POWER, PERFORMATIVITIES &

PLACE:

LIVING OUTSIDE

HETEROSEXUALITY

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Abstract

This thesis explores the concepts of power, performativity and place and how these act to produce non-heterosexual women's everyday lives through practices of 'othering'. The thesis explores three feminist poststructural tenets: that everyday life is saturated in power; that identities and bodies are (re)formed through reiterated performances (performativity); and that place is fluid and (re)produced through performativity and power. These tenets are used to explore 28 non-heterosexual women's accounts of their everyday lives. These accounts were formed using six focus groups, three coupled interviews, 23 individual interviews, 22 diaries and six sets of auto-photography. The thesis contextualises these research methods within discourses of feminist methodologies which understand accounts of research as partial, performative and as formed in spaces of betweeness. The concepts, tenets, methodologies and accounts that make up the thesis are understood as mutually (in)forming and not as discrete entities.

The thesis considers participants' experiences of heterosexism and genderism. Particular focus is placed on everyday processes of othering in food consumption spaces; how women live with these processes; women's experiences of being mistaken for men; and the (re)formation of place through fantasies and imaginings. Through these explorations the thesis deconstructs dualisms, dichotomies and binaries, contending that everyday life is formed across and between these boundaries whilst hegemonic power relations are simultaneously (re)performed to maintain heterosexuality and normative femininities 'in place'. Relations of power and performativities render place (in terms of both sites and processes) fluid, (in)forming non-heterosexual women's bodies, identities and places as 'other' in relation to dominant (heterosexual) codes and norms. Discourses of power do not have to be named in order to be materially experienced and this thesis discusses the everyday use of the term 'it' in lieu of words, such as heterosexism and genderism. Moreover, hegemonic heterosexual and gendered codes and norms are diversely (re)made through relations of power and performativities. The thesis concludes by contending that whilst power relations can be theorised as fluid over time, everyday life is often lived as though power is a fixed structure.

Declaration Page

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other educational institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed ...   .

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Contents

CHAPTER FOUR
Methodology **90**

CHAPTER FIVE
Methods **125**

CHAPTER SIX
Everyday Heterosexisms:
(Re)Producing Non-Heterosexual Women's Identities And Bodies In
Everyday Spaces Of Food And Eating..**163**

CHAPTER SEVEN
Living With 'It':
Passing Versus Transgression?..**199**

CHAPTER EIGHT
Genderism:
Moving Between Woman And Man, Female And Male....................**233**

CHAPTER NINE
Imagining The City, Living The Other: Non-Heterosexual Women's Perceptions of Cities and Experiences of Towns **268**

CHAPTER TEN
Conclusion.. **305**

REFERENCES...**329**

APPENDICES...**387**

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter outline

1.1 Contextualisation

The separation of theoretical developments from empirical research that centralises women's everyday lives has often lead feminists to call for 'praxis', or the integration of theory and empirical research. Feminist poststructural theory has enabled conceptualisations of sex and gender to move beyond the material 'findings' of empirical research. However, it is frequently contended that poststructural research in general, and feminist poststructural research in particular through its focus on the discursive, serves to exclude the materialities of women's everyday lives. Ussher (1997) argues that the material and the discursive cannot be separated. This thesis aims to explore the relationship between feminist poststructural conceptualisations of power, performativity and place and the materiality of empirical research. In particular, the deconstruction of dualisms, and the associated analyses of, often unnamed, power relations and fluid subjectivities are used to explore 28 non-heterosexual women's accounts of their everyday lives.

Concepts of power, performativity and place/space have been both (re)appropriated and developed by feminist poststructural researchers. Poststructural theory is becoming increasingly adopted and diversely (re)appropriated within disciplines and subject fields such as geography and leisure studies (see Aitchison, 1999a; 2001b; Dear, 1998; Dixon and Jones, 1996; 1998). For example, Foucault's (1977; 1978) work on power has become important in conceptualising the formation of everyday spaces (see for example, Sharp *et al.*, 2000; Valentine, 1999a; 1999c). Here, theorisations of power beyond the formal political realm of state and institutional power are important. Cultural power formed in, and through, everyday practices and power relations will be explored drawing on a conceptualisation of the social-cultural nexus (Aitchison, 2000b; 2001a). Within gender studies theories have been developed that reappropriate the contestation of dualistic power relations challenging assumptions of pregiven sexes and rendering fluid the category 'woman'. Particularly important for this thesis is the development of theories of performativity. Performativity is the recitation of codes and norms such that they

become materialised and fixed and as such what we do becomes who we are (J. Butler, 1990a; b; 1993; 1997a; b). Theories of performativity have been reappropriated and developed in a geographical context with authors exploring the performativity of space (Gregson and Rose, 2000; Rose, 1999). Thus, space is both the 'medium and outcome of social actions' (WGSG, 1997: 7). This thesis seeks to use these theories to conceptualise the material experiences of women living outside heterosexuality.

Despite the growing reference to lives outside of heterosexuality empirical studies of non-heterosexual lives are limited (Weeks et al., 2001: 5). Issues of lesbian and gay men's exclusions from particular aspects of society and notions of the 'citizenship' rights of non-heterosexual men and women have been addressed elsewhere (see, for example, Donovan et al., 1999; Richardson, 1998; Weeks et al., 1999). Moreover, lesbian feminism has explored issues of heterosexual power and lesbians (see Chapter 2 section 3.5). Lesbian culture has been explored along with lesbian 'herstory' (Ainley, 1995; Gibbs, 1994; Martindale, 1995). Nevertheless, examinations of women who exist outside the heterosexual norm; their everyday lives and the othering processes they experience are rare. Notable exceptions include Valentine (1993a; b; c) and Dunne (1997) and these studies focus specifically on 'lesbian' 'spaces' and 'lives' respectively. They do not, however, investigate everyday social and cultural practices which (re)form non-heterosexual women's identities, bodies and spaces.

This thesis was initially designed to address such an absence in the research literature by examining food and eating practices. The change in focus will be addressed in section 1.4 below. Here is it suffice to note that not only have some forms of feminist poststructural theory developed without addressing empirical research, empirical research into the everyday lives of non-heterosexual women (and men) is also lacking. This project, moving between theory and empirical research, explores women's everyday lives using theories of power, performativity and place. Heterosexualised power is the focus as it is contended that such power (re)creates sexualised and sexed bodies, identities and places (J. Butler, 1990a; 1993a). Moreover, the thesis offers what I believe are moving

accounts of non-heterosexual women's lives. These emotive materialities are explored using feminist poststructural theories.

The empirical research which forms women's accounts of their everyday lives is understood as (re)formed rather than mere 'data collection' (England, 1994). Feminist poststructural concepts are explored using accounts formed with 28 non-heterosexual women. Accounts of these women's experiences were made using in-depth qualitative research methods comprising of six focus groups, three coupled interviews, 23 individual interviews, 22 diaries and six sets of auto-photography. This thesis aimed to explore differences as well as similarities between women. Consequently, research techniques, such as interviews and focus groups, which enable women to express their opinions were used (Finch, 1991; Kitzinger, 1999). The methodological issues, which separate qualitative/quantitative methods, have been problematised (Oakley, 1998, see Chapter 4). However, qualitative methods can still be understood as appropriate when seeking to investigate in-depth experiences and opinions (D. Bell, 1997; Valentine, 1997a). Moreover, due to the questioning of categories (see section 1.3 below) surveys and other research techniques would have contradicted the theoretical perspective of this thesis (see also Chapter 4). Multiple research methods were used to enable the formation of in-depth accounts and to address weaknesses in individual techniques rather than to provide 'triangulation' *per se*. The details of the techniques used, and the rationale for the adoption of each method, will be addressed in Chapter 5.

The thesis draws on a deliberately small sample of 28 women for three reasons. Firstly, from the outset the thesis did not want to classify non-heterosexual women as a coherent group and diversity between women was seen as important. In the study, generalisations across the group were less prominent than differences between the women. In a larger scale study I believe that individual opinions and experiences would have been lost. This is not to suggest that these individual experiences may not be applicable elsewhere. Rather, it is to advocate the importance of deliberately exploring diversity, not as a series of 'anomalies' but as salient areas of research. Secondly, small groups enable the use of multiple research methods such that, for example, individual interviews can address the

problems of focus groups. Moreover, this use of multiple methods with individuals enables the formation of detailed accounts. Relatedly and finally, in-depth analysis is possible with small groups. This means that, instead of looking for 'patterns', individual experiences and stories gain importance. This is, of course, not to say that the women did not have any similarities. Instead, it is to purport that small groups enabled the exploration of diversity as well as common ground. Perhaps the most obvious manifestation and benefit of using small groups was the possibility of investigating when women are mistaken for men (see Chapter 8). Had the research been conducted with a larger group other issues which relate directly to sexuality may have been more pressing. However, because nine women spoke of being mistaken for a man, it was possible to investigate what I have termed 'genderism'.

Having explored the theoretical concepts that inform the thesis and the methods used within the empirical phases, the discussion chapters of the thesis aim to:

1. Consider theories in the context of everyday life and consider everyday life in relation to theoretical debates.

2. Identify and examine the sites and processes of material power that act to (re)produce the everyday lives of non-heterosexual women.

3. Explore how non-heterosexual women negotiate and contest processes which make them feel 'out-of-place' or 'other' in relation to dominant sexualities and genders.

4. Investigate how place and space are daily (re)made in relation to identities and bodies.

5. Use non-heterosexual women's accounts to deconstruct dualisms, dichotomies and binaries including discourses/materialities, 'transgression'/ 'passing', man/woman and towns/cities to reveal the complex co-existence of ontologies.

1.2 Living Outside Heterosexuality: (Re)using 'Fluid' Labels

Nat: I don't even classify myself as gay cos I just don't like any categories

Leanne: I use it when it's good for me

Nat: if you probably listen to this I just leave a word out... I don't mind the word 'gay'. I hate the word 'lesbian' but I just I don't know, I just hate categories ... I know I'm gay and I'm not ashamed of it... People say 'oh that's Nat. That's just Nat' that's it.

(Nat and Leanne, focus group)

Prior to outlining the map of this thesis, this introduction will address why the term 'non-heterosexual women' is used in lieu of such labels as lesbian, gay, dyke, bisexual or LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual, see R. Butler, 1999).

Strategic essentialism is when diversity within a particular group, such as 'lesbians', is acknowledged but the focus is on similar oppressions to advance equality and equity (see Calhoun, 1996; Wilton, 1995). Individuals thus unite under a particular sign, such as 'woman' or 'lesbian' and these identity politics rely on the naming and labelling of these individuals within groups who are presumed to have some form of commonality. Wilton (1996: 128) argues that naming is important in articulating and maintaining power. Skeggs (2001: 296) contends that 'being recognised as something has been used by certain groups to mobilise claims for political recognition'. She uses the term 'lesbian' as a critique of heteropatriarchal power relations. Lesbians, Wilton (1995) purports, are important politically and strategically. Consequently, labels have been advocated as important in making lesbians visible and can be (re)used for particular purposes, such as contesting homophobic legislation or gaining partnership rights (Valentine, 1993b). However, labels imply internal coherence and commonality between individuals and this thesis explores differences between women. Consequently, the thesis does not align itself with strategic essentialism. This is not to say that these tactics are unimportant, simply that they are not salient for this thesis.

Labels can be problematic for individuals and may not account for cultural and historical variations (Weeks, 1987). Identifying same-sex practices within particular identities such as lesbian, gay or bisexual is problematic because these labels are socially and culturally (re)produced and locally and historically contingent (Ussher, 1997; Weeks, 1987; Wilton, 1995). J. Butler (1991: 14) contends that she will associate with the term 'lesbian' as long as its meaning remains 'permanently unclear'. Wilton (1995: 30) acknowledges that the term 'lesbian' is continually changing. Leanne, above, is involved in a two year relationship with Nat but does not consistently identify with the term 'lesbian'; instead she uses labels such as 'lesbian' when 'it's good for me'. Therefore, as Calhoun (1996: 222) suggests, same-sex female relationships do not necessarily mark one as a lesbian. Quinn (1997) illustrates the fluidity and contested nature of the term 'lesbian'. She outlines JoAnn Loulan's choice to identify as a 'lesbian' even though she is in a relationship with a man. Similarly, Heaphy *et al.* (1998) recount two instances where participants were in relationships with those of the opposite sex but still identified as gay and lesbian.

Both Heaphy *et al.* (1998) and Quinn (1997) argue that essentialist models, which see 'true' sexual identities as being suppressed until they are 'discovered', are too simplistic. Chapter 7 will further explore 'passing'. Passing is in part understood, following Berger (1992), as the process by which gay people pass as heterosexual. 'Transgression', when women overtly confront and challenge heterosexism by transgressing the heterosexual codes and norms of everyday spaces, will also be examined in Chapter 7. However, here I wish to contend that categories simplify complex and fluid identities. Consequently, whilst labels such as 'lesbian', 'gay' or 'bisexual' may be politically important, they are not necessarily used by women who exist outside heterosexuality. In addition, they may simplify complex relations which vary through space and time.

