Ways of Thinking About Young People in Participatory Interview Research

6

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Abstract

This chapter explores what it means to treat young people and children as being worthy of study in their own right, and not in terms of their relationship with adulthood. Moving from the adult-centric theories that have traditionally dominated childhood and youth research, this chapter highlights engaging with young people as active agents in research. Focusing on issues that are particularly relevant to young people (sexuality, HIV/AIDS), the chapter draws on participatory interviews to illustrate the inversion of power relations that enables researchers to engage with and learn from young people who are positioned as figures of authority. It is argued that an analysis of how research with children and young people can be democratized enables an understanding of the pedagogic implications of participatory research. Thinking about interviews as a social encounter between participants, rather than as a device to elicit information from young people opens up an understanding of the way in which interviews are spaces

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in which the discursive practices of the young person are displayed. Respecting these practices enables researchers to draw on young people's knowledge about issues such as HIV/AIDS, for example. The chapter concludes by elaborating on the pedagogical opportunities and risks of using participatory research to open up performance spaces for young people.

Introduction

James and Prout (1997) identify a paradigmatic shift in academic ways of thinking about youth and childhood, from defining and researching them only through their relations with adulthood to taking their identifications, relationships, and cultures as worthy of study in their own right. What this means and the implications of this for (adults) doing research with young people and children, especially in the context of social problems, are key concerns this chapter addresses.

What ways of academic thinking about children and youth have marginalized them in relation to adults and rendered them relatively passive or invisible in research?

James and Prout (1997) cite the influence of theories of "socialization" in sociology and anthropology which construct adults as instigators and teachers and children as passive products. Socialization is usually understood as "the process through which children are 'taught' the social mores pertinent to any particular society or culture" and has tended to be framed as something that is "done to children" (James and James 2012) through their interaction with adults. For example, Durkheim, writing in the early twentieth century, argues that norms and values are learned by children from adults through explicit processes of inculcation in churches, schools, or families or more implicitly through the models of behavior adults set for children (Durkheim 1982). Parsons, writing in the 1950s, focuses on the family or more specifically mothers and fathers in providing role models for what he sees as gender appropriate forms of socialization (Parsons 2002). Such theories have been criticized for presenting an "oversocialized" (Wong 1961) understanding of children and young people which denies them any kind of agency and raises questions about how "children do eventually grow up" (James and James 2012) and become adults and teachers and instigators.

Neither, according to James and Prout, have children and young people been accorded agency in their traditional home in developmental psychology which reduces children to adults-in-the-making, whose views and behavior can be read off from developmental phases.

Such theories, James and Prout (1997) argue, are "adult-centric" and are the product of cultures which take for granted adults as the norm against which children and young people are measured (see ▶ Chap. 2, "Deconstructing Discourses to Rupture Fairytales of the "Ideal" Childhood" by Smith, K. and ▶ Chap. 4, "Thinking About Children: How Does It Influence Policy and Practice?" by Taylor, N. and Smith, A. in this collection). But adults are not neutral and, like children and young people, view the world from particular vantage points influenced by their very different experiences, interests, and identifications. What are the research implications of ways of thinking about young people which challenge the construction of adults as representing the norm while seeking to encourage voices for children and young people? This is a question which is posed in this chapter which seeks to engage with examples of research with children and young people which aim to be “young person centered” (Frosh et al. 2002) and “allow children a. . .direct voice and participation in the production of sociological data” (James and Prout 1997).

This chapter discusses the importance of adult researchers engaging with young people as active agents in interview research, in order to learn from them, and especially about the nature of social problems which influence and affect them. It draws on participatory interviews to illustrate what it means to “invert power” relations and engage with learners as figures of authority in research. This involves **not** taking the interview as an instrument for eliciting information from them, but seeing it, instead, as a social encounter and context in which identifications are made and relations established between the participants, which affect how they present themselves and what they say (Pattman and Kehily 2004).

The chapter begins by elaborating on what it means to think about interviews as social encounters and connects this with concerns about democratizing research relations raised by feminist writers (Stanley and Wise 1983; Oakley 1981) as well as the insights of theorists who draw attention to the contextually specific ways people “present” themselves and “perform” (Goffman 1959; Butler 1990). It then explores the “performances” of participants in an interview-based participatory study with 11–14-year-old boys in London (which included me as the interviewer) and how they constructed and experienced this (Frosh et al. 2002). It then argues for the significance and importance of participatory interview research with young people as a research practice in Southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS and reflects on the pedagogic implications of this.

