

A Poetic and Visual Inquiry into The Male Professoriate:

Clive, Todd, Mark and William

Enquête poétique et visuelle du professorat mâle:

Clive, Todd, Mark et William

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This is a poetic and visual arts-informed inquiry into the male professoriate: Situated in social theory on the body and clothing, artworks, and poetry, visual identity and male scholarship are revealed and presented. Dress is a self-reflexive personal, social and political statement that challenges and/or confirms gendered and social roles. Social acceptance within one's discipline and the academy is key. For two of the four participants in this research study, Clive and Todd, social acceptance is determined by fitting in via incarnations of conservative scholarly clothing. For the remaining two participants, Mark and William, scholarly clothing is a contested site of conventions and taboos. Acceptance is judged by gender and sexual orientation, revealed in a policed personal, socio-cultural and visual aesthetic of the body and what counts as scholarly clothing. This paper draws attention to how bodies are managed, clothed and situated in spaces and places, offering through text, visual images and poems alternative possibilities for knowing and understanding through arts-informed research.

Il s'agit d'une enquête poétique sur le professorat chez l'homme, renseignée par les arts visuels, des œuvres d'art et des poèmes. Identité visuelle et art professoral sont introduits et présentés dans un contexte de théorie sociale corporelle et vestimentaire. La tenue vestimentaire est une affirmation introspective personnelle, sociale et politique qui remet en question et/ou confirme les rôles hommes-femmes et sociaux. L'acceptation sociale au sein d'une discipline et du milieu académique est un enjeu fondamental. Pour Clive et Todd, deux des quatre participants à cette étude, l'acceptation sociale repose sur l'intégration facilitée par le port de tenues académiques traditionnelles. Pour les deux autres participants, Mark et William, la tenue vestimentaire académique est un mécanisme de contestation des conventions et tabous. L'acceptation est fonction du sexe et de l'orientation sexuelle, tels qu'annoncés par l'esthétique visuelle, socioculturelle et personnelle contrôlée du corps et de ce que l'on qualifie de tenue académique. L'article s'intéresse à la façon de gérer et de vêtir le corps et de le présenter dans les divers espaces et lieux, en proposant de nouvelles avenues de conscientisation et de compréhension par le biais de la recherche à caractère artistique et plus particulièrement de textes, d'images visuelles et de poèmes.

Boys must be boys

Recently on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), I heard a woman telling a story of her four year old son and his favorite pink T shirt. On the first day of kindergarten, he wore the pink T shirt. But after that first day, he wouldn't wear it again. When the mother asked her son why, the four year old kindergarten boy said that the kids at school, male and female, told him "boys don't wear pink". As R.W. Connell (2002) notes, usually gender is used as a means of control through shaming, for example, telling a crying boy he is "acting like a girl" (p. 158).

When he was about eleven, my son started doing ballet, following hip hop dance. But in our town, we were told on several occasions that boys don't do ballet. For example, a young girl waiting for her class to begin watched my son through the viewing window, the only boy in a class of twelve year old girls. She said to me "Why is he doing ballet? Ballet isn't for boys. Boys shouldn't do ballet." "Why not?" I asked her. "Because it's only for girls. Boys do hockey." More recently my son began full time training at a professional ballet school where, on a weekend visit, the shaming Connell (2002) refers to was carried out again, this time by an adult. As I walked away from the residence, the mother of a girl in my son's academic grade said "Well my son wouldn't be interested at all in ballet. He's *all boy*". Constructions of male identities in schools examined by Mairtin Mac an Ghail (1994) speak to these notions of what boys are supposed to do and be, as opposed to girls. As Connell notes, difference "is often immediately interpreted for them (boys) in gender terms. Ed Johnson, for instance, did not like football, did like knitting and cooking, and thereby aroused deep suspicion in his father's mind" (p.120). Your body, your underwear, your shoes, your clothing, your haircut, and your accessories speak volumes (Lurie, 1981) about who you are, what you value, and how you feel at any moment. The way we present our bodies, clothed and accessorized, communicates sexual, gender, political, religious, social and cultural affiliations and preferences. Most of us are unconscious of the extent to which our clothed bodies are socialized and gendered. For most human beings, the process begins the moment we are born. Diapers are created with blue or pink patterning and imagery for "boy" and "girl" babies and toddlers. Babies, toddlers, children and teenagers' clothes, toys, games, activities, bedrooms, furniture, books, fabrics and decor are designed to reinforce a culturally, politically, socially, religiously genderized "norm" along binary male versus female lines which is policed by everyone, including ourselves. Our ontologies are reinforced by our own enculturated conditioning.