One of the main reasons for my use of the term 'non-heterosexual' is Nat's contention above. Although I could never have known that Nat would say this, a number of women and friends I spoke to prior to starting the empirical research said that they did not understand themselves as 'lesbians' (see Chapters 4 and 5). Heaphy *et al.* (1998) and Dunne (1997) recognise that the imposition of

categories and labels may exclude those who do not identify with any category. Whilst the women in this research may still have participated in the project, to use the term lesbian, gay or dyke would have meant imposing my labels on them. Burkitt (1998) contends that those who do not fit the categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual need a voice. As Chapter 5 argues, many of the women in this study were not 'out' and did not identify with the term 'lesbian'. This thesis involved these women in research, an area where they are often overlooked because they do not use or identify with the term 'lesbian' or engage in lesbian 'communities' or lesbian 'culture'. Moreover, I struggle to place myself in one category, such as lesbian, and only recently adopted the term feminist (see Chapter 10 section 4). Weeks (1987: 31 original emphasis) contends to make a statement like 'I am a lesbian' privileges *sexual* identity over other forms of identities'. As will be argued in Chapter 4, my multiple identities as a researcher were contextually and continually (re)produced in the spaces between participants and myself.

The term non-heterosexual was used to encompass a wide range of individuals but was also used to indicate the focus of this study. Women who lived outside the heterosexual matrix, which places woman with man (J. Butler, 1990a), were centralised. I wanted to involve women who were not 'out' and who did not see themselves as gay, lesbian or homosexual but still lived their lives outside heterosexual boundaries. Some participants were not 'out' in terms of publicly declaring their sexual identities and this is an important aspect of this study (see Chapter 5 section 2). In other words, this research aims to explore women's daily and mundane lives beyond heterosexuality and this did not have to include a public declaration or the claiming of a specific label.

Weeks *et al.* (2001) use the term non-heterosexual in their 1996 study '*Families of Choice*'. This included women and men who identified as 'lesbian', 'gay', 'bisexual' and 'queer'. Importantly, their participants were then able to self-define and the diversity and complexity of historically inferior sexualities was acknowledged (Heaphy *et al.*, 1998: 457). Some women in this study *did* understand themselves within terms such as 'lesbian' and 'homosexual' (see Marie, Chapter 7 section 3). These women are referred to by their chosen label.

Chapter 2 section 3 will argue in relation to feminisms, that labels, in part. create that which they name (Ahmed, 1998). Using the term 'non-heterosexual' has enabled me to create an academic account of certain women's lives outside of heterosexuality. As Chapter 2 contends, postmodernism and feminism may be created as internally coherent through the process of labelling them, but postmodernism and feminism can be understood as extremely heterogeneous. Similarly throughout the thesis the diversity between non-heterosexual women will be emphasised such that I envisage a plural understanding of the term non-heterosexual.

Unfortunately, I do not think I have achieved the aim of *not* categorising women. In order to discuss the project I have used the term 'non-heterosexual'. This is sometimes perceived as the new 'politically correct' term. This assumption can have unintended results when people approach women who define themselves as 'lesbians' and call them 'non-heterosexual'. In addition, when one does not fit heterosexual or its other, lesbian, then the term non-heterosexual can be seen as labelling women 'non-human'. This is of course unintended. As will be argued in Chapters 2 and 8 in relation to sexual categories, when one does not fit viable common sense categories that individual steps out of the domain of intelligibility and in some sense becomes unintelligible or not-human (J. Butler, 1997a; Probyn, 1999a; b). There are other dangers in defining something by what it is not. De Beauvoir (1949) and Irigrary (1989) recognise the inherent problems of defining woman as opposite to, and not, man. Women are, in this case, the 'Other' or 'lack' in contrast to, and defined by, men. This then puts women in a subordinate position to men merely by virtue of being defined as women. Moreover, De Beauvoir suggests 'humanity is male' (1949: 18) and woman is only defined as relative to man not in and of herself (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000: 124). Similarly, in this context, humanity can be seen as heterosexual. Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are often considered as inferior to and derivative of heterosexuality. Consequently, there is a danger in using the term non-heterosexual as this could reinforce this subordination and dependence. Although I feel the term non-heterosexual can be employed, I would guard against its unconsidered use.

Central to this thesis is the deconstruction of binaries, dichotomies and dualisms. Here it is necessary to clarify what is meant by each of these terms (adapted from the Oxford English dictionary, 1995). Binaries are here conceptualised as describing entities that have two parts or a pair, for example, male and female are understood as binary conceptions produced by and through heterosexuality. Dichotomies refer to two entities that are reiterated as opposite to each other and divided into two 'classes', for example urban and rural can be conceptualised as dichotomous. The pairs of any dichotomy may be equal. A dualism is a more philosophical concept which theorizes reality into two interrelated and dependant principles (WGSG, 1997: 84). Contrary to dichotomies, the two parts of a dualism cannot be equal in terms of power. Therefore, although dualisms can involve binaries and dichotomies, unequal power relations are inherent to dualisms (WGSG, 1997: 84). Dualisms and power will be further addressed in Chapters 2 and 3. Here it is suffice to recognize that although distinctions are made between dualisms, binaries and dichotomies these overlap and gender, for example, can sometimes be considered in terms of all three.

Drawing on poststructural, as well as particular postmodern theories, which validate the experiences of those who are 'other' in the self/other dualism, this thesis seeks to explore the everyday process that make women 'other'. Throughout the thesis the concept of othering, rather than exclusion, will be used. This is because the focus is on everyday practices and not abstract concepts such as 'citizenship' (although these are also important, see Donovan et al., 1999). In studies of sexuality it is often assumed that 'being' gay/lesbian will dictate how you act, thus the focus is not on everyday actions (see for example, Estenburg, 1996; Krammer, 1995; Weeks et al, 2001). However, by focusing on practices and processes, the thesis draws on Butler's (1990) conceptualisation of performativity where actions are understood as constitutive. Moreover, these practices and processes are imbued with power and consequently the everyday experiences of heterosexism and genderism and practices in relation to these experiences are the focus of the discussion chapters. The thesis seeks to investigate how these practices (in)form bodies, identities and spaces.

Whereas homophobia has been understood as the overt hatred of, and discrimination against, gay men and lesbians, heterosexism can be understood as the 'common sense' assumption that heterosexuality is better than any other form of sexuality (Jacobs, 1995). Peel (2001) uses the term 'mundane heterosexism' to illustrate the everyday nature of the taken for granted assumptions of heterosexuality as 'natural', and 'better than' other forms of sexuality. Here the term heterosexism is used to describe othering processes which result from presuming heterosexuality is 'naturally' the superior sexuality. Genderism is understood as the discriminations experienced when there is a disjuncture between how one understands one's sex/gender and how one is read. There are overlaps between genderism and heterosexism. However, they are separated because the term heterosexism does not encompass the experiences of genderism (Chapter 8) and on the other hand, genderism does not describe the experiences of heterosexism (Chapters 6, 7 and 9). Although some acts described in this thesis may be considered homophobic, I will use the terms heterosexism and genderism to centralise how non-heterosexual women are made to feel *other* to, and different from, the heterosexual and feminine norm. Importantly, discourses of genderism and heterosexism do not have to be named in order to be materially experienced; this will be discussed in relation to participant's use of the term 'it'.

1.3 Messy Research: Contesting the Thesis as a Coherent Linear Process

The production of knowledge can be understood as a contested process. Poststructural and postmodern authors understand knowledge as produced, that is (re)formed rather than preexisting. Poststructural authors, such as Derrida (1978), have argued that knowledge and meaning systems are formed through relations of power within dualisms. 'Facts' and objective knowledge can be seen as produced and legitimated by concealing or hiding opposing viewpoints, validating only one view of the world. In this way a grand narrative is created which explains the social world and is portrayed as objective truth (see Chapter 2 and 4). Feminist researchers, for example Oakley (1981), have emphasised the importance of knowledge makers, such as researchers. Knowledge is made and it

is relevant who is producing it and how knowledge is constructed (Harding, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1993). Epistemological debates such as these have been further problematised in terms of writing. Pratt (2000: 650) argues that writing is not a space of 'authentic testimony'. Here I wish to contest the understanding of the thesis as a neutral reflection of a coherent research process.

I see the process of writing a thesis as similar to my life: messy (c.f. Rose, 1997). By messy, I mean to imply that it is complex, multifaceted and disjointed and, at times, untidy and incoherent. This thesis engages with messy theories which do not offer or seek linear progressions or conclusive answers. The thesis itself does not tell a linear story. Instead, it moves in multiple directions. At the outset it is contended that there are no 'findings', because all knowledge is the reworking and (re)development of other knowledges. The thesis therefore does not advocate, one solution to *a* problem, nor does it offer a course of action to effect this solution.

The thesis is formed using research with complex and multifaceted people who refuse to be placed into neat categories but who tell stories that intersect and overlap. Chapter 4 will argue, in relation to reflexivity, that the notion of 'neutral' knowledge has been contested (Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1991, McDowell, 1989). Increasingly accounts of researchers' 'positionality' are important in discussing research (McDowell, 1992; Valentine, 2002). Chapter 4 will investigate the intricacies of these debates, but here it is suffice to note that research is (re)made by someone. This thesis is formed by a person who occupies multiple, fluid and constructed social positions and I do not remove myself from the analysis in order to provide an objective and neutral viewpoint. Consequently, throughout this thesis I am referred to, and at times incorporated into, the analysis.

The process which brought me to the point of handing in this piece of work has been disjointed and complex. It has not consisted of a three year linear progression as I laid out in my research proposal: year one literature review; year two data collection; year three write up. Rather, there have been elements of 'data collection' in my first and third year and I still find myself 'reviewing' the

literature. This final piece of work is perhaps the least messy aspect of the process. It is written and presented in a relatively conventional linear form, it has a structure that can be discerned clearly in the contents list. It follows a logical sequence of theory, methodology, methods, discussion and conclusion. Along with the conventions of writing, the thesis adheres to university regulations. In addition, how the thesis is written takes account of the research training programmes I have been through and the advice I have been given both formally and informally. By adhering to particular conventions of thesis writing, the focus is on what is written rather than how it is written.

Writing is a necessary exercise but it disguises complexity and forces coherency. There is a tension in writing about theories, such as poststructuralism, which defy coherence and emphasise diversity and fluidity. Moreover, writing as a medium of expression has been challenged since Plato (Derrida, 1978; see Chapter 2 section 2.2ii). This thesis seeks to challenge categories and unity. Therefore, there is a tension in naming and categorising theories and creating a sense of harmony between authors and concepts under particular signs. In addition, this thesis in part stabilises fluid processes through writing of them. However, recognising the paradox of writing about fluid identities, bodies and spaces formed through reiterated power relations, I believe that writing, as the main and most powerful medium of communication within academia, should be employed with the recognition that it is powerful tool (c.f. Flax, 1990a, see Chapter 2 section 2.1).

Engaging in theoretical discussions and including multiple voices in these discussions is understood as pertinent especially where white, male, middle class and heterosexual voices are privileged (see Chapter 2 section 2). Bondi (2002) contends that there are tensions in working within academia which can be understood as patriarchal and heterosexist. Nevertheless:

... if... 'feminism' and the 'academy' operate within the framework of paradox then their uneasy relationship might contain possibilities for absurd surprises and associated pleasures.

(Bondi, 2002: 81)

This thesis follows Bondi (1997a: 250-251) in preferring a strategy of challenging patriarchy (heterosexism and genderism) from within our intellectual heritage. In order to participate in academia thesis writing is becoming increasingly necessary. This thesis seeks to work at the margins of conventional forms 'by criss-crossing the boundaries of what is conventional' (Bondi, 1997a: 254). Thus, in a number of ways, the thesis does retain some of the messiness of the research process. Rather than apologise for this and try to hide it or tidy the research retrospectively, I want to highlight three ways in which the thesis contests the traditions of writing this form of work.

The thesis moves from the subject fields of gender studies and sexuality to the discipline of geography. Convention suggests that one should move from the discipline of geography to its practical application in a subject field, however, here this has been reversed. Feminist poststructural theory can be seen as being extensively (re)developed in gender studies. This theoretical perspective has then been applied and (re)used in geographies of sexualities and gender. Chapter 3 clearly illustrates how theories of performativity are used to reconceptualise space/place. Similarly in Chapter 2 cultural geographies are seen as (re)appropriating postmodernism and poststructuralism. The geographical literature is mainly examined in the specific discussion chapters rather than at the beginning of the thesis. This is because at the start of the thesis I wish to focus on theory and the introduction of important concepts and ideas.