Thinking About Interviews as Social Encounters

In thinking about and engaging with interviews and focus group discussions as social encounters, this chapter draws on the work of feminist writers who have raised concerns about power and self-reflexivity in research and argued that relations of power are constructed in the very process of doing research and that these are particularly acute when they are hidden. This is when the researchers seek to minimize their influence by constructing apparent conditions of objectivity and relate to those they are researching as “mere objects there for the researcher to do research ‘on’” (Stanley and Wise 1983, p. 164).

This self-reflexive concern with the dynamics of the research encounter was exemplified in an interview study conducted in the late 1970s in England with women on a labor ward who were about to become mothers for the first time. The researcher, Ann Oakley (1981) wanted to elicit information from these women about their views concerning their future roles as mothers, but they were very quiet. Oakley was older than them and was, herself, a mother, as these women discovered, and they were anxious to know about her experiences of early motherhood.

At first Oakley was disinclined to respond, since her focus was on eliciting information from them. But then she started to respond, and by doing so and drawing on her own experiences as a mother, Oakley was able to engage in conversations with these young women which generated rich information about their views and anxieties about becoming mothers. Such information, she claims, could never have been obtained had she remained relatively detached as the research manuals advised her to do.

What this account of doing research serves to illustrate is that interviews are not simply tools or instruments for eliciting information from interviewees. Even the interviewer who seeks anonymity by simply posing already formulated questions or by not showing any emotions or by not responding (during the interview) to questions about herself establishes a relationship with her interviewees which affects and influences what they say. In such a relationship the interviewees (especially if they are relatively young) may view the interviewer as a figure of authority to whom they defer. This, Oakley argues, was how the young women related to her before she started addressing their questions and concerns and was illustrated in the relatively short staccato responses which they initially gave in response to her questions.

The concept of interviews as social encounters has been influenced by the "biographical turn" (Thomson 2007) in the social sciences which is based on the view that language is not simply descriptive but constitutive of realities (Foucault 1979), that experiences are never raw but always mediated and shaped by people's narrative accounts of these (Riessman 1993). This implies that the narrative accounts of the interviewees are not simply windows on a real world "out there" but important resources through which they construct themselves and others. This means not taking for granted what the research participants say in these as if this is simply a reflection of their internal and external realities, but situating what they say in the context of the research encounter and the particular kinds of identities and relations they forge and fashion in this.

Martyn Hammersley (2013) argues that these constructionist arguments suggest that the analytic focus in interviews "should be on the discursive practices displayed in the informant's talk" and the "cultural performances" of the participants. Indeed the very concept of "performativity" carries important implications for thinking about research events such as interviews as social encounters or contexts, as we see in the works of Goffman (1959) and Butler (1990), both of whom argue that identities are positions we construct through performances and that how we perform and present ourselves depends on the social context. Goffman argues that the social world is analogous to a stage and that individuals are like actors putting on performances which they consider appropriate with particular audiences in specific contexts. Judith Butler (1990) posits the idea of gender as something we do and perform and construct relationally rather than an essence we have, and argues, further, that our gendered performances become so naturalized through "repetition" that they create the impression that they are the outcome of certain fixed and essential attributes which make males and females behave in predetermined ways. But there is no "doer behind the deed" only the "deed."

This raises questions, which this chapter addresses, about how to research (young) people, gender, and sexuality without contributing to the reification of these categories and taking them for granted as descriptors of who people fundamentally are or essences they have which make them behave in predictable and homogenous ways in relation to these but as categories constructed by the young people themselves from the cultural resources available to them (Pattman 2013).

How 11–14-Year-Old London Boys Perform in Participatory Interviews and Their Experiences of These

In their school-based interview study on "young masculinities" with 11–14-year-old boys in London, Frosh et al. (2002) argue for "a young person centered" and semi-structured approach to interviewing. In this the interviewer identifies broad themes to be addressed, such as views about school, interests and hobbies, and relations with girls and boys, but encourages the young people to set the agenda in relation to these by picking up on issues they raise and asking them to illustrate and elaborate. The pace and direction of the interviews depends very much on the particular young people being interviewed and the relationship they and the interviewer establish. But engaging in this way with boys as active agents in research does not imply, they argue, "an uncritical acceptance of boys" versions of themselves. For they take descriptions of experience as "discursive constructions," ways of making sense of things, which involve articulating specific versions of self, identity, and the world (Scott 1992). Boys are positioned as social actors in the interviews, then, by encouraging them not only to talk about themselves and others in expansive ways but also to reflect on how they were identifying and categorizing people.