Gendered Spaces and Places

In addition to clothing, spaces and places are heavily gendered—for example, the ballet studio, the hockey arena, the barber shop, the chic hair salon and the locker room. Juliet Kinchin (1996) in *The Gendered Object* describes the 19th century female domain at home. Still relevant today, these spaces include the often frillier drawing room, boudoir, and bedroom, decorated colourfully and delicately, while the male domain includes the dining room, hall, library, study, billiard and smoking rooms decorated in darker tones, featuring leather and dark wood (p.13). In Joel Sander's *Stud*, (1996), a 1950s Playboy penthouse apartment is described hilariously as a "high handsome haven" (note the alliterative reference to "he") for the "bachelor in town" (p. 55). The 1950s bathroom, for example, has copied frescoes of the prehistoric cave paintings at Lascaux and indoor plants, suggesting the woodsy earthy visceral beast/man, who, with his high tech lighting, sound dimmers and automatic drape switches at the head of the seven foot bed performs the dual role of feral sex-beast following his wild animal instincts, while presenting himself more civilly and seductively as urbane Player Extraordinaire: "Entering the bedroom from the living room we are immediately aware of the textural difference between the living room's cork floor and the luxurious wall-to-wall carpeting of the bedroom, which seems to invite a barefoot romp but which also speaks of rich smartness" (p. 67). Recessed lighting is provided rather than "lamps, which would impede the clean open look of the place...there is a complete absence of bric-a-brac, patterned fabrics, pleats and ruffles" (p.67).

Masculinity, like femininity, is a social construction (Butler, 1993, 1999; Connell, 2002, p. 29). The bachelor inhabiting the Playboy penthouse male space is positioned securely and correctly (one is assured) as all male, averse to anything female or shrilly feminine in his space, unless "she" is there for sexual or house-cleaning purposes. This binary is often so demarcated, in male sports, for example, that it raises in me suspicions around unconscious conflict (Connell, 2002, p.120). Connell cites a study by Foley where football is examined as an iconic activity in the reproduction of encoded gender roles. The same could be true for any sport (and most sports are male dominated), such as rugby, cricket, soccer, basketball and hockey. In football, the game directly defines a pattern of aggressive and dominating performance on the field as the most admired form of high performing masculinity, in/directly marginalizing others who cannot "perform", while cheerleaders are models of feminine desirability; their desirability further defining the hierarchy of masculinity among footballers, since only the most secure and confident will risk ridicule by asking a cheerleader for a date (p. 159).

Imagine the football field as a space and place of 1950s style pumping red-hot masculinity, leased briefly and in a token way to sexed up cheerleaders. Universities, colleges and schools are spaces occupied by persons and objects that are defined in multiple and perhaps even more complicated ways. Donal O'Donoghue's (2007) work examines 17 boys' experiences and conceptions of space and place in an elementary school in Ireland where "masculinities are constructed, performed, and regulated, but they are not uniform and universally generalizable to all boys/men in our society" (p.62).

A set of unspoken messy "rules" point to the ways in which gendered social, professional, academic and sexual identities and roles play out within the academy.

A poetic and visual inquiry into the male professoriate

This is a poetic and visual arts-informed (Cole and Knowles, 2008) inquiry into the male professoriate, focusing on the clothed, disciplined, and/or transgressing bodies of male scholars. Through the literature, artworks and poetry situated meanings of scholarship and visual identity are revealed and presented. Professors are often challenged and subtly punished (by members of their own group) for not living up to acceptable codes of behavior and dress. It is ironic that, within the hallowed halls of academe where the phenomenon of social control is often a site of contestation, the same force of social control is exerted over appearances. It is this site of contestation that I explore.

Methodology

Tom Barone (2008) asserts that arts-based research is not a substitute for qualitative research. What it is is an entirely different way of collecting, analyzing and creating data that broadens our ways of knowing, seeing and understanding. Arts-related methodologies originate in the practices of studio art and art criticism, and in writing theoretically, analytically, interpretively, and creatively. Focusing specifically on arts-informed research (Knowles and Cole, 2008 and Cole and Knowles, 2008) draws upon the idea that meaningful images and texts incorporated into research processes deepen and enhance understanding not possible through conventional academic means. According to Ardra Cole and Gary Knowles (2008) "Bringing together the systematic and rigorous qualities of conventional qualitative methodologies with the artistic, disciplined, and imaginative qualities of the arts acknowledges the power of art forms to reach diverse audiences and the importance of diverse languages for gaining insights into the complexities of the human condition" (p.59). Arts-informed educational research reaches "multiple audiences by making scholarship more accessible. The methodology infuses the languages, processes, and forms of literary, visual, and performing arts with the expansive possibilities of scholarly inquiry for the purposes of advancing knowledge" (Cole and Knowles, p.59) which is necessarily connected to a moral purpose because "ultimately, the research must stand for something" (p.66).

