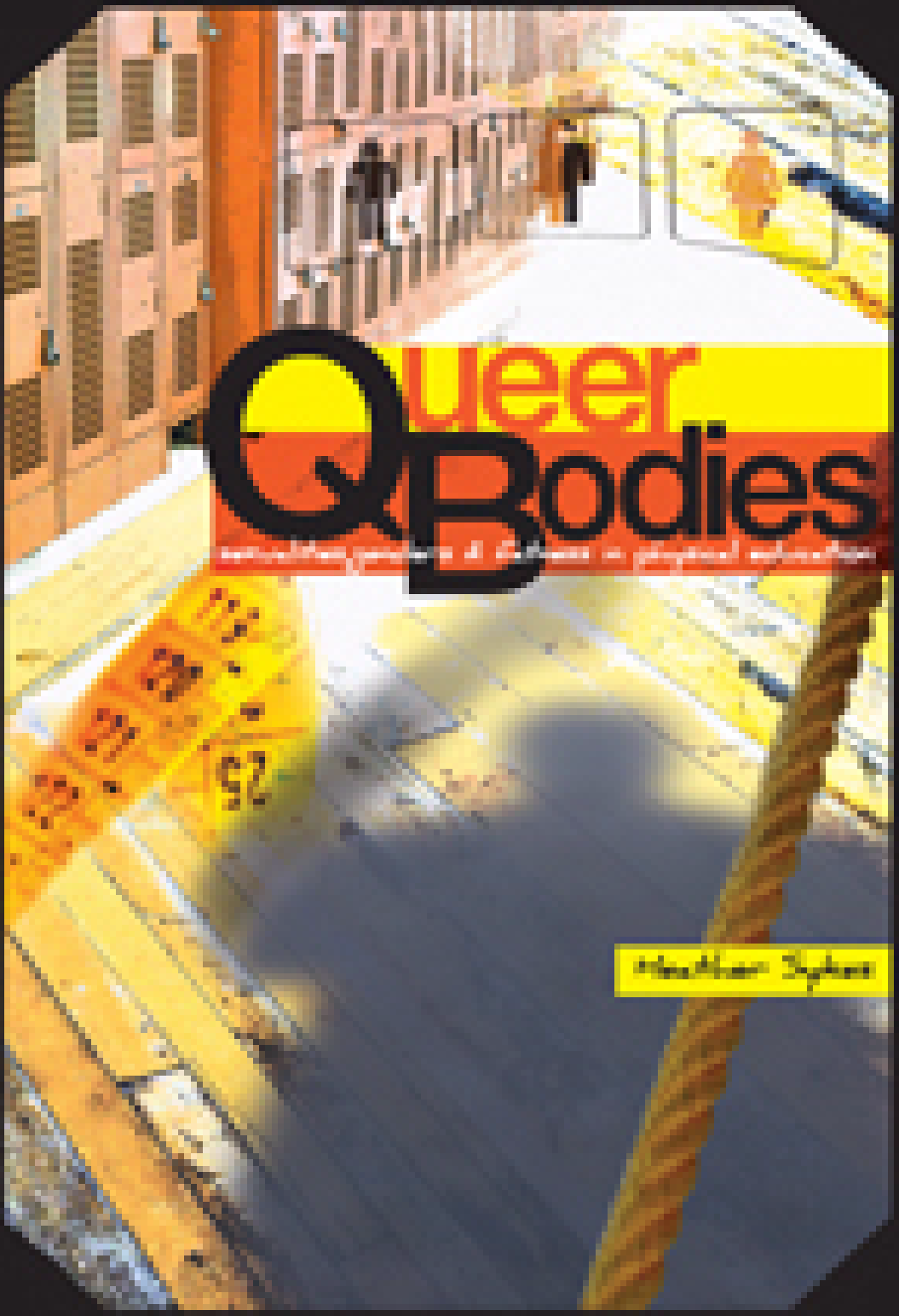
Queer Bodies

• CHAPTER ONE •

Introduction

Queer Bodies in Physical Education explores how students negotiate heterosexism, transphobia and fat phobia in physical education. The book illuminates how students form embodied subjectivities within particular constellations of ableism, heterosexism, racism and body discrimination during physical education within Canadian schools. The book offers a new way of thinking about the connections between physical activity, student embodiment and these forms of discrimination in physical education. It is based on participants' narratives about how they experienced their bodies during physical education and their adult insights about how they would change physical education practices in schools. Chapters in the book oscillate between re-narrating students' experiences and identifying the wider institutional discourses in which students' subjectivities are recognized, misrecognized or erased. This book also draws attention to the importance of psychic phantasies and anxieties about the body, normalcy, athleticism and health. Thinking about heterosexism, transphobia and fat phobia in both social and psychic terms aims to open up new ethical questions about curriculum reform, inclusive teaching and more expansive politics of the body for the future physical education professionals. Ultimately, the book offers an analysis of the how discrimination against queer bodies[1] in physical education serves to maintain widely held illusions about healthy and normal bodies.