One of the findings of this research was how the experience of being interviewed conflicted with the expectations of most boys and the surprise and pleasure many boys expressed at being able to talk at length about their feelings and relationships. This was in part because they imagined the interviewer would be more like a didactic teacher figure, firing questions, putting them on the spot, and sitting at the top of the table, rather than in a circle. This caricature of the interviewer, informed by media representations and a societal context in which children rarely discuss their lives with adults, is one that school-based researchers frequently have to overcome. Other researchers conducting school-based ethnographies and interviews have reflected on how they came to be seen by pupils *not* as figures of authority in the way they positioned teachers (see e.g., Kehily and Nayak 1996; Thorne 1993; Davies 2003).

Frosh et al. are critical of the view that interviews simply present opportunities for people to put into words thoughts and feelings they already have, and draw attention to processes of identity construction going on in the interviews. They focus on how boys produce versions of themselves as they talk, and they address the interviewer (myself) not just as a facilitator but a co-constructor (Hollway and Jefferson 2004) who influences the conversation by his very presence as a particular kind of man, pursuing certain topics the boys raise, challenging them on specific issues, and communicating certain emotions.

Another key finding reported in the research concerns how different boys were in terms of what they said and how they behaved in the individual and group interviews which were conducted.

The group interviews were often characterized by much laughter, while in the individual interviews boys were more serious. When asked, after participating in both the group and individual interviews, which one they preferred, about half of the boys expressed a preference for the group interviews and enthused about the "fun" they had "having a laugh" with the other boys in the group. Through laughter, Frosh et al. argue boys displayed camaraderie with other boys and asserted themselves, too, as emotionally tough in contrast to girls or boys they feminized as vulnerable and weak. In some of the group interviews, they discerned the formation of hierarchies between boys with some boys being deferred to by others. When these boys spoke, there was less cross talking and they elicited the most laughs. In the group interviews, Frosh et al. (2002, p. 37) found "the boys were much more invested in asserting themselves against girls," ridiculing girls for imagining they were more mature than boys, for wanting to play football with boys, for being favored by teachers, and for liking "girl power" (see also Prendergast and Forrest 1997; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Kenway et al. 1998).

As a male interviewer, I may have unwittingly contributed to this polarization of gender in the all-male peer group. As Frosh et al. (2002) found, some boys interviewed in groups accounted for the rapport they established with the interviewer in terms of their shared gender and their assumed shared distancing from females.

> Maurice: it's not like talking to a woman (.) if you was like a woman we couldn't talk about the things we've talked about, we couldn't talk to a teacher about porn mags and things like that [laugh].
>
> Benny: Yeah we couldn't say things about the girls cos she might disagree. (p. 37)

Frosh et al. found that the same boys when interviewed individually praised girls for their maturity and sensitivity, in contrast to boys. It was mainly in individual interviews that boys criticized other boys for being "uncommunicative, thick-skinned, aggressive and uncaring" – characteristics that were often key motifs of masculinity created in group interviews. These boys, they argue, were producing "softer" versions of masculinity, in the sense of being less loud and funny and speaking about emotions and relations in ways which would be derided as "soft" and "wimpish" with a group of boys or even with adult males. Interestingly, opportunities for "talking" and more specifically "talking about personal things" in a "serious way" without fear of others "laughing" at them were the most common reasons given by the boys who expressed a preference for the individual interviews.

I reported on the irony of some boys interviewed individually confiding in me – a man – about their problems, yet idealizing women and girls as sympathetic and supportive listeners. Rather than letting this pass, I challenged these boys to reflect upon how they were polarizing gender. For example, John was asked what would happen "if a boy rather than a girl was 'quite tender and comforting towards you.'" (p. 192). John defined himself as "hard" and talked graphically about his commitment to fighting, yet spoke in a serious, reflective, and critical way about this and expressed sadness about not seeing his estranged father and idealized girls and women as people with "fairer voices" who would sympathize with him about his relationship with his father. Responding to the interviewer, he says:

> John: He'd be pushed aside.
>
> RP: By you? Would you push him aside?
>
> John: Well, depends if (2) depends if the boys would push him away first or if I don't get to hear him he might just be bugging me or something so I just push him to the side and then I feel sorry for them because they're trying to help me and then I don't, then I get angry and I'll lose my temper.

