of themselves by others. B.E.M. teachers see their limited interventions nonetheless as empowering survival strategies and as offering the essential life skills that B.E.M. pupils need to make the transition into adulthood.

The alternative maybe that B.E.M. pupils acquire a very different skill set – by any means (memes) necessary!

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## **APPENDICES**

1 – Information Sheet for Participants

2 –Interview Questions

3 – Ethics Committee Forms

## ***Appendix 1. Information Sheet for Participants***

Academic Department: Educational Studies

### **PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY**

Study Title: ‘How do Black or Ethnic Minority teachers understand themselves as Role Models to pupils with whom they share similar backgrounds?’

#### Introduction

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study related to the careers and experiences of Black or Ethnic Minority teachers in England. This is part of a broader study that considers your interactions with pupils.

#### What is the purpose of the research and how will the research be carried out?

The aim of this study is better understand the experience of teachers from Black or Ethnic Minority backgrounds, some whom may have been born in the UK and others who may not. There is very little research in this area. The study seeks to reveal the narratives of Black or Ethnic Minority teachers in order to better understand how they interpret what role modelling means for them.

#### What will you be asked to do?

The research entails a semi-structured interview for no longer than 90 minutes where you will be asked for details of your career to date, your experiences in school which are significant to you, how you draw on your cultural knowledge and experiences to develop pedagogies and/or curricula.

You will be asked to consent to the interview being recorded. The recording will be transcribed. The recording and transcription will not name you. You will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for factual accuracy and to validate but you will not be asked to change any details within the transcript unless there are factual errors.

#### What are the anticipated benefits of participating in the research?

There is little or no research on the experiences of Black or Ethnic Minority teachers in the UK as role models to pupils with whom they share similar cultural

backgrounds. Whilst studies have discussed the appropriateness of male teachers, seldom have they considered what being a role model means in the everyday practical sense. You will be contributing to the development of this professional and academic knowledge.

Are there any risks associated with participating in the research?

The research will not name you, your school, your colleagues or the pupils who you engage with. However, you may relate details of incident, which may be painful or recall hurtful experiences. If the recall of such events causes distress the researcher will seek your permission to terminate the interview and if you choose to carry on will reaffirm your decision at the end of the interview and seek re-confirmation that is still acceptable to use the information in the research. If after the interview you choose to withdraw for the study (before September 2013) you may do so without prejudice or detriment to the professional relationship you may have with the researcher. If you feel a particular incident would identify you as an individual or cause distress to you and others if it were published then please inform the researcher as soon as possible either in the interview, right after the interview or shortly after the interview. Such detail can be deleted prior to transcription. If you disclose a discriminatory incident(s) within the course of an interview the researcher will ask if you have reported it. If you have not the researcher will not breach the confidentiality of the interview and researcher-respondent relationship but the researcher may well encourage you to log the incident with the appropriate department within your school. You may ask the researcher not to include details of such incidents within the report of the research. The researcher may report the overall number of racist incidents for all participants and only use anonymised incidents where permission for their use has been given.

Do you have to take part?

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary, just because you know the researcher, Patricia Alexander, does not oblige you to participate in this research. You can decline involvement in the research without any detrimental effect or impression.

Who can you contact if you have any questions about the project?

Please contact the researcher Ms. Patricia Alexander if you have any questions about this research. Contact details: Ms. Patricia Alexander; 0207 919 7071;

[p.alexander@gold.ac.uk](mailto:p.alexander@gold.ac.uk)

What happens if you change your mind and want to withdraw?

You may withdraw at any point without giving any reasons for doing so.

What will happen to the information collected as part of the study?

The study will use pseudonyms for the participants which will reflect their gender.

The data will be stored electronically on a password protected computer and paper copies of the transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet. The researcher will dispose of the data by shredding the transcripts and deleting the electronic data after publication of the research. This may take up to 2-3 years.

Who can you contact if you have a complaint about the project?