The 2001 National School Climate Survey reported that 68% LGBT students felt unsafe in U.S. schools because of their sexual orientation (GLSEN, 2001). In physical education, middle and high schools students experience homophobic and heterosexist behaviors on a daily basis (Morrow & Gill, 2003). In some sport and physical education contexts, lesbian and gay sexualities have been gradually recognized and offered some protection from discrimination. Overt homophobia is, perhaps sporadically, being addressed through formal and informal education and social changes. Nevertheless, heterosexuality is still the privileged and normative sexuality expected of most students. Bisexuality remains a confusing and diminished subject position. Homophobic attitudes about lesbian girls and women, especially if they are too

masculine, still seem commonplace within physical education settings while gay male sexuality is all too frequently used as a put down or slur. There are too few physical education places where gay and lesbian students and teachers are encouraged to come out, or where homophobia is directly addressed as a problem.

Gender issues have been a central concern throughout the history of physical education. 'Gender equity' has been the central way of challenging sexism, discrimination and advocating for equal opportunities. Yet, ironically, gender equity has also been a highly normative discourse. When gender equity is limited to binary ideas about boys and girls, or male and female, it can actually work as a very normative and exclusionary discourse for trans and gender non-conforming students. The debate about co-education versus single-sex groups in physical education actively works to ignore the needs of trans and gender-queer students. Gender non-conforming students have to deal with emotional and physical violence each time they get changed for physical education or sport in boys' and girls' locker rooms. Even the skilled movements of the human body, perhaps the very essence of physical education, are continually labeled as masculine or feminine.

Being transgender or doing one's gender differently is hard in most schools. In the United States, 89% transgender students felt unsafe because of their gender expression (GLSEN, 2001). Within Toronto schools in Canada, where this study was located, feminine boys and masculine girls reported harassment more frequently than feminine lesbians and masculine gay boys because the former group had gender self-presentations that differed from heterosexual norms (Rice & Russell, 2002). Yet, being trans is especially difficult in physical education because binary discourses about gender permeate so many aspects of the profession from ideas about the body, the curriculum and even the built environment. The book provides narratives about variations and, sometimes changes, in students' gender identities. These narratives give a sense of the risks, assaults and discrimination facing students in physical education whose gender expression or identity falls outside the norms for either becoming a boy/man or a girl/woman. In most physical education contexts it is still very rare, if not impossible, for students to decide about, develop and live their transgender subjectivities.

The notion that people have more than two forms of gendered bodies is a very marginal discourse in physical education. The problem is not merely a matter of a lack of information about transgender, transsexual or intersex people and not knowing how to provide support for gender non-conforming students and teachers. These are important factors, of course; however, I suggest the notion of more than two categories of gender causes considerable psychic

anxiety for the profession. So many aspects of gender need to be reconsidered and reevaluated once the limitations of binary gender are recognized. That is, normal ways of doing gender, of being male or female, are at stake. This implicates everybody, most especially those bodies and discourses which have never paid attention to the privileges of doing gender normally. The lack of understanding about, and resistance to embracing, gender diversity indicates a high degree of transphobia within physical education as a profession. When transgender experiences and issues are silenced, dismissed and even denied I argue that, in psychic terms, this indicates that a widespread 'transphobic imagination' has a hold in physical education.

Issues of body size have preoccupied physical educators at different times over the past century. In the mid-1980s critical scholars warned about a 'cult of slenderness' in physical education. Twenty-five years later, physical education is in the grip of a discourse warning about an 'obesity epidemic' affecting children worldwide. Students who are perceived to be overweight or fat rarely have positive learning experiences in physical education classes. Racialized youth, especially girls, experience varying degrees of estrangement or disembodiment in physical education lessons (Williams & Bendelow, 1998), and the majority of women in the United States reported being dissatisfied with the size and shape of their bodies (Cash & Henry, 1995; Cash, Winstead & Janda, 1986). In fact, Deborah McPhail and I suggest that physical education is typically an unbearable lesson for most fat and overweight students, just as Susan Bordo (1993) showed that being fat is an unbearable weight in mainstream contemporary Western and North American cultures. McPhail elucidates how the current discourse about an obesity epidemic rests upon other taken-for-granted, yet, spurious discourses: fatness is equated with being unhealthy; fatness is all too readily equated with being unfit; the human body is thought of as a machine, in which fatness is a causal result of metabolic calculation between eating (energy-in) and exercise (energy-out). Many more discourses gender fat as feminine, racialize fat bodies as non-white and, in mainstream gay male communities construct the fat body as un-gay. All too frequently, these commonsense cultural ideas about fat bodies filter down and are played out within physical education classes. This book illustrates how students who identified themselves as overweight or fat dreaded physical education and found it almost impossible to create a livable fat subjectivity in this area of schooling.

Many educational critics, such as Jones, Bennett, Olmsted, Lawson and Rodin (2001) suggest that adult role models—including parents, teachers, coaches—who treat those who are overweight with scorn and disdain contribute to the problem; indeed, Canadian sport policy explicitly states that physical education teachers can positively influence self-esteem by rejecting all dis-

crimination based on gender, race, age, ethnicity, body size, ability or sexual orientation (CAAWS, 2004). However, the call for teachers to be positive role models and simply reject discrimination fails to acknowledge that psychic investments in self-other relations make discrimination a difficult social dynamic to fully eradicate (Britzman, 1992; Kumashiro 2001). This book goes beyond the customary explanation of role modeling to investigate how psychic dynamics between students and teachers complicate the process of body-based discrimination. Chapter five examines the psychic impact of teachers on the formation of students' embodiment, taking into account the intersecting effects of racialized heterosexism, ableism and body-based discrimination.