The human condition, moral and ethical issues explored in my earlier work (Blaikie, 2009) encompass performing as a female administrator, transgendered, gay and feminist scholarship. Revealed in poems and images, my participants' clothing and visual identities are value laden: Shoes, jackets, and accessories say and tell who each scholar is and what s/he values, masking and revealing secrets and histories. They speak to functionality and subjectivity, scholarly disciplines, gender, sexuality and culture.

Melisa Cahnmann–Taylor and Richard Siegesmund (2008) describe arts-based research as a tool for every aspect of engaging in research, from recording to creating to generating data. I seek to exemplify this statement in this study. The primary research question focuses on each male participant's sense of his embodied self expressed through clothing, within the context of his work as a scholar within a particular discipline. I ask: "Tell me about your clothing and accessories, and how they reveal your identity as a scholar?" Photographs and artifacts inspire drawings and paintings; transcripts of conversations inspire prose and poetry. Through arts-informed educational research (Cole and Knowles, 2008) I wish to reveal the poems and artworks as having inherent meaning, as connected, integrated and mutually supportive.

Creating the Poems

Finding meaning in the transcripts for me means revealing each participant's stories in a chronological way, as well as identifying significant moments, feelings, phrases and words. Before engaging in creating poems in this research context, and in addition to academic writing, I have already written several short stories and short poems. I love writing of all kinds. Creating poems in a research context is different. I know that implicit in the process of all writing is re-writing and editing in an obsessive way. *In fact, re-writing and editing is the process.*

I read each transcript multiple times in order to identify emergent themes, and in order to isolate specific elements of text and narrative. After extracting this data from each transcript into a new emergent working document, I identified four elements which I judged to be important:

- significant events and moments
- significant feelings
- significant words
- significant images which emerge from moments, feelings and words

Following events and moments first, I re-arranged the emergent text so that a storyline was revealed. Then, I edited numerous times, and in doing so I isolated moments, words, feelings and images, deleting anything extraneous or repetitive. From these words and phrases I created the poems, engaging in a process of purging and synthesizing until each poem felt right and complete.

Creating the Artworks

The photographs of the participants inspired drawings and paintings, drawing from the photographs but altering them, inspired by the significant images emergent from our conversations. Making visual art is something I have engaged in as a necessarily integral part of my life ever since I could hold a crayon. Before teaching high school art and English, I received an undergraduate fine arts degree from the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. I majored in art history and painting, focusing on portraits. I have always painted portraits and still life using oils and oil pastel washes on canvas and canvas paper. I like oils because I love the smell, the plasticity and sensuality of the paint itself and the way the canvas gives as I stroke it with my favorite brushes, and the richness of the colours I love to use, including Monestial Blue, Naples Yellow and Indian Yellow. The latter is very malleable and can become a light cream or hot saffron, merging into a hot flame when mixed with Alazarin Crimson.

O'Donoghue (2009) notes that in undertaking arts-based research, we need to consider the "processes and practices of artists" (p.352). In this work that focuses on and is infused by research as artistic practice, and artistic practice as research, I have much material or data to work with: In addition to the broader realm of artistic practices and the literature relevant to this work, I have each transcript with all its moments, feelings, words and images; I have photographs of each participant, and I have access to multiple images in print media such as magazines. I study the transcripts and photographs, and I look at stock and print images. Then, I create a collage of a person who, for me, conjures up the essence of who my participant is. I might use eyes from one photograph or print image, a mouth, chin and dress suit from another, for example. The collage is not the final artwork. Several artworks are created using the collage/s as a reference for drawings and paintings, using oils, oils pastels, heavy 4B or 8B pencils, as well as water colour pencil crayons. For a paper such as this one, I selected the artworks I believe best reveal the moments, feelings, words and images expressed by each participant.

The Participants

Using pseudonyms, the participants, Clive, Todd, Mark and William are presented to you now through artworks and poems. I selected four participants because of the space the poems and artworks take in relation to the length of a typical journal manuscript, and because of the relative differences between these participants from one another in the ways in which they perform their masculinities, their differences culturally, experientially, academically and sexually, as well as their varied relationships with and to their managed, clothed bodies.

POEM FOR CLIVE

You say:
I do science
My clothes are utilitarian
sweaters, T shirts
shirts and jackets for teaching
for respect
you say
I don't notice
I see no gender differences

then
prodded
embarrassed, perhaps,
you throw me a
bit of
Life, Art
her sharp shoes
his flamboyant fedoras and berets
where does he get them? you wonder...