If you have a complaint about this research please contact;

Ms. Patricia Alexander

0207 919 7071;

[p.alexander@gold.ac.uk](mailto:p.alexander@gold.ac.uk)

**Or Ken Jones Head of Educational Studies**

## *Appendix 2. Interview Questions (1)*

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| What are the experiences of teachers working in schools where there is a pre-dominance of pupils with the ‘same’ culture as their own, and how do they understand their positioning as a role model? |                                   |
| Introductory remarks   | Secondary questions/notes         |
| Thank you for agreeing to talk to me<br>My name is ...   |                                   |
| I would like to record our talk, to remind me of what was said....<br>Obtain consent<br>Do you want a copy of the transcript?  |                                   |
| Confidentiality<br>Permission – completion of consent form<br>Participant can withdraw at any time   |                                   |
| Setting the scene/   |                                   |
| Something about me as a researcher, my interests, personal experience of being a teacher (short autobiography)   |                                   |
| What the research is about, including my interest teachers’ personal anecdotes of teaching in London schools   |                                   |
| Tell me about your journey to becoming a teacher.<br>What attracted you to the job?<br>Why did you want to be a teacher?   |                                   |
| What is your current post?<br>Do you have any additional responsibilities?<br>If you started over again, would you still teach? Why?   | What attracted you to the school? |

| Probing questions   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Did you go to school in this country?<br/>Tell me about your own experience of schooling<br/>What did you enjoy most about your schooling (if any). Tell me about something that you still remember clearly from those days.</p> | <p>What was it like?<br/>Have you ever returned? Why not?</p>  |
| <p>What do you think are some of the differences between your educational experiences and what the pupils experience in schools today.<br/>For example?</p>   | <p>How was it organised</p>  |
| <p>How do you describe yourself?<br/>e.g. Are you multi-lingual?<br/>What languages are you fluent/confident in as a speaker/reader?</p>  | <p>Do you ever use your mother tongue when talking to pupils, if so when? Why?<br/>Have you ever used your mother to talk to parents, if so when?<br/>Why?</p> |
| <p>Tell me something about the BAME pupils in your school.<br/>Do you have social links with any of them or their parents outside of school?</p>  | <p>Informal meetings e.g. church.<br/>Do you live locally?</p>   |
| <p>If you could change something about pupils experience in school, what would it be?</p>   | <p>What do you think are some of the challenges facing adolescent pupils?<br/>Do you think pupils largely enjoy being in school? Are they disaffected?</p>     |
| <p>Describe to me an incident in school that</p>  | <p>Why was it so</p>   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | makes you want to continue teaching?  | memorable/significant?<br>what was the outcome? |
|  | If you had more control over how you manage your time in school, what would you do?   | 'blue skies thinking'                           |
|  | There have been comments by media, parents etc about the need for role models in schools.<br>Perhaps you have heard comments in other (informal) settings |   |



**Appendix 2 (cont'd) Interview Questions – Follow-up**

|  |   |                     |
|--|---|---------------------|
| How do mathematics teachers working in school, where there is a pre-dominance of pupils with the ‘same’ culture as their own, understand their position as a ‘role model’? |   |                     |
|  | Introductory Remarks  | Secondary questions |
|  | Thank you for agreeing to talk with me again  |                     |
|  | Have they read the transcript I sent  |                     |
|  | Omissions? Errors?  |                     |
|  | Reminder about the research question – follow-up focus  |                     |
|  |   |                     |
|  | Follow-up information   |                     |
|  | What changes have taken place since our last interview?   |                     |
|  | What are you currently doing?   |                     |
|  | Same school/ Promotion?   |                     |
|  | What is different/same?   |                     |
|  | Do you still intend to remain in your present school?   |                     |
|  | In the previous interview, you said that you thought pupils were mis-understood by some teachers, can you elaborate more on this? |                     |
|  | In the previous interview, you said that relationships with these pupils were important to you, can you elaborate?                |                     |
|  | In our previous interview you said do you see yourself as a role model, and you talked about things that you do. Is there         |                     |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>anything more you wish to add? For example:</p> <p>How do you think you make a difference?</p> <p>In what ways? What do you do that is so different?</p> <p>What are the expectations made on you to work with B.E.M. pupils and how do they?</p> |  |
|  | <p>In the previous interview you talked about the dilemmas of moving into management and how that would/may alienate you from your vocation/direct contact with pupils. Is this still the case or have your views changed?</p>                       |  |
|  | <p>You talked about the sense of isolation you felt in the school, can you elaborate on this more?</p>   |  |