Yet, difficult as it was for many people with non-normative sexualities, genders and body sizes who were interviewed for this book to feel valued and be taught well during physical education, their recollections do provide valuable insight into how they negotiated these highly oppressive ideas about gender, sexuality and fatness. Their narratives document how some students managed to avoid or resist the heterosexism, the transphobia and fat phobia that confronted them during physical education. The book seeks to place the experiences of students who were marginalized because of their body size, their gender and/or their sexuality in the surrounding context of what the profession of physical education regards as normal, educational and healthy. Thus, the analytic focus turns from the individual distress experienced by countless students during physical education to the institutionalized discourses that define and confine what counts as a normal body, a queer body and ultimately an unintelligible body. I argue that to understand social change in physical education we need to consider not only the social but also the *psychic* aspects of bodily difference.

Each chapter poses questions about what is at stake, in psychoanalytic terms, in these boundaries and limits between normal and queer bodies. Questions such as: How are anxieties about health and nationalism read into the sexuality and size of bodies at school? Why does a student who transitions from male to female seem to endanger, rather than enrich, mainstream masculinity or femininity? How does the fat body both enable and jeopardize commonsense notions about the healthy body? What does physical education imagine to be the ideal, the educable and impossible forms of embodiment that give the profession its very *raison d'être*? Towards the end of the book I contend that, in psychic terms, the profession of physical education has a phantasy of the athletic and healthy child that relies upon, even as it excludes, the presence of queer bodies.

Acknowledging the importance of the unconscious, with its phantasies and anxieties, within physical education opens up new types of ethical ques-

tions. For instance, how do some students and teachers come to recognize intersecting forms of discrimination and, furthermore, go on to develop different body politics? Why do some teachers and students become lodged in, and others dislodged from, their normative subject positions of whiteness, fitness, healthy citizenship and straightness? Individual commitments to social justice are not neatly or solely determined by social identities and identity politics. Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003) who call for:

> *a rigorous awareness of the constructing activity of social processes and an equally potent analysis of the agentic struggles of individual subjects, that is needed in order to explore how specific subject positions come to be held. (p. 41)*

This is a matter of seeking insight into how subjects—as teachers, as students—become inscribed in racialized discourses of sexism, gender and bodily discrimination but are never entirely determined by these normalizing forces. Body politics, and pedagogical ideals maneuver around, and are maneuvered by, psychic dynamics.

The book provides a groundbreaking account of normative imaginaries about the moving body. The chapters that follow provide new ideas about the whitened transphobic, heteronormative and fat phobic imaginaries that haunt the physical education profession. I show how the ways in which the body is imagined, and idealized, plays a crucial role in maintaining the illusions of compulsory heterosexuality, unremarkable whiteness, everyday able-bodiedness and healthiness. One of the implications of this, in psychic terms, is that queer bodies are needed by, and continually produced by, mainstream views about the body within physical education. Suriya Nayak (2009) writes about how an external object, such as the racialized Other, may be filled with not only racist anxieties but also a host of other psychic anxieties. This book articulates how queer bodies in physical education are sites for the projective identifications of so many psychic anxieties about the body. I hope to encourage physical educators to think about what exceeds sociological and poststructural insights, by taking up recent work that places psychoanalysis in relation to postmodern social theory (Elliott, 1996). Thus, my motivation for writing *Queer Bodies in Physical Education* is to offer new interpretations about what is at stake, both socially and psychically, in the forms of heterosexism, transphobia and fat phobic that are commonplace in physical education. I hope this will complicate the conversation about curriculum reforms in physical education about how to value, respect and educate students with 'queer bodies.'

Theoretical Framework of the 'Queer Body'

Embodied Subjectivity

The theoretical framework takes into account how students form subjectivities, how their subjectivities materialized through the body and how power relations permeate bodily subjectivities in both social and psychic ways.

Embodiment refers to a "certain mode of being in one's body and of living that body" (Benhabib, 1992). The term 'body image' is also commonly used to refer to a person's feeling about their body although it has specific meanings within neurology (Head, 1920; Schilder, 1950), phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), psychoanalysis (Freud, 1914, 1923; Lacan, 1977) and contemporary feminist body studies (Grosz, 1994; Weiss, 1999). Embodiment is a broader concept involving biological, social and psychic processes (Weiss, 1999). *Embodied subjectivity* refers to the intersections between the body, the unconscious and identity. Embodied subjectivity is constructed within a normative gender-sex system (Benhabib, 1992: Prosser, 1998) that is racialized (Eng, 2001) and overvalues productive, thin bodies (Bordo, 1993; Evans, 2004; McRuer, 2004).