I see and smell denial
an/aesthetic
I imagine a heavy dim drizzly Monday morning
you dressing in your brown or blue
with your favourite Mark's Wearhouse tan jacket
brown-lace-ups form manly respect, for teaching
and you turn and say to Irene
it is raining
therefore,
I need
an umbrella



PAINTING FOR CLIVE

With regard to Clive, I am particularly intrigued by Steve Penfold's (2007) provocative description of the university as a "refuge for the socially awkward and physically unattractive"(p.31). Despite caricature images of the disembodied professor—big on ideas with little care for or attention to style, fashion, or appearance—the body and its presentation in clothing matters. While scientist Clive describes his own clothes as "utilitarian", he acknowledges that he notices her "sharp shoes", and his "flamboyant fedoras". At times deliberately and boldly but more often in subtler ways, what professors wear and how they present themselves says as much or perhaps more about them, their politics, their academic disciplines, and how they wish to be 'read' by students, colleagues, and others within and beyond the academy than spoken or written words. Diane P. Freedman and Martha Stoddard Holmes (2003) describe the ethnic, disabled, gendered, aging, pregnant, and classed body of the professor going unnoticed, remaining invisible. "Even the battered briefcase" they claim, "expresses disregard for anything but the life of the mind and the practicalities of scholarship" (p. 7). Appearance for male scholars and "appearance symbols" are unexamined and presented stereotypically as the beard with tweed coat and suede elbow patches, because as Kaiser Chandler and Hammidi (2001) allege, men "don't have to contend with discourses about fashion, femininity and feminism as women do" (p.118).

POEM FOR TODD

*As a sociology/anthropology grad student
I wore jeans, T shirts, sweaters
then,
as a young prof
I was cool, young and hip
identifying with students
my clothes said, I'm one of you*

*in those days
we anthropologists did fieldwork
returning in the clothes
of our people
dressed as them
different
exotic
strange
we tried to counter stereotypes
at conferences
we swapped stories of
malaria and hepatitis
wearing our people's clothing
as a badge
saying
look at me
I did something
I studied in Cambodia, Ghana or India*

*that world has gone
in the 80s
came accessibility
and consciousness of cultural appropriation
how do we fit, what do we do?
we became self reflexive*

*now, I want comfortable participants
I'm not pretending to be them
in jeans
or as a corporate executive
participants have expectations
a professor is coming
I show respect
and balance
in chinos and a jacket*

*at our conferences
the quantitative sociologists
and others with NGOs and governments
are suit and tie wearers
the critical ones, into political science
wear jeans and leather jackets, running shoes or boots*

*sociologist women wear sensible shoes, sandals
there are old hippies in flowing skirts
and feminists with short hair
no make up
rejecting
style
superficiality
and frivolity*

*now
as a new Dean
I'm self conscious
older
when I get my clothes wrong
my whole day is wrong
at some meetings they wear ties
at others, none
there's a logic
often I don't get it right*

*I'm distant
uncertain
uncool
marked
an authority figure
away from students
colleagues
friends*

*but for you
I'm in my favourite
black turtleneck
and my 1980s tweed jacket, from graduate school
I got it right
I feel comfortable
for today*



DRAWING FOR TODD

Bodies are managed, clothed and situated in places and spaces that are gendered, spaces such as universities, schools, the business world, agriculture, sports, politics, shopping centres and hospitals (Connell, 2002, p.215). Within these spaces and places, typically male dress conforms to defined and strictly gendered codes in that men do not wear skirts, high heels and lipstick. However, their clothing is not limited. At universities, schools, in the world of business, in offices and law courts, in agriculture, sports, politics, and the army, male clothing ranges from the couture dress suit to the scruffy brown ensemble, the army uniform, the cowboy hat, the padded large-shouldered massive-bottomed baseball player outfit, to the artsy tight emo jeans, designer glasses and black polo neck sweater.

POEM FOR MARK

*My dad died when I was five
mother influenced me the most
a corrections officer, she wore a uniform
I taught for three years
in a boys' military school we are the masters,
the teachers and the students wore uniforms
I ironed everyday
The crease had to be done
and I polished my boots
I wanted to model for the students
the same standards
clothes perfect
pressed khaki trousers and jacket,
and an unflattering mint green shirt and tie*

*after that
South America
teaching in an American school
teachers were casual
I was the only one wearing dress clothes
students said
"you know, sir, you'll be mistaken for administration"
in shirt, tie and jacket*

*then, seven years in an English classroom
as a professional
shirts, ties, jackets, dress pants
mother bought me briefcases*

*this is a look, I guess
that I've adopted willingly
I like how I feel in dress clothes
I enjoy putting on a shirt and tie
at the university
I want students to see the professional
way of dressing and looking
I take pride in how I dress
everyday I pay attention to it
I really pay attention
I wear a shirt and tie most days
some days a turtleneck
dress pants feel so good*