When undertaking research training courses it is advised that students move from the general to the specific. In the discussion chapters this thesis moves from the specific context of foodscapes and eating spaces to wider discussions of gender and then explores towns and cities. In other words, the issues related to food and eating in local contexts are explored in Chapter 6 and 7 and applied to regional understandings of place in Chapter 9, reversing the more traditional regional/global theorisations that are then applied to local contexts.

At the outset, the research aimed to examine non-heterosexual women's food and eating practices as well as experiences of food and eating spaces. Food patterns have been explored in heterosexual relationships, particularly the family (for

example, Beardsworth, 1997; Burgoyne and Clarke, 1983; Charles and Kerr, 1986; Kremmer *et al.*, 1998; Mennell *et al.*, 1992; Murcott, 1982; 1983a; b). This literature explores who eats what, who prepares the food and cooks and what is considered a 'proper meal'. Initially, this thesis aimed to explore similar issues in a non-heterosexual context. The study aimed to explore food practices outside of the heterosexual 'family' and investigate non-heterosexual women's everyday lives through the mundane power relations inherent to foodscapes. However, during the empirical research women's stories of their lives beyond food and eating were so powerful that I could not ignore them. These women's stories changed my preconceptions of this thesis and what it would focus on. Food and eating processes became less important as women recounted instances of heterosexism (Chapter 6, 7 and 9) and genderism (see Chapter 8). The issues participants raised were ones that I could not, nor did I want to, ignore or negate. On the contrary, I believe that they deserve the central position they are afforded in this thesis. Chapter 4 section 5 further explores this transition and the changes I went through. Chapter 5 section 3 details the specificities of how these changes came about and the impacts they had on the final thesis. The theoretical chapters (Chapters 2 and 3) were written after I decided to change the focus of the project. Consequently, they were constructed in relation to participants' accounts and again this does not follow the supposed linear pattern of thesis research and writing.

1.4 Map of the Thesis

The thesis draws on Foucault's (1977; 1978) theories of power relations and J. Butler's (1990; 19993a; 1997a) theories of performativity and understandings of place as fluid (Massey, 1999; Rose, 1999). These conceptualisations of performativity, power and place will be introduced in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the empirical research using feminist poststructural concepts. Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, interweave power, performativity and place with empirical research and specific examples. Particular issues transgress the chapters, namely: theorisations of performativity, power and place; the

(re)formation of identities, bodies and spaces; discussions of discourses and materialities, and the deconstruction of dualisms, dichotomies and binaries.

This chapter has sought to introduce the thesis and the main research aims. It has described why the term 'non-heterosexual' is used and introduced the concept of 'othering' that will be further explained in Chapter 3. The chapter has argued that this thesis will not be a traditional thesis and contended that the research process is messy in that it is complex and multifaceted. It is conducted by and with people who are complex and fit into and move between many boxes simultaneously but not consistently. Moreover, the tension between writing within particular formal and informal regulations and the subject matter of this thesis has been recognised. The chapter will conclude by outlining a map of the thesis.

Chapters 2 and 3 will introduce the theoretical concepts which will be considered in this thesis. Chapter 2 will contextualise the theories discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 2 introduces postmodern, poststructural, cultural geographical and feminist theories. Acknowledging the complexity and multifaceted nature of these perspectives, the chapter does not aim to explore in-depth the many facets of postmodernism, poststructuralism or cultural geographies' appropriation of these. Rather, the chapter will outline the main aspects of postmodernism and poststructuralism which are salient for this thesis, offering one potential critique of these. It will also introduce a range of feminist theories to illustrate the breadth and diversity of feminism.

Having examined the key concepts of postmodernism, poststructuralism and feminism, Chapter 3 will move on to discussions of power, performativity and place. Chapter 3 is a key chapter in this thesis as it explains my understanding of the interrelationship between bodies, identities and spaces. It also describes the conceptualisations of power, performativity and place which will be used in the thesis. The chapter will interweave discussions of power, performativity and place with understandings of identities, bodies and spaces in the context of sex/gender and heterosexuality. In this way, it will begin the processes of

examining discourses *and* materialities. The chapter will finish by exploring the possibilities and problems of feminist poststructural theories and research.

Chapters 4 and 5 will conceptualise and outline the empirical research undertaken for this thesis. Chapter 4 will examine methodological issues after separating a discussion of methods from methodologies. It will argue that there are salient differences between methods and methodologies and that these should be acknowledged and accounted for. The chapter will then move on to discuss three methodological issues relevant to this thesis: namely the importance of reflexivity; the place of power in research, and the requirement for social change in order to make research feminist. These issues will be understood by developing the concepts in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 5 is the methods chapter. However, it will begin in the grey area between methods and methodologies examining issues of friends in research and the changing research focus of this project. The chapter will then move on to a focus on methods outlining particularities of how this study was conducted. This section of the chapter will describe: the pilot study; how participants were contacted; the use of focus groups, coupled interviews and interviews; issues pertaining to recording and transcribing; diaries and auto-photography; how the analysis was undertaken; how feedback was given to participants and ethical issues that have not been addressed previously.

Chapter 6 will begin the discussion of the empirical research in relation to the theoretical concepts introduced in Chapters 2 and 3. The chapter will start by outlining the literature of geographies of consumption and food and eating. It will move on to explore how women in this study discuss their sexuality and experiences of heterosexism, introducing the concept of 'it'. The chapter investigates the use of the term 'it' in lieu of terms such as heterosexism thus rendering certain forms of othering unnamed. Following this, the chapter will explore embodiments and identities in three specific sites or places: restaurants, work and home. The chapter will contest the dualisms and dichotomies of public/private, work/leisure and materialities/discourses. Moreover, it will further

consider theories of power, particularly those relating to critiques of heterosexual power from those who exist outside the heterosexual matrix.

Chapter 7 continues the discussion of heterosexism in the context of spaces of food and eating. Having established that there is an 'it' which often goes unnamed and can be accepted in everyday spaces, this chapter will explore how women live with 'it'. The chapter is divided into two sections, the first examining 'passing' and the second 'transgression'. The dualistic dichotomy of transgression equating to good and passing associated with bad is critically examined. Moreover, the chapter considers the concept of performativity by investigating whether non-heterosexual women unreflexively repeat norms and codes. It explores the (re)formation of codes and norms through performativities and, in this way, examines the potentials of feminist poststructuralism introduced in Chapter 3.

Chapter 8 will move from discussions of sexuality to a discussion of gender. It will start by investigating the literature in gender studies which contests the assumption of two binary sexes/genders. The chapter will then introduce the concept of 'genderism' and discuss women's experiences of this form of discrimination. The chapter will address what has been termed the 'toilet problem' which is the problem women who are mistaken for men experience when using the 'ladies room'. It will then explore women's mistaken identities and how they contest these 'mistakes'. Finally the chapter will discuss the discourses of 'mistakes' and further consider the potentials of feminist poststructural theories.

Chapter 9 will conclude the discussion chapters by focusing on place. Having investigated the formation of identities and embodiments, the thesis further explores the performativities of place. This chapter begins by outlining how geographies of sexualities have developed in relation to rural and urban spaces. The chapter then moves on to examine the urban/rural dichotomy using non-heterosexual women's imaginings of place. The focus is on women who live in towns and their imaginings of cities as urban Meccas, together with investigations of the intersections between fantasies, performativities and place.

The conclusion begins by synthesising the thesis in a manner similar to this section of the introduction. It then highlights and further explores some issues which move between the chapters and examines how this thesis has addressed particular concepts which can be understood within feminist poststructuralism. The chapter then reflects on the research process and my own personal development throughout this journey. The thesis then concludes by exploring 'future' research possibilities.

Chapter Two

Poststructuralism, Postmodernism And Feminism:

Fluidity, Dualisms And Diversity

Chapter outline

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce postmodernism/poststructuralism, cultural geographies and feminism. It is not a comprehensive review of all the literature in these areas. Instead, the chapter seeks to highlight particular issues which are salient to this thesis and which will be further developed in Chapter 3. These are messy concepts and postmodernism and poststructuralism in particular may not be defined as 'positions' (J. Butler and Scott, 1992: xiv). Consequently, it is recognised that this chapter does not offer extensive histories of postmodernism and poststructuralism and that the very act of writing may make coherent something that is not. Moreover, both this chapter and the next do not claim to be 'literature reviews' in the traditional sense. Rather, they serve as theoretical chapters with the literature regarding specific topics, such as **geographies of food** consumption (Chapter 6), transgression and passing (Chapter 7), gender transgressions (Chapter 8) and rural and urban geographies of sexualities (Chapter 9), addressed in greater detail in the four discussion chapters.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first outlines postmodernism, structuralism and poststructuralism by looking at the differences as well as commonalities between postmodernism and poststructuralism. Following this, certain concepts in cultural geographies are presented as a specific disciplinary example of postmodern theories and their appropriation. The chapter aims to introduce concepts which have been defined within postmodernism, poststructuralism and cultural geographies and which are relevant for this thesis. The second section moves on to recognise the co-existence of diverse forms of feminism, with a brief account of liberal, radical, Marxist/socialist, black, lesbian and postmodern feminism. Whilst recognising the usefulness of these categories, the simple division of feminism into typologies is problematised and feminism understood as plural and diverse. In this way the chapter contextualises the discussions of feminist poststructuralism that will be further developed in chapter 3.

2.2 Poststructuralism/Postmodernism

Postmodernism/poststructuralism are difficult to categorise and are perhaps best understood as theoretical perspectives which have been differentially appropriated across and between disciplines and subject fields. This section will briefly introduce postmodernism before moving on to poststructuralism. Both postmodernism and poststructuralism are simplified and only relevant aspects of the theories introduced. Postmodernism is introduced first because, it will be argued, poststructuralism can address some of the weaknesses of postmodernism.

Carter (1998: 103) contends that poststructuralism is 'genealogically rooted in postmodernism'. The terms postmodernism and poststructuralism are often conflated, associated and intertwined. The aim here is not to create rigid boundaries between these terms but to argue, that for the purposes of this thesis, it is important to distinguish between them whilst acknowledging that they are overlapping and mutually informative. Due, but not limited, to their histories, poststructuralism and postmodernism cannot be merged and, although they share similarities, their differences should be recognised. This section follows Peters (1999) in differentiating postmodernism from poststructuralism with reference to their objects of study, i.e. modernism and structuralism respectively. Whilst it is important to explore structuralism as it is (re)worked by poststructuralism, modernist theories are not considered as relevant in this context. Consequently, this chapter will not outline modernism except with reference to postmodernism.

2.2.1 Postmodernism

Postmodernism can be seen to have its roots in modernism, although both modernist and postmodernist theories now co-exist. Many theorists who attempt to define postmodernism look to differentiate it from modernism (Flax, 1990a; Natoli and

Hutcheon, 1993). However, postmodernism is not simply an evolution of modernism, superseding and replacing modernism. Instead, postmodernism can be viewed as a dynamic and diverse engagement with a diversity of both textual and visual artefacts, critiquing and challenging diverse modernisms. The focus of this thesis is social relations and, consequently, modernist and postmodern explorations of art and modernist metatheories of society will not be explored (Peters, 1999; Yentzer, 1995). Instead this section will outline aspects of postmodernism important to the thesis.

Whereas modernism held out the dream of an attainable order, postmodernism resists this assumption of order and coherence (Clarke, 1997). Therefore, it is difficult to offer a coherent definition of postmodernism because 'it' resists classification and definition:

By even speaking of "postmodernism", I run the risk of violating some of its central values - heterogeneity, multiplicity and difference. Postmodernists claim, however, that the "fictive" and nonunitary nature of concepts need not negate their meaningfulness or usefulness.

(Flax, 1990a: 188)

Ahmed (1998) argues that in defining postmodernism it is made a theory, often a generalising theory. By writing of 'postmodern' we are (re)producing 'postmodernism'. Consequently, recognising all writing as constitutive, I am (re)creating theories throughout this chapter and this thesis. However, following Flax above, postmodernism's slipperiness and understandings of writing as constitutive should not prevent us from speaking or writing.

One of postmodernism's central tenets is a deliberate attack on rationalist metanarratives which are associated with modernist epistemologies (Dear, 1988; Flax, 1990a). Modernist metanarratives and grand theories seek 'to build systematic accounts of the world which aspire to rigorous standards of exactness' and want to 'understand the totality of social life' in 'terms of stories that add up' (Thrift, 1999: 297). This thesis draws on postmodern (and feminist) critiques of grand narratives and assumptions of universal truths where such grand narratives are exposed as systematically marginalizing whilst claiming universality (Pile and Rose, 1992: 126). Moreover, modern narratives

23

are seen as suppressing difference under the guise of universality and their search for one 'truth'. Claims to truth are thus seen as competing, fluid narratives, written by and for someone, usually the white, middle class, heterosexual, male who then claims universality for all people (Pile and Rose,1992; Natoli and Hutcheon, 1993).

Flax (1990a) argues that postmodernism is based in philosophy and a questioning of truth claims without contextualisation. Therefore, postmodern theories look to the local and the specific rather than the universal. Local contexts and micro spaces have therefore become important in postmodern theorising. Consequently, place and space are salient considerations in postmodern analyses, see section 2.2.3 below.