Identification plays an important role in the development of subjectivity. Simply put, identification refers to "how we make ourselves through and against others" (Luhmann, 1998: 153) and relate to others on the basis of our psychic histories and social locations. The theories about identification used in the book are informed by theorists such as Franz Fanon (1994), Homi Bhabha (2004), Adam Phillips (1997), Judith Butler (1993,1997), Jan Campbell (2000), Kaja Silverman (1995), David Eng (2001) and Jay Prosser (1998), all of whom have reworked Freud's early work about identification to take into account the complex intersectionality of racialized sex/gender and other social relations. There has been considerable scholarly interest in the unconscious aspects of student-teacher relationships (Britzman, 1998a; Benjamin, 1995, 1996; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; McWilliam, 1999; McWilliam & Taylor, 1996; Pitt, 1996; Todd, 1997) and identification has been an emergent theme within discussions of queer pedagogy (Britzman, 1998b; Luhmann, 1998; Pinar, 1998). Psychoanalytic studies of identification, therefore, have the potential to provide more complex understandings about the impact teachers have on students than role modeling research that focuses only on conscious aspects.

Marginalizing and Normative Body Discourses

Marginalization and *normalization* refer to inseparable processes of exclusion and inclusion across different social locations. It has been clearly shown that heterosexism and homophobia in physical education negatively impact the experiences of many students and teachers (Clarke, 1996; Dewar, 1990; Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Griffin & Genasci, 1992; Kirk, 2001; Sparkes, 1994a, 1994b; Sparkes & Templin, 1992; Squires & Sparkes, 1996). There are an increasing number of physical education studies into marginalized femininities (Chepyator-Thomson & Ennis, 1997; Ennis, 1999; Wright, 1996b), masculinities (Gard, 2001; Gard & Meyenn, 2000; Hickey, Fitzclarence & Matthews, 1998; Skelton, 2000) and their relationality (Kirk, 1999; Paechter, 2001; Penney, 2002; Wright, 1996a). In disabilities studies, Karen DePauw (2000) noted that while race and gender issues have been studied from a socio-cultural perspective in physical education, issues of disability have been regarded exclusively as a biological category. She called for "an examination of the assumptions about disability, the body and physical activity" (p. 358). These studies focus on how students are excluded on the basis of a single identity or social issue—as 'lesbians' *or* people with disabilities *or* students with eating disorders. This single-issue approach has been subject to scholarly criticism.

Marginalization examines how these processes of exclusion and inclusion intersect across different social locations. This approach emerged in response to challenges within the gay/lesbian movements raised by bisexual, transsexual and transgender people and within black movements by biracial and multiracial people (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 1997; Bell, 1997). Influenced by queer theory, understanding processes that marginalize particular students reveals the *normalizing* effects of dominant discourses about bodies. Such an approach can help to understand how students experience being positioned on the edges of what one participant called the 'world of normal normality.'

"I was Never in the Mold"

Scout[2] identified herself as intersexed and a queer, gender lesbian. She also described her class as 'poor white trash' and racial identity as 'mutt, but you would suppose I was white.' In this brief excerpt, Scout recounts how her whiteness changed when, as a child growing up in California, she moved from mainly black neighborhood into a new school:

> *Scout: I was always the kid from a bad neighborhood or the kid from a bad family or the poor white kid, or the freaky smart kid. I was just, I was never in the mold, you know? Like I said*

earlier, I looked like the mold because I was a white girl but I didn't fit that mold because I wasn't blonde.

I went from a [black] neighborhood where I grew up in... to this new white neighborhood. I never fit in because my people [were white], weren't you know the right color, But that's where I grew up, so that was my culture right? So they stuck me in this white neighborhood and I was, like, 'Hey, where are all the black people?' and I'm not black.

So [laughs] at a very young age I clued in that there's two very different worlds. There's the one I grew up in and then there's this other world that I can't access. I don't understand it. It just doesn't relate to me at all.

That pretty much set me up for all of these kinds of things with school and physical activities because I never had that clique, and there was no clique for me. So if I didn't have any social clique I wasn't going to have any physical activity clique either, because it's all integrated in the same system right?

Scout attributed her deep sense of never fitting 'in to the mold' partly to her classed and racial positioning, feeling that she 'never fit in' to the black neighborhood nor could she access the culture of her white neighborhood. Scout identified herself as 'poor white trash' and had a strong sense of not fitting into mainstream white culture of her school, especially the girls' volleyball and tennis teams. She went on, in other parts of the interview, to narrate how her sex/gendered body—she discovered later in life she was intersexed—was also problematic, if not entirely unintelligible, within her school, family, and competitive gymnastics contexts. This example shows how normative discourses about binary sex categories and classed whiteness constituted Scout's embodied subjectivity as outside the mold—not part of the 'world of normal normality.' Interpreted from this political and ontological standpoint, Scout's experiences have much to reveal about the intersection between particular formations of whiteness, classed identity and assumptions about dimorphic biological sex. Throughout the book, I seek to identify and challenge the effects of such normalizing discourses about sexuality, gender and body size.