*for you, today
a stripy Tommy Hilfiger shirt, with a red
inside collar
spicy
stylish*

*at conferences, I treat myself
friends laugh and say
"it's like you buy a pair of shoes at every
conference"
if I had the money I still wouldn't be lavish
I'm not into flaunting wealth
I'm an academic
I'm not paying four hundred dollars for pants*

*I am understated
yet a little radical
these glasses make a statement
they are at the edge
fun
people notice; I get compliments
they say, "neat glasses" or "I haven't seen
anything like that"
these glasses are about how I negotiate who
I am
I wear these for playfulness
I try to exude energy, dynamism
an edge*

*the other pair is subdued
classic
straight-edged across and frameless beneath
formal
for a meeting*

*I've a closet full of shoes
straight up loafers and brogues
and new strap overs
kinda funky with a little silver
still
the shirt and tie represent*

*a privileged middle class
it's important to engage students to think about
these things to see their own
white
privileged
layered identities*

*I purposely engage
students
colleagues
friends
through language and clothing
I like to destabilize
rigid limiting categories
like gender identity
and class*

*shopping for a dress-up party at Sally Ann
I found college kids grabbing clothes for costume
in a carnivalesque atmosphere
I was uncomfortable
other people were shopping there because these
are the only clothes they can afford
I saw a couple with their children, buying clothes
with their children, buying clothes for their
daily existence
while we chose clothes for fun
it made me sick*

clothing and language reek of privilege and power

*for the first couple of weeks when I teach
I talk about my partner
so they're trying to figure out who I am
"we thought you were gay" they say
why?
"well" they say "you used the term partner"
I say why do you assume partner means gay?
they say "that's what gays say"
"partner"
the reason I say partner is to make people think
about privileged heterosexuals
even my six year old kid uses the term partner
it's empowering, heartening*

*I really care about this in my research
in my ethnography I learned to dress like the boys
to be one of the boys
to take up certain positions among the boys
the code of masculinity plays itself out
through rules you have to follow*

*there's hierarchy everywhere
the white middle class senior male professors
here have a certain presence
a presence embodied by their physicality
a bulkiness as they strut the halls
with their stereotypical professoriate look
ugly
stodgy
I'm so disinterested
I disengage
I avoid them*

*to other male scholars
friends
I'll say "boy you look really great today, neat
shirt!"
they're not used to conversation about their
clothing but they've come to think about it, to be
mindful, to accept my compliments
at a party I go up and embrace them
my brother says "it's okay Mark, we can shake
hands"
and I say "you know Bob, I know that, but I can
also hug you"*

*when Simon was here as a young scholar
he dressed to the nines
he was beautifully coiffed
beautifully dressed
the receptionists said Simon and I were the best
dressers in the building*

*this clothing stuff makes most men
uncomfortable
it's unfamiliar
un-male
it's hard for them to express themselves
through fashion, with syle and flair
it's not accessible to them*

*I'm conscious and cautious
about the designer clothes I wear
I like clothes well-made
colorful, striped shirts
my clothes are edgy
yet conservative*

*I have the intellectual framework to talk about
privilege and class
yet class and privilege drip off me
dressed in a shirt and tie closes me
but I'm pushing boundaries within the confines
I wear shirts with
green on the cuffs and red inside the collar
peeking out
not too radical*

*I'm caught
conscious
cautious
yet pushing at the edges of
dress
language
and being
in my world*



DRAWING FOR MARK

Following Joanne Finkelstein (1997), in choosing clothing, accessories, makeup and a hairstyle, individuals un/knowingly express “a particular sub-cultural worldview” (p.152) and can “dress in order to criticize the dominant culture and transcend its homogenizing influences while simultaneously aligning themselves with the conventions of marginalized and dissenting groups” (p.161). As Pierre Bourdieu (1984) asserts, taste unites and separates; it classifies.

Dress informs, positions, distinguishes, classifies and legitimates social differences. It is, as Goffman (1959) claims, a way of presenting ourselves to the world and making a statement, intended or not. It is a means of self display, argues Anthony Giddens (1991). Clothing, together with clothing choices and configurations, is a form of literacy, a nonverbal form of communication that can be constructed, read, mediated, interpreted and subverted (Levi-Strauss, 1963).