Postmodern attacks on universal 'truths' come from multiple directions:

> Postmodernism, then, can be interpreted from the standpoint of what I shall call the master subject contemplating the issues of legitimacy for his authority which arise from the refusal of those cast as other to stay silent. Or, it can be interpreted from the standpoint of those who are placed as the disruptive and challenging voices of the Other.
>
> (Yeatman, 1995:187)

Postmodernism, then, from both the centre and the margins, destabilises universal truths and the legitimacy of the master subject, thereby offering a space which legitimates the 'views from the margins'. This project comes from the 'margins', in the sense that it challenges non-heterosexual women's 'exclusion' from discourses of the Master subject.

However, life without universal truths can be problematic if it is interpreted that there is no truth and, consequently, all narratives bear equal weight (Dear, 1988; Evans, 1995; Pile and Rose, 1992). Postmodernism's argument that all narratives, including those challenging the grand narrative, are equal can be seen as relativistic. This is problematic because, where all narratives bear equal weight, prejudiced and discriminatory narratives are equal to those which challenge these injustices. Material realities may thus be ignored. Consequently, despite the importance of the local and the questioning of

24

universal truths, postmodernism is problematic in that it may not offer a critique of unequal power relations, disempowerment or social injustice.

2.2.2 Structuralism and Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism is conceived here as addressing some of postmodernism's weaknesses, particularly in relation to a critique of power. The previous section introduced aspects of postmodernism which are central to this thesis and problematised relativistic postmodernism. Prior to exploring poststructuralism, this section will briefly outline structuralism. The section is longer and more detailed than the previous section because there are more salient concepts for this thesis.

2.2.2.i Structuralism

Poststructuralism's origins lie in structuralism (Peters, 1999). Structuralism has developed in a number of different disciplines including linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Despite this disparity, it has been argued that structuralism has developed a common methodological basis:

Structuralism seeks out the underlying structures or relations between empirical elements, seeing the empirically given object as merely a manifestation of this broader system ... rules regulate the ways in which particular elements are able to function and have meaning.

(Grosz, 1989:11)

Similar to modernist metanarratives structuralism aims to form coherent and overarching theories (Sarup, 1988: 43). Therefore, contrary to individualist theories such as phenomenology, it is the system that is the unit of analysis. Moreover, structuralism conceptualises individuals as subsumed within structures (Palmer, 1997; Sarup, 1988).

Due to its appropriation in many different subject fields and disciplines, there are numerous forms of structuralism. Two will be addressed here, linguistic structuralism and structuralism in social theory.

Structuralist linguistics, following de Saussure, began with a linguistic conceptualisation of the world (Craib, 1992; Peters, 1999). Signifier (sound or what is said) and signified (concept or what is meant by what is said) are theorised as forming a dichotomous relationship which is not necessary but is instead formed through common usage and convention (Peters, 1999; Sarup, 1988). The signifier/signified relationship forms the basis of structuralist and poststructuralist discussions of language. Language can be seen as structuring the speech act, such that conventions of language dictate what can be said. However, these conventions are not required but structured, this can be seen by the existence of multiple languages (Craib, 1992: 26). Thus, and importantly, language has been conceptualised as constitutive (Grosz, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Consequently, linguistic structuralist theorists see language as a sequence of unconscious cultural conventions that dictate to individuals, (in)forming their speech acts (Yentzer, 1995; Craib, 1992). Language is therefore more than words and grammatical constructions; meanings and systems of meanings are also important. Moreover, structuralism, arising from structural linguistics, recognises that we are 'all, in some sense, 'structured like language'' (Grosz, 1989: 11). Structure then, in the linguistic sense, can be seen as process.

Structuralism in social theory sees structure as construct; that is structures in society construct individual lives and society itself. Arguably, the founding father of this form of structuralism is Karl Marx who, throughout the mid-nineteenth century, developed his theories of class, capitalism and society. Marx argued that the structure of economic relations was the most basic and important element of society as a whole. Structural Marxism saw the individual as the 'bearer' of these economic structures and humans could obtain a 'perfect' society if social conditions allowed. In this way the economic and the social are intertwined and interdependant (Craib, 1992: 29). Therefore, structural Marxism looks for knowable economic determinants of human (social) activity in search

of the appropriate means of transformation (Flax, 1990b: 46-47). Consequently, structures could be subject to change but any transformation is an extended process (Ussher, 1997). From this it is argued that society structures individual lives thereby constraining us in particular ways. In geography, these theories can (re)conceptualise place as fixed and as a structure which (in)forms individual lives and societal structures such as gender roles and relations (see for example Maroulli, 1995).

Levi-Strauss introduced the notion of the unconscious structure within the study of anthropology. In 1968, he used de Saussure's structuralism and theorising within anthropology in an attempt to explore systems and find general laws which were universally applicable (Sarup, 1988; Peters, 1999). Levi-Strauss integrated forms of linguistic structuralism into social theory and critique. Therefore, structuralism can be seen as having developed in diverse forms which overlapped and interacted. This section has oversimplified a huge variety of structuralist theories and theorists, but serves the purposes of introducing the two main strands of structuralism which are relevant for this thesis: structure as process and structure as construct.

There are two main critiques of structuralism which are important for this research. Firstly, structuralism does not allow for individual human agency as the individual is merely a bearer of structures and, although change is possible, this must occur at a societal level. Structuralism differentiates itself from humanism, setting up a structure and agency dualism where individual agency is often disregarded. There has been an ongoing debate related to the structure versus agency divide (Giddens, 1979; 1984). Secondly, structures are only conceptualised as constraining, that is structures are only understood as enforcing particular actions. Power is conceptualised as constraining and in terms of domination (Giddens, 1979; 1984). In other words, power is conceptualised as being exacted in a top-down approach whereby power in the form of structures is imposed upon the agency of individuals.

In his theory of structuration, Giddens addresses these two critiques purporting that agency and structure are not dualisms but are dualistic: that is that human agency and social structures are interdependent in time and space (Giddens, 1979, 1984). Giddens

recognises the importance of interactions for the creation and maintenance of social systems as well as the positioning of agents in time and space and in relation to other agents (Giddens, 1984; Craib, 1992) (see Chapter 3 section 2.3 for a discussion of interactions). Moreover, Giddens' structuration theory argues that structures can be enabling as well as disabling (Cassell, 1993). The productive nature of power drawn from poststructuralism informed Giddens' thinking and is addressed in Chapter 3 section 2. Structuration theory draws on a diverse range of disciplines, subject fields and theories and Giddens' work has in turn been appropriated in many disciplines, including geography (Craib, 1992). However, he does not look to deconstruct dualisms, settling instead for his concept of duality. Gregson (1986: 198) argued, using empirical studies from Giddens, that studies of duality focus on either the micro or the macro and 'not on the shading of one into the other'. Therefore, by reconceptualising, rather than deconstructing, dualisms it could be argued that Giddens does not look between or beyond dualistic structures or the power relations which hierarchise them and keep them in place.

It is acknowledged that structuralism is a diverse theory and although commonalties have been identified between particular authors, there are also dissonances in their work. Moreover, although particular authors have been celebrated in historical accounts of the rise and fall of structuralism, many authors have used and developed, and continue to use and develop, structuralist theories without always naming them as such. Therefore, similar to postmodernism, poststructuralism is not simply an evolution of an equally static, coherent and discredited structuralism, rather poststructuralism and structuralism co-exist and are interrelated.

2.2.2.ii Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism, similar to postmodernism, celebrates diversity, questions the unitary subject and universal truths, and recognises the importance of the local. Poststructuralism can be characterised as 'a mode of thinking, a style of philosophising

and a kind of writing' (Peters, 1999: 4.1). However, it is not homogenous but interdisciplinary and has numerous different yet related strands (Barnett, 1998). Poststructuralism's heterogeneity makes it difficult to define. It is not a 'position' in the traditional sense but an 'interrogation of the exclusionary operations by which positions are established' (J. Butler and Scott, 1992: xiv). As such, poststructuralism recognises structuralism's limits, critiquing structuralism's narrowness (Craib, 1992, Yentzer, 1995).

It is contended that poststructuralist theory originated in France and developed further in America in the late seventies. Derrida (1978) is credited with institutionalising deconstruction and poststructuralism outside of France when, in 1966, he delivered a paper in America in which he questioned 'the notion of the 'centre'' (Peters, 1999: 4.5). In this paper Derrida challenged Levi-Strauss's structuralism, arguing that, in the absence of a centre, everything becomes a discourse and there is never an absolute presence outside the systems of difference (Derrida, 1978). Similar to postmodernism, poststructuralism questions the existence of a universal truth. Poststructuralism also problematises structuralist assumptions of underlying, unconscious, hidden structures which dictate individuals' enactments (Derrida, 1978; Ussher, 1997). 'In short, poststructuralism involves a critique of metaphysics, of the concepts of causality, of identity, of the subject, and of truth' (Sarup, 1988: 4).

The 'truth is not out *there*, transcendent and elsewhere, but *here*, in the activities and strivings of social life' (Morris, 1997: 373, original emphasis). Therefore, the specific and the local are the focus of poststructual theory. Consequently, spatial formations and spatial contexts are important. Contrary to structuralism, place and space are not understood as a dualism with place as fixed and space as malleable. Place, along with space, is instead seen as fluid and (re)formed through social life (c.f. Thrift, 1999).

Both structuralism and poststructuralism recognise the importance of language according it primacy in creating selves and objects. However, unlike my description of postmodernism, my comprehension of poststructuralism acknowledges and critiques fluid and diverse relations of power. Language, as more than the words and grammatical

formations, can be understood as formed through and forming dominant discourses. In other words, systems of meanings and systems of power are interconnected. Moreover, poststructuralists see language as constitutionally unstable and produced through interactions between readers and text, in contrast with a structuralist view where there is 'a truth' within the text (Bryson, 1999; Sarup, 1988). Poststructuralism contends that there is no objective knowledge or constant object and, consequently, knowledge is always partial (Bryson, 1999). Thus, similar to postmodernism, grand theories and narratives are not understood as 'truth' but conceptualised as competing discourses.

In the linguistic strand of poststructuralism, which (re)appropriates linguistic structuralism, language and discourse are seen as unstable. The self can be understood as created through linguistic and discursive processes and is 'constitutionally unstable' (Palmer, 1997: 142). Therefore, the poststructuralist critique of the subject created through language and discourse renders it unstable and subject to change (Sarup, 1988). Consequently, the subject, instead of being seen as unitary and essential, is viewed as multiple, shifting and fragmented (Ussher, 1994: 154). Some poststructuralist theorists reintroduce agency as partially structuring social life (Morris, 1997). However, debates are far more complex than simple structure versus agency and the concept of performativity reworks this dualism (see Chapter 3 section 1 and 2). Whilst poststructuralism, similar to structuralism, sees the subject as relational, i.e. the subject is defined by what it is not as much as what it is, subjectivity within poststructuralism is 'a site of disunity and conflict' (Weedon, 1987: 21). Consequently, subjects are seen as embedded in 'a complex network of social relations' which they in turn (re)create (Namaste, 1994: 221).

As the subject and language are unstable, poststructural authors have looked to deconstruct the 'sign', which is related to dominant discourses, representations and subjectivities. Derrida began this by deconstructing philosophy texts such as those by de Saussure, Plato and Levi-Strauss, arguing that they all fail by their own criteria. Specifically, he contended that their rejection of the written and the privileging of the spoken is undermined through their use of writing to convey these ideas (Derrida, 1978;

Sarup, 1988). Derrida argued that the sign's other (object) always determines the sign (subject), which is absent. In other words, the invisible object makes the subject and what is spoken is seen as only as important as what is unspoken (Dear, 1988: 266). The opposition between the object and subject is therefore considered in terms of relational binaries. Whereas structuralists assume the foundational and exclusive status of dualisms, poststructural thinkers challenge the assumptions that govern dualistic thinking. Similar to postmodernism, which investigates the outside of grand narratives, poststructuralism, through deconstruction, explores the other of dualisms: that is the parts of dualisms that are opposite to the dominant term or concept. Moreover, deconstruction enables possibilities outside of dualistic categories.

Within dualisms, the primary term or self defines itself by excluding its other and the self then establishes 'its own boundaries and borders to create an identity for itself' (Grosz, 1994: 3). The 'construction of dualisms is inherently related to the construction of the Other' and the other as opposite to the self is usually inferior (Aitchison, 2001b: 136). The others in dualisms are often invisibilised, and considered in terms of lack (not). However:

The self only becomes a self on the condition that it has suffered a separation (grammar fails us here, for the 'it' only becomes differentiated through that separation) a loss which is suspended and provisionally resolved through a melancholic incorporation of some 'Other'. That 'Other' installed in the self thus establishes the permanent incapacity of that 'self' to achieve self-identity; it is as if it were always already disrupted by that Other; the disruption of the other at the heart of the self is the very condition of the self's possibility.