Poststructuralism has been criticized for not paying sufficient attention to corporeal or embodied aspects of subjectivity. Several new areas of critical theorizing about the body and subjectivity have emerged in the early 2000s—areas of scholarship I collectively refer to as 'postmodern body studies'—which seek to redress this disembodied trend in poststructuralist social research. Postmodern body studies draw from aspects of queer theory, trans theory, postcolonial theory, crip theory and fat theory to provide multidimensional ways of thinking about sexualities, genders and body sizes as part of an embodied subjectivity.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Subjectivities

Research seeking to address *intersectionality* attempts to engage with the notion that "how we inhabit one category depends on how we inhabit others" (Ahmed, 2007: 136). Broadly speaking, I draw upon poststructural and sociological theories of embodiment, particularly queer theory, trans theory and feminist fat theory. In addition to using trans theories and queer theory, to a lesser extent I utilize other poststructural theories about the body, such as whiteness studies, postcolonial theory, and crip theory to permit a broadly conceptualized theoretical framework. Poststructural feminist theories of subjectivity (cf. Davis & Gannon, 2005; Lather, 1991, 2007; Weedon, 1997) have produced critical analyses of how *subjectivities* are constructed through multiple discourses within various sporting and physical education discourses (Birrell & MacDonald, 2000; Caudwell, 2006).

The following example highlights how one person's subjectivity was narrated within multiple and interlocking discourses about sexuality and gender.

"Coming Out As..."

Teiresias self-identified as a white gender-queer, transguy at the time of our interview. Here, Teiresias was recalling his coming out process:

> *Q: When did you come out?*
>
> *Teiresias: I was thirteen*
>
> *Q: You were young. So that was in middle school? Okay. Did you come out as queer, at that point? Or lesbian?*
>
> *Teiresias: I came out as bisexual. I guess this was the label that I plastered onto my forehead at the time.*
>
> *Teiresias: ...the [same] time that I was coming out, I had some really awesome friends. I was lucky in the sense that six of us came out as bisexual or gay or lesbian at the same time.*
>
> *Q: In your teens?*
>
> *Teiresias: Yeah, in my Grade 8 year. So, even if they weren't close friends, it was just really awesome having that.*

Teiresias' experience reveals that in addition to coming out as 'lesbian' or 'gay,' 'bi' and 'queer' were possible alternatives to normalizing heterosexual identities. This range of sexual identities taken up by students in Teiresias'

school resonates with broader shifts from gay and lesbian identity politics to queer politics (cf. Jagose, 1996; Nicholson & Seidman, 1995; Walters, 1996). Teiresias went on to narrate coming out as queer and, later, as a transguy:

> *Teiresias: Coming out just as queer at one point helped me about my body because, at that point, I was feeling "If I could just be a guy, things would be figured out." But then when I came out as queer, it opened up a space for differently gendered subjectivity and so that ended up definitely changing how I felt about the body that I inhabit. But then, later on, I ended up coming out as trans, and all the body stuff that leads up to that...*

Thus, Teiresias' sex/gender coming out narratives move through being bisexual and gender-queer and, later, coming out differently as a transguy. These multiple moments of coming out coagulate, and shift, across sexuality and gendered subjection positions.

Transgender Subjectivities

Issues about transsexual, transgender and intersex embodiment form a central concern in the emerging field of Trans Studies (Stryker & Whittle, 2006; Wilchins, 2004), a field of inquiry which encompasses some sharply contrasting theoretical and political elements. Indeed, few trans theories are seamlessly aligned, theoretically or politically, with queer theories (Alsop, Fitzsimons & Lennon 2002). One strand within trans theory rejects queer theory's deconstruction of sex/gender identity categories because it continues the harmful erasure of many transsexual and transitioned people's lived experience of, and narrative about, the 'realness' of their sexed identity (Prosser, 1998). In contrast, another strand of trans theorizing explores new transgender identities, communities and politics, and problematizes the very notion of living any stable, coherent gendered identity (Noble, 2006). This, in a way, builds on queer theory's deconstruction of sexual binaries (homo/hetero) and identity categories, to analyze how the prevailing, binary gender categories of male/female are insufficient for many transgender people (Halberstam, 1998). Following the call for participants who identified as sexual and gender minorities, people who were interviewed narrated their experiences in physical education across a range of gender, trans and intersex identifications. Some participants, like Arnand below, spoke explicitly about the shifting and complex nature of their sexed and gendered subjectivities.

"Why Can't I Be a Pretty Girl?"

Arnand identified himself as a middle-class, white, gay man at the time of the interview, yet he described how, while growing up, he felt 'wrong' in his body and wished he could be a girl until, quite suddenly, his body 'appeared' and he realized he was a boy who was really feminine. When he was seven years old, Arnand remembered: "that's when I started having my gender dysphoria." He recalled being teased because of his feminine gender expression as his masculinity was 'assaulted' in several contexts.

> *Arnand: I always had a bit of a gender dysphoria when I was younger...When I was a little boy, my masculinity was really assaulted by everyone else around me. I was constantly reminded, told, chastised, belittled on my masculinity. "You act like a girl. You look like a girl. You talk like a girl. You're friends with the girls. You hang out with the girls." So I learned from a very early age, there was something inherently wrong with my body. That was strong. I didn't understand why am I not a girl. Had I been a girl, my interests, my playmates, and my lack of interest in roughhousing with other boys through sport, wouldn't have been chastised. There would have been lots of room for me to explore what I wanted to explore, which were considered feminine, you know? It's no surprise now that I worry about my masculinity at 25.*

He described how he came to profoundly dislike his own gendered embodiment:

> *Arnand: I hated my body, I hated it so much. Like, why can't I be a pretty girl? Why do I have to be this ugly boy thing that's turning into a man. And it wasn't being a boy or being a man that I had a problem with... it was the social construct of what those things meant. It wasn't that I wanted to be a girl, it was the social construct of what being a girl would have allowed me to do at that time in my life.*

Arnand described forming positive feminine identifications with cleanliness, pleasant smells, fine motor movements and touch, hair and fabric—things he wished to be able to feel and sense. In contrast, he felt that mastery of strong, skilled and expansive movements, which have historically been normatively associated with hegemonic sporting masculinity, were deeply problematic because they deprived him of access to feminine activities that he so badly wanted.