O'Donoghue (2010) describes objects including material things, clothing and accessories as speaking to our “practices of living” (p.410) and to “something beyond themselves” (p.407). Viewing clothes and accessories as material objects, Alison Lurie (1981) writes that “for thousands of years human beings have communicated with one another first in the language of dress” (p.3). Long before I am near enough to talk to you on the street, in a meeting, or at a party, “you announce your sex, age and (social) class to me through what you are wearing - and very possibly give me important information (or misinformation) as to your occupation, origin, personality, opinions, tastes, sexual desires and current mood” (p.3). While Lurie does not acknowledge the gaze of the viewer, there is no naked eye (Jagodinski, 2010). Whether enacted entirely consciously or not, individuals are active agents, complicit in creating and subverting visual identity in order to mis/direct the gaze of the viewer.

POEM FOR WILLIAM

*This is me, William speaking
In a course I was asked
How I came to do gender theory
I told them*

*in elementary school
I had longish hair
and gender confusion
as long as I can remember
there were questions
about me not being
appropriately
normatively
male*

*leaving high school
I went to a speech therapist
my speech boxed me in
I wanted to pass as straight
normal
I loved wearing pink
but if you cover
you don't get the shaming
around not being quite the right sort of male*

*then, as a professional
a gay teacher of English who wasn't out
in a community coded through dress
people placed me
attributed sexuality on the basis of how I did
my gender
so I never wore clothes that deviated
professional
class coded
gender coded
in a tie and a tweed jacket
students commented
on how well dressed I was*

*I was teaching a year twelve class
my students took me
to play billiards
guys stopped
looked
I got scared
I had young people around me
saying oh, we should go
yes, we should go
the boys were worried
subjected to danger*

*I was never out in the Catholic schools
I taught in
And coming out wasn't easy
I wanted people to know*

*but the irony
paradox
was they already knew
I was named
before I could name myself
it was the gaze of men
and not being able to escape it
I went from teaching school to university
feeling freedom I'd never felt
I found myself putting
the rainbow flag on my office door
wearing
a rainbow bracelet
I wanted my students to see that
without having to confess*

*Teaching school was hetero-normative
our faculty is hetero-normative
I talk about my partner
I refer to him as he
I wear a wedding ring*

*just as heterosexual people talk about
their partners or families
as a naturalized discourse
little things assert difference
without threatening*

*professional norms are internalized
for me at university I wear
good trousers, a shirt
a jacket
conservative
but as a scholar
I am anti-establishment
my ideas are transgressive
challenging
inconsistent with how I present myself*

*on weekends
I go for comfort
like my Brazil soccer jersey
my partner hates it
it's a Saturday cozy thing*

*creating an identity
marks
distinguishes
visibility is associated with potential
for violence and shaming
I don't want to be bashed
it depends where you are
in Canada
it's about space
walking with my partner
beyond downtown
our first months here
we had food thrown at us
out of cars
three times
food
and a bottle
and a can*

*I thought: maybe we're identifiable
we're conscious of what we're wearing
we don't want violence
we don't want to invite it
we're careful
maybe it's the way we're walking, I'm not
monitoring that enough
so there's the emotional toll*

*but at the Men's Plus Club
it's different
the spa is closed off
it's a different sort of space
those men, supposedly straight
cruise
in the open showers, the jacuzzi
men walk around
intimately nude
some erect
those well-endowed
want to be looked at
brazenly, they drop the towel and walk
buck naked
the subject of one another's gazes
erections everywhere
I'm amazed
thinking
wouldn't you be trying to hide it?
I would
married players
have a way of looking, identifying*

*in class I talk about the body
as whole
as a signifier
as text
I'd feel less constrained without this binary
boys and girls need to be hemmed in by it,
they need a spectrum to express themselves
but we're a long way off
it's taken time to be comfortable
with who I am*

*no matter what I wear
my body signifies
femininity
my identity as a gay man is tied
to the queering of my body
if it passed as straight, the vulnerability wouldn't be
there
do you see? I use my hands as you're seeing
them right now
it's the way I use my hands
the way I'm expressive
it's associated with the feminine
it used to worry me, now, I embrace it
people know I'm gay
they read it off my body
it's the queer body
right?
talking to you
I realize the extent to which I use
clothing as a signifier of normalcy
I'm subjugated by a dominant culture
my clothes perform
they assimilate
neutralize
but I can't hide
that second skin
my leather jacket and trousers
don't protect me
I feel
vulnerable
actually*



DRAWING FOR WILLIAM

In *Contested Bodies*, Ruth Holliday and John Hassard (2001) describe the (Foucauldian) high status body in Western culture which is controlled, disciplined, and "normal" while fat/ugly/disfigured/disabled bodies are reviled and "queer bodies get coded as promiscuous and contagious; working men's bodies are imbued with excessive masculinity and bestial aggression" (p.6). Disordered uncontrolled bodies suggest similarly disordered subjectivities. In the workplace the body is managed, regulated, desexualized yet gendered. Uniforms and suits de-subjectify and "invisibilise" the worker (Green, 2001, p.117). In *Bodies out of Bounds*, Jana Evans Brazier (2001) notes that anything beyond the svelte, slim exercised "contained body" (p.235) risks societal disgust.