(J. Butler, 1993b: 27)

The self and the other are thus interdependent and formed through relations of power. For example, the core is dependent on the peripheries, norms on deviants, powerful on powerless. The discussion chapters will consider such dualisms, dichotomies and binaries in more detail and particularly in relation to the othering of non-heterosexual women.

In his critique of the centre, Derrida (1978) argued that the longing for the centre creates hierarchised oppositions/dualisms. Deconstruction can break down dualistic constructs and categories, investigating what functions these divisions serve (Namaste, 1994).

Deconstruction looks to show how the 'privileged' term of a dualism depends for its identity on its excluding of the other and demonstrates that primacy really belongs to the subordinate terms instead.

(Sarup, 1988: 56)

Dualistic terms have 'an epistemological relation' with opposing terms being valued differently, the positive over the negative (Johnston, 2000: 182). Through deconstruction, the self is rendered contingent and unstable as the other is seen as original (this will be further examined in Chapter 3 section 2). Poststructuralism can explore how 'binary oppositions always support a hierarchy or an economy of value that operates by subordinating one term to another' (Peters, 1999: 13). It is important to note that categories of self and other are seen as fluid due to the conceptualisation of subjectivities as fluid. The challenging and exploration of dualistic, binary and dichotomous categories is central to this thesis and *processes of making non-heterosexual women other*, or *'othering'* are the focus.

Poststructuralism differs from postmodernism in its object of study, i.e. structuralism and modernism respectively. However, this has implications beyond simple critiques of modernism and structuralism. Poststructuralism critiques the rigid conceptions of social structures inherent to structuralist examinations of society. This problematises theories, such as structural Marxism, which argue that structures pre-exist human enactments. Moreover, it challenges the assumption that one form of oppression dictates experiences. Arguably, postmodernism focuses on the cultural and the aestheticisation and stylisation of life. It could therefore be contended that postmodernism does not immediately lend itself to social critiques, including critiques of power. However, poststructuralism, with its roots in structuralism and an analysis of hierarchical relations of power, can be described as more of a 'social' critique. By this I mean poststructuralism enables an exploration of power relations within and between dualisms and allows an investigation and critique of dominant structures and discourses. Thus, poststructuralism enables an

exploration of social structures recognising that power relations constitute the social world. Consequently, although Crotty (1998) argues that postmodernism is more general than poststructuralism, 'the cultural is not all there is to the social' (S. Jackson, 1999: 5.3). With a focus on social and cultural power relations, which continually and diversely form everyday realities, aspects of poststructural thinking will be considered in this thesis.

Although this section may appear to give the illusion of homogeneity within poststructuralism, and a linear progression from structuralism to poststructuralism, it is important to note that some authors continue to work within structuralist paradigms. Moreover, I acknowledge that the authors I have termed 'poststructural' may not themselves identify with this label (Potter, 1988). The chapter will now explore cultural geographies which draw on, and reappropriate, poststructuralism and postmodernism. The importance of place/space has been recognised as important in postmodern and poststructural theories and forms the literal 'site' or one important focus of the thesis.

2.2.3 Cultural (and Social?) Geographies

New cultural geographies provide:

... a meeting ground for the anti-foundationalist movements of postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism and its analyses attempt to embrace the complexity of spatiality rather than engaging in the spatial determinism of the early twentieth century or the grand narratives of structuralism from a decade or so ago.

(Aitchison, 2000c: 112)

Aitchison argues above that cultural geographies can enable a complex conceptualisation of spatiality within postmodernism, poststructuralism and postcolonial critiques. Introducing concepts of spatiality to postmodernism and poststructuralism and postmodern and poststructural theories to geography has been central to recent

developments within the discipline. Postmodern and poststructural theories have been used to investigate the 'cultural' which, for the purposes of this thesis, includes consumption, identities and 'popular' everyday culture (Barnett, 1998: 380). Geography, in general, and cultural geography in particular, is not understood here as singular and the term *geographies* will therefore be used in this thesis (D. Bell, 1991; P. Jackson, 1993). There is a vast literature on culture within sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, business studies and marketing, to name a few. The focus here will be on some of the recent developments in cultural geographies, recognising that geographies draw on this wider literature to inform the diverse conceptualisations of culture. The vast and diverse literature regarding culture and the specifics of geographies' engagement with wider literature on culture will not be addressed here as this could lead to overarching and perhaps inaccurate generalisations. Instead the relevant aspects of cultural geographies in relation to the previous discussion of poststructuralism and postmodernism will be highlighted.

This project explores concepts that were formed as a result of the 'cultural turn' which took place in human geographies and wider social theory (see for example Barnett, 1998; Crang, 1997; Gregson, 1994; P. Jackson, 1989; 1993a; 2001; Mitchell, 1995; Nash, C. 2000; Nash, C. 2001; Price and Lewis, 1993). The cultural turn in geographies has enabled a focus on everyday life and, in particular, the formation of identities and this issue will be discussed in depth in the next chapter (Barnett, 1998: 380). Here, however, it is sufficient to acknowledge the importance of space in the constitution of subjectivities which are rendered fluid by poststructuralism.

In the early 1990's cultural geographies contained extensive debates regarding the boundaries of the sub-discipline (see for example, Barnett, 1998; P. Jackson, 1993b; Mitchell, 1995; Price and Lewis, 1993). These discussions questioned the singularity of 'geography' (Jackson, 1993) and, on the other hand, the ontological existence of 'culture' (Mitchell, 1995). The debates regarding the complexity of 'culture' obviously have resonances elsewhere and have long been debated within wider cultural theory (see for example, Williams, 1978; Wright, 1997). Cultural geographies combine a dynamic

conceptualisation of the importance of space within explorations of culture. Related to the understanding of geographies as plural is the importance of fluid boundaries between disciplines and subject fields. Aitchison (1999) argues that social and cultural geographies and leisure studies could be mutually informative. This thesis transcends boundaries between disciplines and subject fields including leisure studies, gender studies and social and cultural geographies. Although this section focuses on geographies to highlight the importance of place/space, the thesis also draws on a wide range of literature.

Within geography authors have now begun to eschew the term 'cultural turn' just as it has begun to take on 'a certain solidity within the discipline' (Barnett, 1998: 379). Thrift (1999b: 317), in place of what he terms 'the smugness' of the cultural turn, argues for a different style which is located within 'non-representational theory' (Thrift, 1996; 1997). Thrift (1997) argues for a move beyond texts to spaces of 'pure' experience beyond/before representation. This assertion arises from the observation that:

We cannot extract a representation of the world from the world because we are slap bang in the middle of it, co-constructing it with numerous human and non-human others for numerous ends (or, more accurately, beginnings).

(Thrift, 1999b: 296-297)

Drawing on postmodern and poststructural theories, Thrift (1999b) argues for a rejection of grand narratives and a focus on the 'taken-for-granted'. Chapter 4 will discuss issues of extracting representations and reflexivity. With an emphasis on everyday practices non-representational theory is then, a theory of practices. Whilst I agree that there is a need for a focus on everyday 'taken-for-granted' practices (see next chapter), I do not subscribe to non-representational theory.

Non-representational theory can be considered a postmodern cultural theory. Nash (2000) has problematised non-representational theory in a number of ways. Important here is her problematisation of assumptions of 'pure' experiences beyond social discourses such as sexualities. Moreover, the absence of bodies, displaced by current

discourses of bodily practices, is problematic when issues of race and gender are central (Nash, 2000: 660). Consequently, in spite of the term 'social *and* cultural geographies', these have been relatively separated with the social often absent from discussions of the cultural (P. Jackson, 2001; McDowell, 2001). The materialities of power often absent from the theoretical debates of cultural geographies will be included in this thesis alongside cultural analyses.

There are many stories and histories to be told regarding postmodernism, poststructuralism and cultural geographies. This section offers one brief account of many possible stories of poststructuralism. The written sources I have drawn on are creating postmodernism and poststructuralism often through writing of them as if they pre-existed the act of writing. However, the act of writing postmodernism and poststructuralism itself may homogenise and simplify complex ideas. This history is partial and has its own exclusions and omissions. One salient lacuna in the majority of accounts and explanations of poststructuralism is women's challenge of masculinist language and the phallocentricism of structuralist writings. Most accounts of the development and present situation of poststructuralism are written by and celebrate the work of men (e.g. Palmer, 1997; Potter, 1988; Sarup, 1988). Irigrary (1985; 1993), for example, profoundly challenged the masculinised theorising of signifying-subject and signified-other. She contended that this framework falsely represents woman and this representation indicates the insufficiency of the entire structure. The feminine is always elsewhere and cannot be represented in a signifying economy in which the masculine constitutes the closed circle of signifier and signified. In other words, Irigrary sees a masculine signifying economy that includes both the existential subject and its other (J. Butler, 1990; Irigrary, 1993).

Thus, instead of remaining a different gender the feminine has become in our languages the new masculine, that is to say an abstract nonexistent reality.

(Irigrary, 1993: 20)

The concepts of many other female theorists remain largely unacknowledged and the universal applicability of male theorists' writings is assumed. Weedon (1987: 13) argues

36

that the omission of women is due to the masculinist production and validation of knowledge. Male postmodernists and poststructuralists remain unaware of their gendered recounting and interpretation of the Western story (Flax, 1990a). Moreover, although poststructuralist and postmodernist ideas have been used within feminism, feminist contributions to postmodernism and poststructuralism remain largely unrecognised (Bondi and Domosh, 1992; Flax, 1990a). Perhaps this is because, as Grosz (1989: 1) contends, French feminists such as Irigrary, Kristeva and Le Doeuff, rewrite and reread masculinist positions. Flax (1990a) argues that the absence of a serious consideration of gender relations as constitutive of Western culture profoundly affects the texture of postmodernists' (and poststructuralists') work. Therefore, as Irigaray's work illustrates, consideration of gendered accounts would significantly alter the stories told.

2.3 Feminism

Similar to poststructuralism, feminism is neither static nor homogenous. Theories of feminism relate to gender oppression but they conceptualise gender differently (Moss, 2002). Using the term 'feminism' implies that there are commonalities between all forms of feminism. However, there are divisions within feminism and diversity between feminists which this section seeks to highlight. Poststructuralism is conceptualised as internally diverse, and to speak of poststructuralisms with this understanding would be nonsensical (c.f. J. Butler and Scott, 1992). Similarly, feminism can be seen as internally heterogeneous and the term 'feminism' can be used to recognise that there are commonalities between different forms of feminism but also that the term is inherently diverse (c.f. Hirsh and Keller, 1994).

Whilst recognising that there are multiple histories of feminism the complexity of these is beyond the scope of this thesis and I do not wish to simplify these within one linear account. Segal (1999: 201) contends it is unlikely that we 'can repackage feminism in a

neat and orderly fashion'. Although some may wish to create a coherent story of feminism the complexity and diversity of feminism can be seen as a strength of feminist research and thinking (Gibson and Graham, 1994).

Potted histories of the development of feminism are found in most textbooks and discussions of feminism (for example Bryson, 1999; Beasley, 1997; McDowell and Sharp, 1997; Nicholson, 1997; Tong, 1989; WGSG, 1997). However, poststructuralism critiques linear chronologies which ignore the complexities and messiness of these developments. Moreover, these chronologies only tell one story where there are many possible stories, often ignoring the power relations which constitute the dominant narrative. Therefore, this section will not follow the convention of outlining the linear 'development of feminism', beginning and ending with justifications such as: 'Although the organisation of our discussion implies a linear history, we want to emphasis we do not see it as such' (Mattingly and Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995: 249). Different forms of feminism do not simply replace each other in a logical and progressive sequence. It may be that although liberal, radical and socialist feminisms were recorded and debated in an academic forum first, other forms of feminism, such as black feminisms, did exist but were invisibilised within the academy (c.f. The Combahee River Collective, 1977). Bryson (1999) contests accounts of feminism which contend that liberalism is the oldest form of feminism. She documents radical and black feminism beginning in the 18th century. Moreover, Bordo (1990) contends that 'postfeminism' and theories associated with postmodern feminism can be identified in the 1920's and 1930's. This of course is not to contend that feminist theories are ahistorical. Rather, it is to assert that they are not linear progressions of each other and multiple forms of feminism co-exist to the present day. Different forms of feminism and different feminists can address diverse issues that require a plethora of responses and approaches.

However, this section does, to a certain extent, simplify and 'repackage' aspects of feminism in order to discuss the diverse forms of feminism. It does this by briefly outlining liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist and socialist feminism, black feminism, lesbian feminism, and postmodern feminism. The forms of feminism outlined

here are not chronologically ordered and it will not be argued that particular types of feminism are obsolete. The section exemplifies the tensions of writing discussed in Chapter 1 as it simplifies and summarises complex ideas in order to speak of multiple forms of feminism. This tension is in part addressed through the problematisation of categorisation and simplification in section 2.4. This section and the next chapter aim to justify the use of feminist poststructuralism for this project. It is acknowledged that these choices implicate myself as the author and this issue will be addressed in Chapter 4.