Narratives such as Arnand's reveal the shifting nature of gender and sex subjectivities that complicate and destabilize the gender binary discourse that pervades every level of physical education. It points to the need for body stud-

ies to take trans and intersex subjectivities seriously and to tease apart issues of sexuality from issues of sex/gender in order to expose the myriad insufficiencies regarding gender within physical education.

Fat Subjectivities [Co-Author Deborah McPhail]

Fat theory, rooted in second wave fat liberation and feminist movements, is now burgeoning into academic field of fat studies that is, to varying degrees, influenced by queer and psychoanalytic theory (Kent, 2001; LeBesco, 2001, Rothblum, Solovay & Wann, 2009). There is a growing amount of critical research into fat phobia and the harmful effects of 'obesity' discourses in sport and physical education, evidenced by a recent special issue about the social construction of fat in the *Sociology of Sport Journal.* Deborah McPhail who specialized in feminist fat studies at York University, Toronto, conducted a detailed analysis with me into ways that participants in the *qBody Project* negotiated fat phobic discourses in physical education (Sykes & McPhail, 2007). Our analysis highlights how individual's responses to phobic discourses about obesity and their fat subjectivities are inter-penetrated by gender and sexual subjectivities.

"Shapes That Were Tantalizing and Real"

Several participants who self-identified as fat or overweight, at some point in their lives, talked about how they experienced their fat subjectivity in relation to multiple sex/gender identities. Sammy-Jo, who described herself as a queer dyke, felt "there is more room as a queer woman to fit a little outside the norm with my body." This point was echoed by Wawa:

> *Wawa: I think being around more queer spaces and queer women transformed that bullshit male patriarchal standard of what I was supposed to be into me as, kind of, a beautiful, sexy, hairy, you know, gorgeous woman. Just in my own right—without any kind of standards of what that's supposed to be. I think it unleashed sexiness in a different way too. It made sexuality so much more profound, more full and ripe with tastes and smells. Also, the incredible diversity of shapes that were tantalizing and real and whole, instead of performed and plastic and bullshit.*

Methodology

This book emerged from a qualitative research study, called *The qBody Project*, which was designed to examine heterosexism, transphobia, ableism and body-based discrimination in Canadian physical education. The methodology used a feminist-queer, poststructural approach to qualitative research (Lather, 1991, 1992, 2004; Middleton, 1998; Reinharz, 1992; St. Pierre & Pillow,

2000). People who took part in the project were required to self-identify with one or more of the following marginalized social groups: sexual or gender minority; having a physical disability; having an undervalued body size/shape. On a demographics form (see Appendix A), participants described their identities in the following areas: sexuality, gender/sex, racial/ethnic, class, physical disability; other disability; body shape/size. The people interviewed were adults, all over the age of eighteen, which allowed us to learn from their retrospective sense-making about physical education experiences. The purpose of interviewing adults was to provide self-reflexive data about changes in the meaning of their experiences and their subjectivities over time (Middleton, 1998).

To conduct the interviews I (Heather) worked with a team of graduate research assistants at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, who had an array of research interests and political involvements, such as anti-psychiatric survivor activism, body image therapy, critical sport studies and fat activism. Members of the research team used their personal contacts to find participants as a result of these research and political interests. We also contacted people via community organizations involved in eating and body issues, trans and queer advocacy, disability sports and fat/size acceptance groups. Most people interviewed were located in the greater Toronto area, although a small number of participants were based in other Canadian and U.S. locations.

During a one-year period, the research team held a pilot focus group (Fern, 1982) followed by thirty-nine semi-structured interviews. One or two interviews were conducted by a single researcher with each person, lasting between one to three hours. We approached the semi-structured interviews as inter-subjective conversations (Kvale, 1995) in which each interviewer asked questions based on a common interview guide, while also asking extension questions based on their own perspectives and relationships with the person being interviewed. Interview topics included individual's memories of physical education; confidence in physical abilities and feeling about their body; the impact of physical education teacher; and how physical education might learn from participant's experiences of marginalization (see Appendix B).

Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed according to a protocol derived from Mishler (1991, 1995). Participants were requested to choose their own pseudonym and researchers subsequently inserted pseudonyms for the real names of all other people and places. Interviewees were invited to verify and edit their own interview transcript, before the research team began to think about and analyze the interview transcripts.