In Bourdieu's (1985) theories of reproduction, cultural consumption, and physical capital, the body is conceptualized as a form and bearer of symbolic value, produced presented and managed to acquire status and distinction across social fields and social classes. According to Shilling (1993) "bodies develop through the interrelation between an individual's social location, habitus and taste" (p. 113). The body is always an unfinished entity, which develops in conjunction with various social forces (Butler, 1993; 999). Bodies are agents and objects of social process and change (Connell 2002). Bodies, clothed or not, are seen and judged by ourselves and others in what has been described as The Gaze. Describing Lacan's work on the gaze, Jan Jagodinski (2010) notes there is always an "unconscious investment made as to how we should be seen by this outside symbolic order" (p. 303).

Concluding Remarks

Clothing is inspired by personal motivation, intention and investment in appearance and embodied clothing statements that are 'read' within particular disciplines and within the broader context of the academy, where the role of the body, dress and appearance is part and parcel of the academy as a bastion of prestige and patriarchal privilege, a place where many of its members claim not to bother themselves with such mundane matters as dress and appearance. Indeed, academic garb notwithstanding, the professoriate is embedded in a culture predicated on the supremacy of (disembodied) thought.

In stereotypical media images male scholars are presented as serious, distracted by ideas and theory from domesticity and things physical and present, their unknowing de-sexualized bodies are drably dressed and unattractive. The notion of the male body as present, beautiful, sensual, sexualized and packaged aesthetically for display is absent in media based visual identities of most scholars. For example, in Hollywood movie productions such as the *Nutty Professor* the obese bow tied bespectacled onomatopoeically named Professor Sherman Klump prepares his own (scientific) concoction, evolving bizarrely into slim sexualized Buddy Love. Dr Evil in *Austin Powers* is another corpulent caricature of a mad white coated scientist. In *The Da Vinci Code* Dr Robert Langdon is conventionally tweedy. The conventionalized image of the male professor in incarnations such as bow-tie or turtle neck and tweed jacket or lab coat seem natural, homely, invisible.

In this study I challenge conventional visual identities of the male professor. **Clive** may present and perform his male scholarly-scientist visual identity in a way that seems conventional, by describing his clothes (and himself) as utilitarian, purchased at Mark's Work Wearhouse in Canada. I could even argue that he presents as the stereotype of the absent-minded professor whose focus is out of body. In talking about his body and his clothing he states: "I don't notice" and "I don't see" suggesting aesthetic disengagement, and a mind/body disconnect. Clive presents in an inconspicuous casual to semi formal daily uniform of shabby worn blue and brown trousers, shirts, sweaters and ties, so that he doesn't have to consider his clothing choices on a daily basis. He clothes himself in a way that suggests an absence of a personal aesthetic, of physicality and sensuality. Yet he acknowledges "her sharp shoes" and his "flamboyant fedoras". "Where does he get that (fedora) I wonder?" asks Clive.

Anthropologist **Todd's** relationship with clothing is unsettled. He sees himself as "uncool" because he is now a Dean. There is a deep level of discomfort for Todd with regard to who he is and how he presents as an administrator, and the relationship between his scholarship/work and clothing. He claims there is an intuitive "logic with ties". Todd doesn't seem to understand

what to wear in order to “get it right”. On these occasions, his whole day “goes wrong”. On the day we talked, he felt good because he “got it right today” in a black turtle-neck, and a favourite tweed jacket from the 1980s (an object of memory and personal significance). Todd’s sense of being uncomfortable in his clothing suggests a deeper level of discomfort being in his own skin. With regard to specific clothing items such as the tie, Barnard (2002) notes, fashion and clothing are instrumental in the process of socialization. The absence or presence of a particular garment signals sexual, gender, social, ethnic and other differences (p.119). According to Barnard, clothing represents “a border or a margin between a public, exterior persona and a private, interior identity. Clothing cannot be reduced to a means of concealment or display; clothing expresses both simultaneously (p.119).