2.3.1 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminists work from within a patriarchal system's existing structure to gain equality for women. It is the mainstream face of feminism and there is a focus on the public sphere (Beasley, 1999). The suffragette movement, which fought for electoral rights for women, is exemplary of liberal feminism. Liberal feminists have succeeded in gaining 'equality' in terms of rights within a number of key institutions, such as those within government, education and business. For example, in Ireland the Equal Status Act (2000) guarantees, on paper at least, no discrimination on the basis of gender, amongst other social differences. Bryson (1999) argues that liberal feminism is difficult to critique because it is not well articulated, existing as common sense. Thus, the debates which follow are very one sided.

Pateman (1988) notes that whilst women have gained equal opportunities in the past century, their embodiment as women subordinates them because equality is measured on male terms. Aitchison (2000a: 189) argues that a theorisation of 'the interrelationships between social and cultural power or of structural and symbolic power' is required. Legislation and policy can be seen to exist between the material and the symbolic, such that these inform and reconstitute each other. Even where official support provides legitimacy for change, this remains within existing patterns of discrimination which are taken for granted (Hargreves, 1994: 184). Therefore, as Frazer (1998) contends, changes

in traditional political arenas may not result in conclusive social change. Judicial equality can coexist with social and cultural inequalities and everyday practices could still serve to marginalize and exclude (Young, 1990; 1995). For example, Whittle (1994: 1) purports that in Manchester gay men, whilst not criminalized, 'may still be socially excluded'. Therefore, 'it is not just in the arena of government that we find politics, but throughout social relations' (Gordon, 1991:106). Arguably legislative changes, while important, are not sufficient in addressing the subtleties of othering processes which are the focus of this thesis. Therefore, legislative change perhaps should not be the *only* goal and formal politics should not be the sole focus when addressing issues of power and social change (see also Chapter 3 section 3 and Chapter 6 section 1.2).

Liberal feminism assumes sameness between the sexes and strives to rectify inequities on this basis. This is based on the assumption that distinctions would not be made by biological sex (Weedon, 1997: 16). Liberal feminists thus ignore biological distinctions between the sexes which radical feminists emphasise.

2.3.2 Radical feminism

Radical feminism is perhaps best described in one sentence: 'From their perspective the problem for women is quite categorically men' (Wheelan, 1995: 70). Sexual oppression is seen as the most noteworthy form of repression (Beasley, 1997). Consequently, radical feminists challenge the structures and systems of patriarchal oppression, arguing that men and women are biologically different. This biological difference is sometimes reappropriated to argue for women's superiority and it is claimed that through patriarchy men 'infect' every aspect of women's lives (Bryson, 1999; Wheelan, 1995). Radical feminists thus argue for the combating of patriarchy through unification of women within a shared biology and experiences of oppression. Those women who do not have this understanding are considered to exist in a false consciousness (Wheelan, 1995). Because male oppression of women was seen as universal and women who denied that

were seen as misguided, efforts were also put into raising women's consciousness in relation to their oppression by men (Beasley, 1997; Wheelan, 1995). Radical feminists thus take as their starting point women's lived experiences rather than abstract paradigms and look to challenge the gender hierarchy by making women's voices heard in non-hierarchical ways (Wheelan, 1995; Rowland and Klein, 1991). The most extreme opposition posed by radical feminists to male domination is separation from men, either in women only communities or by denying access to their bodies through lesbian feminism (WGSG, 1984, see below, lesbian feminism).

In the 1970's and 1980's there were strict guidelines within radical feminist communities on what feminism was and how it should be 'done' (Rudy, 2001). The insistence on one 'true' feminism does not allow for diversity within feminism (Stanley and Wise, 1983). Radical feminists conceptualised a pre-existing subject who 'experiences' patriarchy. However, 'experience is not something that happens to a previously existing subject but rather the process through which the subject is constituted' (O'Driscoll, 1996: 31, see chapter 3 section 2). Differences between men and women are understood as biological and biology is seen as fixed and unchanging and is not subject to historical or cultural variations. This radical feminist emphasis on biological differences between men and women limits possibilities for change (Nicholson, 1995: 53). Moreover, focusing solely on patriarchy ignores other forms of interlocking difference negating men and women's differential access to power.

2.3.3 Marxist/ Socialist feminism

Following Karl Marx (see section 2.2.2.i above), Marxist feminism sees the basis of all inequalities in capitalism and class structures. Sexual oppression is, therefore, seen as a dimension of class power (Beasley, 1997). The focus of Marxist analysis is wage labour and Marxist feminists tend to explore women's position in relation to wage labour, namely that women work unpaid undertaking household labour and childcare to support

the capitalist system (Crotty, 1998). Consequently, the family is seen as a site of production that reinforces class and gender divisions. Marxist analyses focus on revolutionary class change as the necessary precondition to dismantling male privilege (Beasley, 1999). Authors such as Harvey (1993) then use this position to contend that women should firstly join the class struggle and that 'all other forms of politics other than class politics are particularistic' (McDowell, 1998: 4). This overemphasis on class suppresses other forms of oppression, including heterosexism, and places feminism in a subordinate position to Marxism (Bryson, 1999; Flax, 1990b).

Socialist feminism has a similar emphasis on class but is perhaps more palatable and has made a huge contribution to feminist discourse. Socialist feminism has highlighted that women as a group have 'less privileges within the economy and less access to the control of the economy', as well as pointing to the family as a site of unpaid labour (Flax, 1990b: 152-153). Socialist feminism can include analyses of other systems of interlocking social difference. Skeggs (1997), for example, focuses on class *and* gender in her longitudinal study of working class women, whilst also accommodating an analysis of sexuality. Ingraham (1994) argues that heterosexuality produces gender or what she terms 'heterogender' and this is central to the organisation of the division of labour. In this way, Ingraham (1994) incorporates class, gender and sexuality but still approaches issues of power from an institutionalised (structuralist) top-down approach. Socialist feminists, in their search for the 'truth' of women's 'oppression' often overlook enabling aspects of contested power relations. However, and importantly, both socialist and Marxist feminisms recognise that human nature is not *essential* but *socially* produced and changeable. This contrasts with radical feminists who understand that men and women are separated by essential biological difference.

Whilst recognising class as a salient focus of study, particularly as my sample could be described as predominantly 'working class' (see Chapter 5 section 2.1), this project does not present an analysis of class, choosing instead to focus on sexuality and gender. Clearly, the narrative I have chosen is one amongst many possibilities and the focus reflects my interest in sexuality and gender (see chapter 4.3 for a discussion of

reflexivity). This is not to negate the importance of class but rather to acknowledge that the stories, which are (re)told here, adopt a particular focus which does not 'fit' within socialist feminism.

2.3.4 Black feminism/Postcolonial feminism

Radical feminism and liberal feminism look to unite women under their common oppression as women by men. These ignore an examination of issues beyond patriarchy and assume homogeneity between women. Moreover, socialist feminists have been accused of assuming issues of race are not central considerations (Flax, 1990a: 153). The lack of recognition for other forms of oppression has been contested by a number of factions within feminism. There were calls in the 1970's and 1980's for a broad based feminism which allowed for difference to be recognised and this created, amongst other groupings, uneasy alliances around 'Third World' divisions (Kanneh, 1998). This alliance was based on critiques of the exclusion of race from an analysis of systems of power including, but not restricted to, explorations of patriarchy.

Black feminists argue that 'white feminism' is inherently racist (The Combahee River Collective, 1977). Assumptions and generalisations made by the feminist movement can be irrelevant, inappropriate or even false for women of colour (Bryson, 1999; Mills, 1997; Mohanty, 1992; Sandoval, 1991). It is argued that women of colour may experience their sexuality and gender differently (Flax, 1990b). Consequently, race is not simply an addition to gender oppression, similar to the inclusion of gender into malestream theory. Instead, analyses of questions of race deeply change the conditions of that oppression (hooks, 1993). Postcolonial studies are in fact developing their own theory, rather than simply using an add on model (Aitchison, 2001a: 137). Additionally, postcolonial critiques of Western writings on Third world women argue that these present homogenous and condescending views of non-western women (Radcliffe, 1994).

Brooks (1997) notes, the terms 'postcolonial' and 'black' are now perceived as overly homogenising in themselves. Whereas black authors began by contesting the homogenisation of feminism, 'black' itself is coming under scrutiny for homogenising racial and ethnic differences, experiences and oppressions. 'Black feminism' can recognise differences and specificities within the field as well as within feminism (Kanneh, 1997). Therefore, black and postcolonial feminisms are multifaceted, but a full discussion of this is beyond the scope of the thesis. It is suffice to note that Black feminism is often solely credited with contesting the unified basis of feminism thereby challenging the assumption that one form of oppression exists for all women and that one form of feminism can speak for all women. Histories of feminism often only mention black feminism ignoring other forms of diversification that challenged a unified singular understanding of feminism. In order, in part, to contest this focus on race, the chapter will now explore lesbian feminism.

2.3.5 Lesbian feminism

Lesbian feminism argues that feminism can be heterosexist and can ignore issues of sexuality thereby rendering the institutional barrier of heterosexism invisible (Calhoun, 1995; Wheelan, 1995; Wilton, 1995). Some feminists attempt to distance their association with, and contest the visibility of, lesbians within the feminist movement. This is because it has been argued that overt connections with lesbians may weaken the feminist position. Consequently, lesbians within feminism have often been invisibilised and marginalized (Wilton, 1995). Calhoun (1995) argues that 'lesbian' has continually disappeared from the feminist appropriation of the term 'Woman' and 'Women's' problems often exclude 'women' who are not heterosexual. This can be seen in feminist books which ignore the contribution of lesbian feminism to feminist theories (see for example Beasley, 1997; Bryson, 1999). Similar to feminist critiques of postmodernism, feminist theory does not always engage dialectically with lesbian feminism or issues of sexuality. Sexuality is frequently 'added' in with a list of differences, not to be

addressed again. However, as with black feminism, heterosexism and homophobia alter the terms of oppression illustrating that one form of feminism is not sufficient in addressing the diverse and multiple oppressions that co-exist. 'Oppressions of class, disability, 'race' and sexual orientation are not exactly alike as add on models imply' (Wilson, 1993: 112). Lesbian feminism acknowledges overlapping networks of power namely those of heterosexuality and gender and it is therefore able to challenge patriarchal society, heterosexism, homophobia and hegemonic feminism.

'Lesbian feminist politics is a critique of the institution and ideology of heterosexuality as a cornerstone of male supremacy' (Bunch, 1991: 320). Lesbians can challenge accepted notions of gender and identifying as a lesbian can be an act of resistance (Chouinard and Grant, 1996; Melia, 1995; Roy, 1993). Some radical lesbian feminists therefore argue that women should exist entirely apart from men. They illustrate their separation from men spatially by withdrawing from 'masculinist' society to live in separatist communities (Rudy, 2001; Valentine, 1997). Hawthorne (1991) believes that separatism shows that women are capable of being self-sufficient without men. Separatism has various dimensions ranging from a complete separation from men, for example by living in women only communes, to the exclusion of men from sexual relations (Calhoun, 1995; Wilton, 1995). However, the underlying arguments are the same, namely, that everyday life and/or sexual desires and practices have political effects.

Lesbian feminist perspectives have addressed the assumption that 'lesbianism' is purely individual and/or biologically-based deviance. What could be termed the 'social-constructionist' viewpoint sees lesbianism as socially produced. Wilkinson and Kitzinger, (1996: 139) contend that 'same-sex sexual activities and lesbian/gay identities (as well as heterosexual activities and identities) are social phenomena, subject to social and political concerns'. Challenges to heterosexual norms initially broadened and diversified the term 'lesbian'. As a result, this category could include any woman who chose to identify with the 'lesbian' label regardless of her sexual preferences or activities. 'Lesbian' thus became a fluid and encompassing category which did not lend

itself to simple biological definitions or explanations (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1996; Stein, 1993). This understanding of lesbianism is continuous with the arguments described in Chapter 1 section 2 regarding the historically and culturally contingent formation of labels such as lesbian (Weeks, 1987: Martin, 1992).

'Lesbian' has, however, increasingly become a site of contestation. Whilst lesbian feminism began by expanding the category of lesbian certain forms of lesbian feminism assert that lesbianism must be announced and performed in particular ways (Stein, 1993). In what is known as the 'sex wars' the politics of sexual practices were debated (Glick, 2000; Wilton, 1995). Particular authors, such as Jeffreys (1990, 1997), asserted that specific forms of sexuality, including sadomachicistic practices, result in a mirroring of patriarchal oppression. However, these assertions assume that there is a generic way of 'doing' lesbianism. Just as there is no one 'right' form of feminism, neither is there a 'right' form of sexual expression (c.f. Engelbrecht, 1997; Wilton, 1995). Debates regarding how one should do one's sexuality in daily life will be further examined using the concepts of 'transgression' and 'passing' (Chapter 7).