While responding to John's idealization of girls in relation to boys, I seem to be challenging him, here, to consider how invested *he* is in sustaining tough and hard relations with other boys. What is striking is the reluctance of John to say *he* would "push him aside," presumably because he had been "critical of boys for being so unsympathetic and emotionally disengaged" and because he had developed a close relationship with me as the interviewer that enabled him to be so. When John generalizes that "he'd be pushed aside," I ask if he would do this. John "admits" he might push him aside, though qualifies this with "just" as if diminishing the effect of his action. But he also speaks of getting angry, "as if he knows he has missed an opportunity." This view of John's was co-constructed in the sense that it emerged as a result of the sort of relations being forged between the interviewer and interviewee. Here I appear to be picking up on John's attachment to myself as an interviewer and as a caring and interested man and challenging him to reflect upon his longing for these kinds of relations and his investment in a particular male identity collectively constructed and performed in opposition to versions of "softness." Such moments of engagement between the researcher and respondent point to the fluidity of gender as a social category and the way it may be shaped by the research space.

When told about the marked discrepancies between what boys were like in individual and group interviews, some of the teachers attributed this to boys' presumed susceptibility to "peer pressure." However, Frosh et al.'s view is that the individual interviews do not provide insight into what boys were *really* like, in contrast to the group interviews as the teachers assumed. As Bronwyn Davies (2003) notes, "contrary to much of our experience, a consistent thread running through our discursive practices is the idea of each person as unitary, coherent, non-contradictory and as fixed" (notably in relation to sex/gender). Interestingly, projections of "coherence" by teachers onto boys, in Frosh et al.'s study, seemed to carry moralistic injunctions, implying that many boys seduced by peer pressure were not behaving as boys should.

This also applies to social scientific research practices which have tended to ignore or "iron out contradictions" in their quest to elicit the truth (Pattman 2007). What the very different accounts of boys in these different modes of research suggested, according to Frosh et al., was they were taking up different (sometimes contradictory) discursive positions in different contexts, and modifying and also resisting these. Whereas in the group interviews they seemed to be displaying aspects of what Raewyn Connell (1995) calls “hegemonic” masculinity – confidence, assertiveness, anger, and raucous humor – when talking about a range of themes and issues connected to their interests, identities, and relationships, in the individual interviews many of the same boys were addressing the sorts of problems for boys and men incurred by trying to live up to the unrealistic expectations imposed by these hegemonic ideals and fantasies.

The Significance of Participatory Interview-Based Research with Young People in Southern Africa in the Context of HIV/AIDS

This section focuses on another participatory interview study conducted with young people in Southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS. This was a UNICEF study which the author coordinated with Fatuma Chege between 2000 and 2003 with young people mainly in their teens (Pattman and Chege 2003; Pattman 2005). The rationale for conducting this research was to collect information from boys and girls about their lives in order to develop appropriate and relevant resources for life orientation programs being introduced into schools in the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It was hoped that, in contrast to established forms of HIV/AIDS education which were largely didactic, these programs would actively engage with young people and their views, identifications, and experiences (HEAIDS Report 2010).

Until the late 1990s and early 2000s, little research had been conducted on the topic of young people and sexuality either in South Africa or other African countries “because it was deemed too private to make investigation either appropriate or feasible” (HEAIDS Report 2010, p. 27). This was, and still is, reinforced by cultural taboos concerning adults and young people talking about sexuality and by adult constructions of children, in many predominantly Christian countries, as nonsexual beings, through idealizations of youthful “innocence” (and ignorance) in relation to sexuality. Indeed, one of the main contributions that more recent research with young people on the topic of sexuality has made in Southern Africa is that young people are themselves sexual beings, a view which informs and is reinforced by further research. Sexuality, as these studies have attested, is not something that becomes meaningful and significant only as we approach adulthood, even if it has been constructed in South Africa (Bhana 2007), as in many other societies (Epstein and Johnson 1998; Kehily 2002; Reynold 2004), as a marker of adulthood by adults wishing “innocence” on children and imagining them as asexual.

Such research has been motivated mainly by the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as other social issues and concerns, such as sexual harassment and gender-based violence. A body of qualitative (interview and ethnographic) research has emerged in South Africa which has attempted to explore the meanings and significance which young people, in particular communities and social contexts, attach to gender and sexuality and how these affect and influence their lives. Such research has raised important questions about young people’s knowledge or lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS and modes of transmission; their own practices, desires, or concerns relating to sex and sexuality; their views about abstinence and condom usage; and more generally about their experiences, identifications, relationships, and vulnerabilities, desires, and ambitions as young men and women in particular communities (e.g., Wood et al. 2007; Shefer and Foster 2009; Bhana and Pattman 2011; Jewkes and Morrell 2011; Msibi 2012). It has provided us with valuable insights and ways of understanding the power relations involved in the deployment of gender and sexuality as social categories.