In contrast to Todd, **Mark** is a professor of language who enjoys challenging conventional media based male scholarly visual identities: Mark challenges straight hegemonic masculinity. As the poems reveal, scholarly clothing is a contested site of conventions and taboos. Acceptance within any discipline and the larger academy is key, and is determined not just by successful scholarship, but also by gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, revealed in a policed personal, cultural and visual aesthetic of the body and what counts as scholarly clothing. As Mark states: “there’s hierarchy everywhere/the white middle class senior male professors here/have a certain presence embodied by their physicality/a bulkiness as they strut the halls/ with their stereotypical professoriate look/ugly/stodgy/I’m so disinterested/I disengage/I avoid them”. Mark deliberately confuses his colleagues and students by wearing an “understated yet...radical” look, with funky glasses and Tommy Hilfiger shirts with a “flash of spicy red” under the collar and sneakers with silver on them. Mark’s clothes, use of language and way of being point metaphorically to a “spicier” self that he engages in/directly by pushing “at the edges” through clothes and words. Deliberately he baffles students and others by referring to his female spouse as a gender neutral “partner” because this suggests he is gay. For Mark, this ambiguity is cutting-edge, avant-garde, yet one senses that the ambiguity is more deeply felt than it is expressed through clothing: “I’m caught, conscious, pushing at the edges of dress, language and being in my world”.

While Mark enjoys challenging conventional visual and other identities, I suspect he would feel and act differently if he were living as a gay man in a committed gay relationship. By contrast, **William**, a gender theorist, experienced significant gender dysphoria as a boy. William’s hair was long by preference. He preferred pink and his voice was high. Realizing these characteristics identified him as effeminate, William tried to mask himself, or, better still, he tried to hide. This physical, psychic and emotional vulnerability William felt/ feels about being

a gay boy and then a gay man *has stayed with him*. As an adult, William describes several instances where he has felt physically vulnerable and threatened, including taking his students to play pool, and having cans thrown at him and his male partner as they walked in their own community. Unlike Mark, who enjoys the brash luxury of deliberately wanting to puzzle others about his sexuality through mixed clothing signals, all along William has wanted the physical and psychic protection of being able to “pass as straight” so he “never wore clothes that deviated”. He states: “if you cover/you don’t get the shaming around not being quite the right sort of male”. William’s scholarly clothes are professional, unobtrusive, but no matter how much he tries, or how “male” his clothes are, William’s queer body signifies femininity, and as Holliday and Hassard (2001) assert, queer bodies are seen as “promiscuous and contagious” (p.6), as well as vulnerable: William states: “I can’t hide/that second skin/my leather jacket and trousers/ don’t protect me/I feel/vulnerable/actually”.

Scholarly clothing is a contested site of conventions and taboos. Mark and William in particular challenge the power of social control over their appearances. Clearly, acceptance within any scholarly discipline and the larger academy is key, and is determined not just by successful scholarship, but also by gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, revealed in a policed personal, cultural and visual aesthetic of the body and what counts as scholarly clothing. Sanders (1996) asserts that every person’s experience of choosing, wearing and performing in clothing is negotiated within the spaces between opposites: public/private, interior/exterior, male/female, visible/invisible, and so on. These variables are operationalized within spaces, places, and through furniture, clothing, accessories and all other human made products (p.17). William refers to a particularly sexualized space: In the gymnasium William claims straight men show off their naked bodies in a most homoerotic way. Interestingly, Ian (1996) claims that male body builders are “narcissistic and insecure men driven to compensate for their feelings of inadequacy by uncritically fashioning themselves into cartoonish figures of hypermasculinity” (p. 196).

In writing about material objects within spaces, O’Donoghue (2010) notes that we perform as curators in collecting material objects—including by extension the clothing and accessories we place in our homes and on our mis/managed bodies. These objects serve as “informants” (p.408). As I stated earlier, even diapers are gendered. And from early childhood, clothing our constantly changing bodies is an ongoing personal, professional, cultural and often political curatorial project, that at any given time and place and in various spaces speaks to and about who we are, what we value, and similarly to the examination of the situated clothed body as a site of aesthetic, gendered, sexual, pedagogical and continually unfolding memory. We create our embodied gendered clothed selves by shaping the kinds of interactions and engagements we

have with ourselves and others with and through our clothed bodies. Gender and identification of the gendered self through clothing is both socially constructed and, in unique ways, it is also performed (Battaglia, 2010).

Earlier I referred to Cole and Knowles, (2008), drawing upon the idea that in arts- informed research, meaningful images and texts incorporated into research processes and products such as this paper deepen and enhance understanding not possible through conventional academic means. My purpose has been to examine the embodied clothing of male professors by engaging in arts-informed research through poems and portraits, situating these artworks within an academic research context, in order to reveal and unsettle situated meanings of male scholarship in different and alternative ways. The significance of this study lies in contributing to ongoing scholarly discourse which re/conceptualizes the arts, research, representation, truth, and authenticity. Through poetry, artworks, and narrative contextualized by the literature I have examined how male bodies are formed, managed, clothed and situated in spaces and places, offering, through the literature, visual images and poems, a range of alternative possibilities for and ways of knowing and understanding the male professoriate in relation to clothing from the point of view of Clive, Todd, Mark and William.

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