Similarly, because patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality are believed to be irrevocably intertwined some lesbian feminists assert that feminism is only 'true' when it is lesbian or separate from men (Jefferys, 1997). However, Smart (1996) argues that the benefits of heterosexuality should be acknowledged and the concepts and constructs of heterosexuality should be problematised but that heterosexual women should not be excluded from feminism. Similar to the argument which lesbian feminists levelled against heterosexual feminism, there is and should be diversity between feminists. Presently, critical explorations of heterosexuality are being undertaken and serve to destabilise heterosexuality (see for example Hubbard, 2000; S. Jackson, 1999; Nast, 1998). The challenge for lesbian feminists is to accommodate these investigations rather than accuse heterosexual feminists of 'conspiring with the enemy'. These arguments, of course, do not preclude an examination of heterosexuality by those who occupy positions outside heterosexuality. Rather such challenges enhance the destabilisation of heteronormativity through multiple and diverse disruptions.

Lesbian feminists can also have an important role in creating spaces for women within and beyond 'gay liberation' and 'queer' movements. Auchmuty (1997: 53-54, my emphasis) contends that 'subsuming 'lesbian' into 'gay'' politics has the same implications as subsuming women into man: *'we disappear'*. Moreover, J. Butler (1994: 11) argues that lesbian and gay studies refuse 'the domain of gender'. However, gender and sexuality, whilst different are mutually informative. Therefore, lesbian feminism is well placed to integrate feminism and critiques of sexuality (see Chapter 7 for a discussion of feminism and queer theory).

2.3.6 Postmodern feminism

Postmodern feminism looks to the mutually informative possibilities of postmodernism and feminism. One point where postmodern theories and feminism converge is the questioning of the Master subject and the challenging of rational scientific (male) claims to 'truth'. Flax (1990a) claims that metatheoretical level postmodern philosophies can contribute to a more accurate self-understanding because:

… we cannot simultaneously claim (1) the mind, the self, and knowledge are socially constituted and what we can know depends upon our social practices and contexts and (2) that feminist theory can uncover the whole truth once and for all.

(Flax, 1990a: 48)

Moreover, both feminists and postmodernists have sought to 'develop new paradigms of social criticism which do not rely on traditional philosophical underpinnings' (Fraser and Nicholson, 1990: 19). Postmodernism critiques foundationalism and essentialism but, as I have argued in section 2.2.1, issues of power and social critique are often underconsidered. Feminism has robust concepts of social criticism but tends to lapse into foundationalism. Consequently, postmodernism and feminism could be complimentary with each addressing the critiques of the other (Fraser and Nicholson, 1990: 20). Postmodern feminism can be understood as non-universalist and attuned to changes and

contrasts instead of determining and engaging with laws. However, postmodern feminism does more than challenge the universal 'man', it also disputes a generic 'woman', encompassing contestations from black and lesbian feminists (Strickland, 1994). Therefore, it replaces the unitary woman and feminine gender with plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity (Frazer and Nicholson, 1990).

Ahmed (1998: 3) argues that in the context of postmodernism, feminism is accepted as difference but is left unheard. As I contended in section 2.2 above, within postmodern and poststructural theories women authors and feminist theories are often not included into main(male)stream theory. Feminist theories are not seen as originating or charting the field. Even where theories are developed in and from feminism, feminism is usually not recognised as the originating source (Ahmed, 1998: 4). On the other hand, within feminism both postmodern and poststructural theories can be treated with contempt and often the terms postmodern/poststructural are spat out rather than spoken at conferences. Flax (1992) notes that some feminists reject postmodernism, often writing with vehemence but with only minimal knowledge. The differences between postmodernism and poststructuralism ignored, certain feminists believe both of these to be detrimental to the progress of feminism.

Postmodernism/poststructuralism, with an absence of universal truths and 'whole theories', are understood by some feminist authors as apolitical and unable to offer concrete structural solutions to material problems (Flax, 1992; Mangenu, 1994). Strickland (1994) sees this as the result of postmodernism's acknowledgement of 'difference' which is linked to its relativistic stance and is irreconcilable with feminist goals of justice and equity. Destabilising Enlightenment discourses of rights, individualism and equity is seen as problematic because without these concepts it may be possible to allow oppression to continue without being contested (Evans, 1995). With a focus on only culturally and discursively constituted 'difference', the implication is that analysis of women's lives would be abandoned and systematic inequalities denied (S. Jackson, 1999). Postmodernism has difficulty articulating materiality and reality except as effects of representation (Zimmerman, 1997). Consequently, the *'real'*

materialities of women's lives and oppressions are believed to be ignored in favour of issues of representation and a focus on *culture and discourse.*

The questioning of subjectivity is problematic in a feminism which sees itself as only just regaining a place for women (Flax, 1990a).

Why is it that just at the moment when so many groups of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves … that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic? Just when we are forming our own theories about the world, uncertainty emerges about whether the world can be theorised. Just when we are talking about the changes we want, ideas of progress and the possibility of systematically and rationally organizing human society become dubious and suspect.

(Hartsock, 1990: 163-164)

Hartsock (1990: 191) contends that 'postmodernism represents a dangerous approach for any marginalized group to adopt'. Similarly, Adams (1998: 395), in terms of sexualities, contends that there is a premature denial of gay and lesbian identities 'in a world where homosexual subjectivity remains a necessary part of practical resistance to heterosexist hegemony'.

Some feminists argue that 'postmodern language intimidates all but those heavily involved in this writing' (Evans, 1995: 140; see also Flax, 1992). Feminists, and particularly radical feminists, emphasise the integration of theory and practice. They and others therefore argue for accessible academic feminism. However, to discuss debates within poststructuralism and postmodernism it is sometimes necessary to engage with complex and academic language. Clearly, without the development of feminism within academia postmodern feminism would not be possible. However, this should not impede the development of numerous forms of feminism, including academic feminism.

Postmodern feminism, then, charts a difficult course between postmodernism and feminism. Feminists are wary of postmodernism and even those who use postmodern theories would argue against the 'wholesale adoption' of postmodern frameworks (Bordo, 1990: 153-154). Consequently, although textbooks now look to describe 'postmodern feminism' (e.g. Bryson, 1999; Crotty, 1998; Segal, 1999), tensions between

feminism and postmodernism are far from resolved or dissolved. For example, Ahmed (1998) argues that 'Differences Matter' and Alcoff (1997: 25) contends that whilst feminists can have 'sex' with postmodernism there should not be a 'marriage'. Perhaps the tensions, which are formed through intersecting and mutually reforming feminism and postmodernism have the potential to be, and have already been, fruitful and invigorating for theoretical debate. However, and it is important to reiterate this point, this carries the danger of postmodernism placing feminism as a derivative of itself rather than in a dialogical relationship (Ahmed, 1998; Flax, 1990a). These debates have also occurred in relation to feminist poststructuralism and will be addressed in Chapter 3 section 4.

2.4 Problematising Categories of Feminism

A search for a defining theme of the whole or a feminist viewpoint may require the suppression of the important and discomforting voices of persons with experiences unlike our own.

(Flax, 1990b: 48)

S. Jackson (1999) argues that feminist sociologists (and presumably feminist scholars) should not forget older traditions of thought. The purpose of this section was to recognise that different forms of feminism co-exist and that they are important in understanding and challenging complex and contradictory social relations which constitute us (Flax, 1990a; b). No one feminism can do everything and consequently the co-existence of multiple forms of feminism enables us to engage with divergent and even contradictory problems. As Flax, contends above, defining one theme may exclude and silence voices that are not ours. Feminist theories and theorists can be understood more like a tapestry composed of many different hues, rather than one woven in a single colour (adapted from Nicholson and Fraser, 1990). This chapter has simplified and classified feminist thought, for the purposes of illustrating diversity within feminism. This form of classification can be seen as creating order where there is very little (Stanley and Wise, 1983). Two problems of this approach will now be outlined.

Firstly, classifications vary considerably and there is a diversity of thought on how feminism can and should be classified (Crotty, 1998). It is acknowledged that these typologies are not clear-cut but are conceived as fluid and often overlapping. For example, radical and lesbian feminisms overlap in their separation tactics. In addition, S. Jackson (1998: 13) contends that although radical and socialist feminisms have been split into distinct camps (e.g. Nicholson, 1997), they are better conceptualised as a continuum along which particular authors locate themselves. The huge variety of feminisms which now co-exist challenges the notion of a simple continuum, and the idea of existing and moving between different forms of feminism is useful. Individual authors do not tend to sit solely within one form of feminism or another, instead different feminisms are combined, intersected and reformed throughout texts and lives. Stanley (1997a) illustrates this as she documents her journey through and between different forms of feminism in her lifetime. This challenges Mangenu's (1994) assumption that feminisms, which are seen as co-existing, cannot challenge or mutually inform each other. Therefore, the above account of distinctly different forms of feminism is overly simplistic and generic stories of 'types' of feminism are problematic.

Secondly, there may not be coherence within feminist categories. Each strand of feminism has changed and developed and although similarities have been identified between authors who label themselves or are labelled within these boxes, there are also dissonances. This is illustrated in the debates surrounding sexual practices within lesbian feminism. Consequently, there is only an illusion of internal consistency within categories of feminism. This illusion can be fostered, maintained and claimed but should be understood as produced through these processes, not pre-existing them. However, this does not negate laying claim to a label where necessary as long as it is recognised that in claiming any label we are also forming it through the assertion.

The categories of feminism which were used to illustrate the breadth and diversity of feminism are problematic. However, this section has sought to illustrate that although feminism explores gender relations and power, how one goes about challenging and investigating gendered power relations is not uniform. Therefore, 'feminism' is complex

and individually appropriated. Integral to these appropriations, and one's understanding of feminism, is how one understands the world. Consequently, there are different feminist epistemologies which are informed by and, in turn, inform ontologies and methodologies (see also Chapter 4 section 2.2).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter began by introducing the important aspects of postmodernism, poststructuralism and cultural geographies. Postmodernism questions metanarratives and the Master subject. Challenging the assumption of universal truths enables a space beyond the white, male universal subject from which non-heterosexual women's voices can be validated. Arguably, postmodernism does not easily lend itself to social critiques, including critiques of power. Poststructuralism is seen as offering a critique of dualistic thinking and social structures inherent to structuralism. Postmodernism and poststructuralism have not engaged in a dialectic relationship with an internally plural feminism. 'Mainstream' poststructural and postmodern thinking often sidelines feminism, sometimes with a brief account of 'feminist' challenges to male grand narratives. This thesis, however, draws on the interstices between feminism and poststructuralism.

From poststructuralism this thesis also draws on the questioning of universality and essentialism, the unstable yet constitutive function of language and the resulting fluidity of the subject. This fluidity enables a conceptualisation of women's lives as constantly being (re)made. Postmodernism and poststructuralism recognise the importance of local contexts in place of metanarratives. Cultural geographies integrate the questioning of fixed subjectivities with the importance of local contexts. This not only illustrates the plurality of geographies and the fluidity between disciplines and subject fields, it also highlights the importance of place and space in the constitution of subjects. An appreciation of fluid subjectivities and place enables this thesis to explore how identities,

bodies and spaces are (re)formed. In order to address the potential relativism of postmodernism, poststructuralism is used in a way that enables an understanding of power and power relations. Issues of power will be considered in the next chapter.

I began this chapter with an introduction to aspects of poststructuralism that are important to this thesis. This is not to contend that poststructuralism supersedes other perspectives or that it underpins feminism, rather both feminism and poststructuralism are understood as mutually informing this research. In this way, I appropriate Weedon's (1987) assertion that what is important is feminist appropriations of authors' work, even where the original authors may not engage with feminist analysis. Feminism is understood here as relating to the politicisation of gender and challenging gendered power relations. This is a diverse project as there are many different forms of feminism. Problematising categories of feminism enables an understanding of feminism and feminists as fluid. This fluidity, dynamicism and multiplicity informs my reading of feminist methodologies (see Chapter 4). Having separated poststructuralism and feminism, the next chapter will introduce feminist poststructuralism through explorations of concepts of power, performativity and place in terms of gender and sexuality.

Chapter Three

Feminist Poststructuralism:

Performativity, Power And Place

Chapter outline

3.1 Introduction

[F]eminist poststructuralism rather than poststructuralism *per se* is chosen because the combination of poststructuralism and feminism renders political what may otherwise be dismissed as a purely theoretical debate.

(Aitchison, 2000b: 131)

One of the key contributions of poststructuralist feminism has been to challenge all binary dualistic modes of Western thought based on hierarchies of opposition: oppositions which in turn map onto the division between 'man' and 'woman'.