Informing this kind of research are two key assumptions: one, that young people are sexual beings and two, that they are active agents who construct their everyday social worlds (even though, as social beings, they are never free and independent agents, but are always constrained by the social and material worlds they inhabit). But only a few researchers working within this paradigm have advocated participatory forms of research in which young people are addressed as potential authorities by encouraging them to "produce knowledge" (Stuart and Smith 2011) about their social worlds and, at same time, critically reflect on themselves, their identifications, and relationships through their participation in various kinds of research activities such as drawing, role play, and photo voice (see however ▶ Chap. 7, "Approaches to Understanding Youth Well-Being" by Cahill, H., and ▶ Chap. 21, "Performative Pedagogy: Poststructural Theory as a Tool to Engage in Identity Work Within a Youth-Led HIV Prevention Program" by Cahill, H. Coffey, J. and Beadle, S. in the section on Identity in this collection). In this kind of research, the "adult" researcher works with the young people, introducing them to the research activity and posing questions which relate to the problems they raise rather than deciding, in advance, what the research problem is and asking predetermined questions which relate to this. For example, concerns about being harassed sexually in the school toilets were raised by many female learners in a participatory research exercise in which learners attending a rural high school in KwaZulu-Natal were given disposable cameras and asked to take photos of safe and unsafe spaces in the school. These photographs became powerful resources for provoking reflexive discussion and for highlighting gendered concerns not usually communicated to adults and teachers (Mitchell et al. 2006).

The UNICEF research also sought to engage with young people in participatory ways and to encourage critical self-reflection, though this, as in Frosh et al. (2002), was pursued mainly through particular kinds of semi-structured interviews. Research assistants (men and women in their early 20s–50s) were trained to conduct interviews with young people about their lives and identities, addressing similar themes in Frosh et al.'s study but also engaging with their views about HIV/AIDS. They were trained to be self-reflexive, approachable, and "young person centered" in the way Frosh et al. (2002) describe. Prior to the interviews, all of which were conducted in mixed and single-sex groups, some of the interviewers engaged the young people in dance and clapping and short ritualistic games, and these seemed to be very effective in helping them to feel at ease with the interviewer.

Many of the young people reported enjoying taking the interview in directions they wished and being listened to by interested adults, with whom they established relations which enabled and encouraged some of them to put questions to the researchers about concerns they had regarding HIV, condoms, and sexual relationships (for a discussion of participatory approaches to research with children, see Smith's ► Chap. 25, "Childhood and Youth Citizenship" in this collection).

Sexuality usually emerged spontaneously in the interviews with children of all ages – without it being introduced by the interviewers – most notably when young people were discussing their relations with contemporaries of the opposite sex. In fact questioning young people about their relations with contemporaries of the opposite sex often provoked laughter and some embarrassment as if cross-gender relationships were heterosexual relations. Significantly, narratives told by young people about cross-gender friendships were striking by their absence.

As well as being interviewed, some of the young people were given diaries to keep. When writing up their diaries which they were asked to do at the end of every day for a week, the young people were given certain questions to which to respond. These were about significant events, emotions, and relations were open-ended and encouraged the diary keeper to elaborate and provide illustrations.

Boys were much more misogynistic and likely to talk about girls in derogatory or impersonal ways when being interviewed in groups rather than when writing diaries. In single-sex interviews, for example, some boys boasted about sleeping with and dumping girls, yet, in the diaries they kept, wrote highly romanticized accounts of girlfriends. The idealization of girls in boys' diaries extended to praising them (and even women teachers) for the sound advice they offered and their more "sympathetic" nature, implying dissatisfaction with popular ways of being boys.

Boasting about having multiple sexual relations was not something that was done by any of the girls our researchers interviewed. Indeed, it seemed that most of the girls were keen to present themselves as "good" (as opposed to sexual). Good was mentioned four times by four different girls in the following extract from an interview with 16-year-old, urban Zimbabwean girls:

> Elisabeth: I go around with good girls because when I do something wrong they tell me that it is bad.
>
> Nyeredzi: I get along only with good girls because they tell me about life, because they know that my parents are both dead so they tell me how to survive.
>
> Sarudzai: I like going out with friends who have good behavior and whom I tell my secrets to and share ideas.
>
> Forgette: I go around with my friends who have good ideas and can give me good advice.