Heather created a code-book (see Appendix C) based on the interview questions to numerically code or group narratives we thought were significant, illustrative or compelling (Kvale, 1995). We drew mainly upon Steinar Kvale's

(1995) condensation and interpretation approaches to qualitative interview analysis as our guide for selecting and interpreting excerpts from the coded interviews. At this stage, each researcher independently inserted comments beside select interview excerpts according to interview themes and the theoretical framework of embodied subjectivity and marginalization. These coded interview excerpts were further analyzed to identify discourses of normalization, intersectionality and marginalization, according to the theoretical framework (Eco, 1992; Parker, 1988; Sanger, 1995).

Chapter Summaries

In what follows, I summarize each chapter and set out my overall argument about queer bodies in physical education. Chapter Two opens with narratives that portray the range of physical education experiences remembered by interviewees who self-identified as sexual minorities. Heteronormativity in physical education was shaped within highly visual economies, both in locker rooms and in movement spaces. The visual discourse of seeing-is-believing sexualities is derived from sexological discourses that, at the turn of the nineteenth century, produced the idea that homosexuality was an *identifiable* disease or perversion to be cured (rather than a crime against nature), and more recent epidemiological discourses that cause the popular imagination to visually *diagnose* gay men's HIV status in terms of their muscle size. The biomedical logics of identifying and diagnosing homosexuality are haunted by racist and eugenic anxieties about miscegenation and mixing (Seitler, 2004; Somerville, 2000). The need to diagnose and medicalize a host of queer bodies also stems from militarized wishes and anxieties about masculinity, sexuality and nationalism. In the contemporary moment, the muscular gay gym body serves to incorporate racialized bodies, not only into the white supremacy of commercial gay male culture, but also into the homonationalist, securitized 'Western' nation-state (Puar, 2007).

These heteronormative, visual discourses are underpinned by racist, nationalist and scientific discourses which fuel the transphobia and fat phobia that was described by participants in the *qBody Project*. This is not to argue that heterosexism can be conflated with transphobia, nor genderism thought to be analogous with fat phobia. Far from it. The historical, spatial and experiential intersectionality of each form of body-based discrimination means that students live, feel and negotiate their sexuality, gender and fatness in specific and, often, distinct ways. Nevertheless, this project has led me to think about the extent to which common anxieties about the body underlie these different

forms of discrimination. The flexibility of new racisms, the resurgence of homophobias and religious fundamentalisms can be taken as evidence of the ongoing battle between Eros and Thanatos—psychic conflicts manifest as social symptoms that make our contradictory present.

Chapter Three reveals how various discourses about gender in physical education produce and stabilize binary subject positions—either as masculine or feminine, male or female—even as they permit changes and expansion within these binary categories. The narratives and analysis in this chapter question several taken-for-granted assumptions about gender binaries in physical education. The first part of the chapter sketches some ways that trans and intersexed participants felt about their bodies and their physical abilities. Their narratives highlight the variation, complexity and changing nature of some students' gender identities and sexed embodiments. Collectively, their narratives give a sense of how their gender and sexed embodiments felt extremely 'out of place' and dislocated within the context of physical education. By remarking on what may seem unremarkable, I hope to show how everyday discourses about gender in physical education are highly normative. I suggest that the reason these gender discourses seem to make sense is because mainstream physical education is still, in psychic terms, attached to a transphobic imaginary. Put simply, the notion of more than two, clearly distinguished gender identities—male and female—causes both conscious and unconscious anxieties about some of the central discourses within physical education. The chapter deals with three such discourses that work on quite different scales of the body: kinesthetic gendering of bodily movements and motor skills; curricular gendering of single-sex versus coeducation discourse; and the architectural gendering of the built environment.

Each of these discourses seeks to produce and, in most instances, can only imagine subjects who are coherently and clearly gendered as either boy or girl, male or female. The chapter encourages physical educators to question the value placed on masculine ways of moving; to acknowledge the arbitrariness of organizing students' bodies and teaching approaches according to only two gender categories; and to imagine locker rooms and activity as spaces of vulnerability, sensitivity and perversity. Such questions seek to imagine gender as more than two basic ways of being. More than this, it urges educators to consider how gender is never just gender; rather, gender is continually being produced by the ways physical education organizes and categorizes movement, curriculum and architecture.

Chapter Four, which was co-written with Deborah McPhail, examines how fat-phobic discourses in physical education both constitute, and are continually negotiated by, "fat" and 'overweight' students. Drawing upon feminist fat the-

ory, the chapter examines how students negotiate fat phobia in physical education. The narratives of many participants emphasized how very difficult it is for students to develop positive fat subjectivities in physical education; how weighing and measuring practices work to humiliate and discipline fat bodies; and how fat phobia reinforces normalizing constructions of sex and gender. The chapter also illustrates how some students resisted fat phobia in physical education by avoiding, and sometimes excelling in, particular physical activities. Finally, the chapter discusses the importance of having access to fat-positive fitness spaces as adults and tentatively suggests how the teaching of physical education might respond more proactively to alleviate current levels of fat phobia.

Chapter Five offers a fresh perspective about the role physical education teachers play in the formation of students' identities, students' feelings about their bodies and their confidence to participate in physical activities. It comes as no surprise that the influence of teachers is crucial for some students, while it may be almost irrelevant for others. However, this chapter reveals that a teacher's impact upon students is far more complex than the notion that teachers provide either positive or negative 'role models' for students. The chapter turns the teacher-student dynamic around to focus upon how students 'make use of' their teachers both in conscious and unconscious ways. The psychoanalytic process of identification foregrounds how students 'use' their teachers to create their identities and embodiment in interesting and, sometimes, surprising ways. The early sections present short narratives to give a sense of how students formed not only one but multiple identifications with their physical education teachers. These multiple identifications often reached across, or seemed to form in spite of, the gender, race or size/shape of the teacher. This is intriguing enough, perhaps. The latter part of the chapter delves more deeply into the narrative of two particular students, Gerald and Kevin. Gerald recounts how, on the one hand, he despised the anti-intellectual masculinity of his physical education teacher, yet, on the other, he also was attracted to his fit, white masculine body. As a young gay, black man, Gerald made use of this teacher in contradictory ways—both desiring and despising this particular teacher across the obvious identities of race and sexuality. Kevin, who also was coming into his gay identity during high school, formed a rather different identification with the white athletic masculinity of his physical education teacher. He dissolved the distinction between jock and nerd, identifying with both the intellectual and athletic aspects of his male teacher.

Kevin's and Gerald's racial and sexual identifications are situated with broader racist and heteronormative discourses about sexuality and masculinity that circulate within the Canadian context. Thus, the chapter portrays how

these students used their teachers and how they formed attachments across race and sexuality because their teachers provided little else. This points to the ambivalent yet productive work of loving and loathing unexpected objects within the space of physical education.

Chapter Six poses a series of questions: Why is the profession of physical education resistant to curriculum approaches that value and celebrate queer forms of embodiment and movement? Is something profound, but as yet unnamed, at stake in the call to recognize and teach queer bodies? The chapter tackles such questions by considering the unconscious phantasies associated with the idea of the child and the notion of enjoyment. Physical education imagines the ideal child to be developmentally appropriate, a potentially healthy citizen and rational kinesthetic learner. Secondly, physical education is founded upon pedagogical phantasy about teaching such children to learn through enjoying physical activities, games and sport.

First, I contend that the pedagogical phantasy of the athletic and healthy child relies upon, even as it excludes, the presence of fat, slow and clumsy bodies. Imagining what a normal child is, and how to best teach such a child, requires constant and difficult psychic work that takes place in a register quite different from the more rational, obvious challenges of how to teach diverse groups of children. It requires ongoing psychic work to idealize bodies—of whiteness, productivity, mobility, health, masculinity, athleticism. I argue that this unconscious work happens through neoliberal physical education discourses about 'fun,' 'healthy living,' 'participation,' 'obesity' and 'gender equity.' These phantasies that seek to defend the educational imagination against the loss of white heterosexual privilege, lost certainties about binary gender and losing the 'war against obesity.'

Second, I argue that the presence of 'queer bodies' in physical education threaten to reveal the phantasies upon which the 'normal,' 'healthy' and 'athletic' child is based. Queer bodies—'fat,' 'lazy,' 'unathletic'—are rarely imagined because they threaten phantasies of enjoyment and fun that binds physical educators together. Following Slavoj Žižek (1998), I propose that physical education 'fears the theft of its own enjoyment.' That is, the enjoyment of idealized, athletic bodies both requires and is threatened by the proximity of queer bodies. Thus, physical education classes and activities seem, in their very nature, to need some element of Othering and psychic aggression in order to provide enjoyment and fun. The chapter then turns to dodgeball as the quintessential example of what is at stake when students learn to be physically educated through enjoyment, or in psychic terms, 'jouissance.' The game, like many others, allows students to confront their own limitations and their own

potential annihilation while, for the majority, emerging with the illusion of being unscarred and simply having fun.

Participants in the *qBody Project* identified numerous approaches to changing physical education at the level of curriculum, policy and social change. Chapter Seven suggests that part of the reason physical education curricula and pedagogies are resistant to liberal, even radical, reform is because queer forms of embodiment evoke anxieties in physical education about the theft of enjoyment, the awfulness of fun and the fragility of fortified athletic bodies. This raises issues about the ethical relations the profession of physical education currently has, and might seek to develop, in relation to queer bodies.

Physical education increasingly compels students to become a neoliberal, healthy citizen. Neoliberal approaches to physical education imagine students learning health-related fitness and making 'smart' consumer choices about sport, health and fitness opportunities. Such rational, neoliberal curriculum discourses serve to avoid, even deny, the psychic aspects of imagination, phantasy and anxiety about normal and queer bodies. Psychic defenses pose curricular questions about the neoliberal search for control, health, fun, and simplicity in physical education curriculum. In this final chapter I call for critical educators to engage in an ethical conversation about the defensive mechanisms that sustain the phantasies, imaginaries and anxieties about sexualities, genders and fatness. The ethical challenge is to develop an openness to queerness and to re-imagine an ethics of looking and visibility in physical education. This may require educators to create a different—ethical—relation to normalized, idealized images of bodies (Silverman, 1995). Participants in the *qBody Project* illustrated how the visual and fat politics of queer physical activity spaces, well beyond school-based physical education, have something highly pedagogical to teach teachers, schooling and education. I am calling for a complicated conversation about physical education curriculum reform which involves learning from queer body cultures, see(k)ing more ethical encounters with queer bodies and re-imagining the homophobia, transphobia and fat phobia in physical education.