The absence of positive stories from girls about girls with boyfriends was striking. Most girls characterized these as inevitably oppressive relationships, which interfered with schoolwork, ended up in pregnancies and abuse, and conflicted with Christian or Islamic teachings. While boyfriend-girlfriend relations were very negative in the ways the girls described them, these girls had a powerful interest in presenting them like this. By doing so, they were showing themselves publicly – in the context of a group interview – to be good girls who resisted such relationships, contrasting themselves with bad girls who did not. Whereas boys could acquire status from their peers by speaking openly about their sex drive by constructing girls as objects for them, girls had to be careful not to talk about their sexual desires or about boyfriends for fear of being labeled as "bad" (Pattman 2005).

In their interview study with young girls growing up in Malawi about their knowledge regarding menstruation and other sexual themes, Helitzer-Allen et al. (1994) observed that the young women participants seemed to be reluctant to talk openly about sexuality in group discussions compared with in-depth interviews. For this reason they advise against research which employs mainly group discussions for assessing girls' sexual knowledge. But if we interpret individual and group interviews as particular contexts, in which girls (and boys) perform, then one could argue that girls' reluctance to talk about sexuality in group discussions represents, itself, an important finding. What was interesting about the diaries kept by the girls in the UNICEF study was how many wrote about their boyfriends and their enjoyment having them, in stark contrast to the ways they presented themselves in interviews. Whereas for the boys the diaries seemed to provide a safe space to be "romantic," for the girls they seemed to provide an opportunity for articulating sexual desire.

Conclusion and Future Directions

One of the features of participatory research with young people is that it carries implications for ways of working with them in educational settings and other contexts. The research practices and methodologies may, themselves, become models of (arguably) good pedagogic practices in the context of social problems such as forms of sexual abuse and bullying. How to promote forms of participatory research, and how participatory research can be used to contribute to the development of curricula materials and pedagogic practices which engage with girls and boys as complex and multidimensional people, as active agents, and as sexual beings, presents an important challenge.

A challenge for HIV/AIDS sex educators must be to encourage boys to "perform" in groups in ways that do not involve subordinating girls (MacNaughton 2000) but draw on the affection for girls that they express so vividly in more "private" contexts such as diaries and individual interviews. This is not to argue that boys should be encouraged to *idealize* instead of subordinate girls. For this reproduces stereotypes of girls as good and boys as bad which may generate problems for both boys and girls. On the contrary, sexuality education needs to raise possibilities of boys and girls relating to each other not as stereotypical opposites, but as potential equals and friends. The critique of the polarization of gender identities around sexuality has become particularly pressing in the light of HIV/AIDS. For if boys and girls construct themselves in opposition to each other, in part through sexuality, how can they develop relations with each other which enable them to interact and socialize, let alone relate sexually?

Encouraging boys to be less invested in defining themselves in opposition to girls may mean affirming boys when they talk in ways normally constructed as feminine (Raey 1990), or providing images of caring men (Salisbury and Jackson 1996) or male facilitators/researchers exemplifying such models, and, in contrast to the strong role models advocated by writers like Biddulph (2000), subverting gender polarities (Frosh et al. 2002).

Frosh et al. (2002) found that boys were most critical of hegemonic forms of masculinity when interviewed individually, also more likely to praise (or less likely to deride) girls and perform in "softer" and less raucous ways than in the single-sex group interviews. Rather than authenticating boys' "individual" voices, as teachers tended to do by constructing boys as inauthentic and problematic in groups, Frosh et al. argue that such contradictory performances may characterize the lives of boys seduced by hegemonic ideals but also troubled by the competition, violence, anti-intellectualism, and homophobic policing which these engender, and that boys should be encouraged, in non-accusatory ways, to reflect on these contradictions.

Cross-References

- ▶ Approaches to Understanding Youth Well-Being
- ▶ Deconstructing Discourses to Rupture Fairytales of the "Ideal" Childhood
- ▶ Learning Gender in the Early Years of Schooling in South Africa
- ▶ "Let's Go 50/50": The Everyday Embodiment of Sexuality Amongst African Young People
- ▶ Performative Pedagogy: Poststructural Theory as a Tool to Engage in Identity Work Within a Youth-Led HIV Prevention Program
- ▶ The Gendering and Sexualization of Young Women Through Sex Educational Practices and Discourses in Southern Africa
- ▶ Thinking About Children: How Does It Influence Policy and Practice?

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