(Williams, 1998: 69)

This chapter explores Aitchison's and Williams' conceptualisations of feminist poststructuralism whilst simultaneously outlining the theoretical underpinning of this thesis. It moves on from postmodernism, poststructuralism and feminist theories, examined in the previous chapter, to explore feminist poststructural theories of gender, sex and (hetero)sexuality. The term feminist poststructuralism is used in an attempt to readdress the absence of women and feminist theory in mainstream poststructuralism (see Chapter 2 section 2).

Feminist poststructuralism does not 'designate a position from which one operates, a point of view or standpoint' which might be usefully compared with other 'positions' (J. Butler and Scott, 1992: xiv). Feminist poststructuralism is instead slippery, fluid and at times contradictory. It can be used to understand structures or constructs, including gender and sexuality, as socially and culturally produced in particular contexts within specific relations of power. This is one of many possible appropriations of feminist poststructural theories. Recognising the fluidity of boundaries between theoretical perspectives, the thesis also draws on other areas of research and theory challenging the notion of situating a thesis within one 'perspective'.

Feminist poststructuralism is conceptualised, following Aitchison above, as integrating a critique of gendered power relations and poststructural theories. These feminist

appropriations and uses of poststructural theories significantly alter and reform these theories. Although it is important to recognise that feminisms are not atheoretical (Ahmed, 1998; de Lauretis, 1994), a dialectic relationship between feminism and poststructuralism enables a sophisticated deconstruction of gender, sex and sexuality which are conceptualised within relations of power. In one way this continues 'the single most important advance in feminist theory', which is that 'the existence of gender relations has been problematised such that 'gender' can no longer be treated as a simple, natural fact' (Flax, 1990a: 43-44).

Feminist poststructuralism can negate universal truth yet appreciate power and domination (Aitchison, 2000b; Nasmaste, 1994). Therefore, poststructuralism, in recognising that competing discourses co-exist, enables explorations of social and power relations which place particular halves of the dualism as dominant (Potter, 1988; Sarup, 1988). The problems of dualistic thinking, and the power inherent to the maintenance of dualisms which was introduced in Chapter 2, is explored in this chapter in relation to gender and sexuality (Williams, above). Feminist poststructuralism, in deconstructing gender and sexuality, can still recognise that sexism, homophobia, heterosexism and genderism co-exist (Weedon, 1987; Brown, 2001). Poststructural theories can analyse how boundaries are maintained and policed and, consequently, feminist poststructural critiques do not simply acknowledge difference as diversity but can reveal power relations (Brooks, 1997).

The chapter begins with an exploration of the dualism of gender as socially produced identities and sex as fixed bodily materialities. The complexity of these simplistic distinctions will be explored using J. Butler's (1990; 1993) conceptualisations of performativity. Following the previous chapter's conceptualisations of place as fluid, this chapter will then explore the formation of space/place. Intersections between bodies, identities and spaces are conceptualised as performative socio-spatial relations of power. Power can be (re)interpreted, explained and explored in many ways. The centrality of power relations to this thesis necessitates an examination of how power is understood in this context. As the focus of this thesis is on sexualities and genders, the chapter will

critically examine the 'naturalness' of heterosexuality and the power relations which (re)produce its assumed 'taken-for-grantedness'. Having deconstructed the gender/sex, male/female binaries and the sign 'woman', the potentials and problems of feminist poststructural theories are discussed. The chapter will conclude by revisiting key theoretical concepts.

3.2 Materialities and Discourses: Sex, Gender and Performativity

Current debates over the global assumptions of only two gender categories have led to the insistence that they must be nuanced to include race and class, but they have not gone much beyond that... Deconstructing sex, sexuality, and gender reveals many possible categories embedded in social experiences and social practices, as does the deconstruction of race and class.

(Lorber, 1996: 145)

In some feminist thinking and theorising there is an assumption that woman is pregiven on the basis of biological sex (see for example radical feminism section 2.3.2). Social constructionism can be seen as beginning the critique of an essentially biological woman. Within these theories society is seen as producing men and women through top-down power structures which impose feminine characteristics onto female bodies and masculine characteristics onto male bodies (see Barnard, 2000; Devor, 1989; Ussher, 1997). This section examines the sex/gender distinctions of social constructionist feminisms and re-emphasises the importance of materialities in the form of bodies.

The conceptualisations of relations between discourses and materialities in the form of identities and bodies can be seen in debates regarding gender and sex. Gender and sex are theorised in a number of different ways and, as with postmodernism and poststructuralism, writing on these topics is formative. Mohanty (1992) argues that feminism can be seen, in part, as creating gender and J. Butler (1990: 2) contends that feminist critiques ought to understand how the category 'woman' is, in part, 'produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought'. In addition, lesbian feminism, outlined in Chapter 2 section 3.5, often does not contest the

term 'lesbian' and, in this way, may (re)create who and what a 'lesbian' is, the very existence of the category itself and even the inferior position of this category as disempowered and marginal. Although some authors agree that sexualities are fluid, they still tend to homogenise and stabilise what is, in fact, a myriad of performances, identities and relations within the categories of 'heterosexual' or 'lesbian' (for example Smart, 1996). S. Jackson (1995) argues that 'heterosexual' and 'lesbian' only exist in gendered frameworks, just as male and female are constituted within heterosexual frameworks (J. Butler, 1990). Consequently, this section seeks to problematise the terms 'lesbian' and 'heterosexual' along with 'male' and 'female'.

3.2.1 Gender/Sex

Whereas gender and sex have been and are still sometimes considered biological, stable and given, feminist authors have challenged the 'natural' associations of sex with gender. Initially this challenge took a social constructionist approach. This approach, similar to that of structuralism as outlined in Chapter 2 section 2.2.i, sees social structures as mutable and biology as unchangeable. Consequently, sex is understood as biological and, therefore, fixed and unchanging and gender as the opposite to sex is viewed as socially constituted and thus malleable (Brooks, 1999). Sex provides 'the site' that gender is thought to be constructed on or in (Nicholson, 1995: 41). This approach assumes that there is something specific about men's and women's bodies related to reproductive capacities (Nicholson, 1990). Gender is then associated with masculine and feminine behaviours, attitudes and attributes. This understanding centralises time and space as gender is understood as 'a culturally constructed notion that varies across time and place' (Johnston, 2000: 186). Moreover, gender is the social positioning of bodies within society, such that women are seen to be given or to undertake subordinate roles and positions at home and work (McDowell, 1989). It is then argued that, through an analysis of gender roles, equality between genders could be achieved, leaving the dualism of man and woman in place. It is contended that transformation should take

place in ideology, separating the mind (ideology) from the body (biology). Therefore, what needs to be changed are the attitudes, beliefs and values, rather than reconsidering the body itself (Grosz, 1994). The sex/gender dualism can uncover sexism and enable equality politics. However, assuming the unity of biological 'woman' erases differences between women (Nicholson, 1996: 58). Nicholson (1990: 49) understands this as biological foundationalism, whereby biological determinism is rejected but one of its key features, the presumption of duality of sexes across cultures, is retained.

Geographical studies in this vein have included place and space in the analysis of gender roles and relations. Similar to structuralism (Chapter 2 section 2.2.i), place was seen as informing individual actions. For example, the home is investigated in terms of gendered power relations, where men and women had different roles (Rose and Mackensie, 1983; Wheelock, 1990). However, fixed and preexisting places were given social meanings. For example, when analysing the production of the place of the house, some feminist geographers purported that the 'private' space of the home and the social relations which occurred therein was being defined through the physical site of the house (Valentine, 2001). These feminist geographers then located women within the place of the home and men within work, arguing that these places defined the gender roles within home spaces (WGSG, 1984; 1997). Although these studies have been seen as environmentally deterministic, the idea of social space as built upon physical sites, locales or regions (place) prevails. Consequently, although gender roles and relations vary between places and thus differ through social space, place is still accorded the materiality that sex was once given. In other words, certain aspects of place were seen as 'fixed' in contrast to the mutability of spatial relations because the latter varied between places. In this way, the place/space binary can be seen as mirroring the sex/gender dualism.

The sex/gender divide draws on the binary separation of social/natural, where the social is seen as mutable but the natural remains unchangeable. Social constructionist theories, operating within dualistic frameworks, make a basic distinction between the material body and its social/cultural representations. In this way the body and identity/mind are seen as separate. The body is seen as 'a *tabula rasa*: a blank surface ready to be

inscribed' (Brook, 1999: 1). Because of this the important elements of the multifaceted relations between materialities and discourses have been undertheorised (Barnar, 2000: 673). Moreover, materiality is often considered 'one social discursive construct among many' (Barnard, 2000: 172). Therefore, within sociology and geography the focus was on social relations and the body and 'place' became present absences (see Longhurst, 1995a; 1997; Shilling, 1993; Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Valentine, 1999b).

The tendency to exclude the body extended beyond feminist assumptions of the gender/sex divide and the absence of the body in social sciences has been attributed to the mind/body (Cartesian) dualism (Grosz, 1994). The Cartesian dualism not only distinguishes between the mind and the body, it associates particular genders with this separation. Men were accorded superiority, in terms of rational and logical thinking (mind), and women were associated with, and often reduced to, the body which was seen as irrational and, on this basis, women's social and economic roles were restricted to (pseudo) biological terms.

Women, like nature, are viewed, as found and unreliable; part of the natural order of things, the body rather than the mind, and so unfitted for the cool rationality of the public arena.

(McDowell, 1994: 729)

Consequently, the Cartesian dualism was a hierarchical relation which confined women to their (sexed) body. The absence of the body has been addressed in wider sociological literature (for example, Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Sullivan, 2001; Shilling, 1993) and within this thesis the focus will be on feminist (re)appropriations of theories of the body.

Within social constructionist feminisms, the focus on socially constructed gender and the assumption of a given biologically sexed body meant that analyses of the body were at best not explicit. The body was often negated and remained unconsidered, in contrast to the emphasis that was placed on its opposite discursive/social constructions (Barnard, 2000; Longhurst, 1997). Whilst how we experience our bodies is 'invariably social', daily life is 'fundamentally about the production and reproduction of bodies' (Nettleton

60

and Watson, 1998: 8, 2). Bodies are thus conceptualised as processual rather than static, volatile rather than fixed (Williams, 1998: 77).

The notion of gender as supplementing the human subject is only possible if human subjects exist prior to their social contexts (Gatens, 1992: 128). Connell (1999: 451) argues that biological processes are shaped by social practices and bodies are in turn involved in historical social relations. Consequently, the understanding of bodies as neutral and passive surfaces upon which gender is inscribed is dubious (Gatens, 1996: 3). There is a constant interplay of social processes with biological processes. The dichotomy of sex as the pregiven body and gender as the social construction which is inscribed on this body is thus problematic. Here sex and gender, and the related associations of materialities and discourses, are instead conceptualised as existing in a 'dialectic relationship' (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 3). Therefore, although bodies have no meanings outside of socio-historical constructs (Weeks, 1987), the materialities of bodies are salient considerations in the (re)formation of these constructs. Finally, bodies are here understood as sites, hence we can speak of *Bodyspaces* (Duncan, 1996). The spaces of bodies interact with other bodies and their environment. As sites, therefore, bodies can be seen as locations of social relations of power. In this way, bodies and identities are not only spatialised; bodies, spaces and identities are mutually formative.

J. Butler (1990a; b; 1993a; b; 1997b) contends that sex is not prediscursive or biologically fixed. She challenges the assumption of sex as pre-existing gender and gender, in turn, as merely expressing/reflecting an anatomical sex. Young (1995: 190) asserts that gender identification is not 'a culturally variable overlay on a pregiven biological sex', instead, the gender categories make sexual difference. Similarly J. Butler argues:

If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct of 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all... sex could not qualify as a prediscursive anatomical facticity. Indeed, sex, by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along.

(J. Butler, 1990a: 7-8)

Here J. Butler (1990a) purports that sex, as well as gender, is produced in the cultural realm. Similar to Young (1995), she reverses the sex/gender dichotomy arguing that instead of sex determining gender, gender designates the apparatus whereby sexes are produced as prediscursive. In other words, gender, as the apparatus of cultural construction, produces sex as the embodiment of this production. Consequently, the sex/gender binary is destabilised by reversing the terms of the sex/gender dichotomy (Butler, 1990a; Young, 1995).

J. Butler (1990a) argues that there is no pregiven link between sex, gender and desire (sexuality) and, in this way, enables a reconceptualisation of their relations. Where gender does not necessarily follow from sex and this does not follow from desire, possibilities exist beyond identifying with a sex or desiring it (Butler, 1990a: 135-136). The delinking of sex, gender and desire enables a reconceptualisation of the binary terms of gender and sex. Bodies are diverse and the assumption of two mutually distinctive 'types' ignores the complexity of bodies within and between these categories (J. Butler, 1990a; Connell, 1999). Such theorising can be related to geographical conceptualisations where places, as fluid and (re)made, can also be seen as gendered and sexualised (Johnston, 1996).

3.2.2 Performativity

Performativity is a term coined by J.L. Austin (Rapi, 1998) to identify the 'social and cultural instances' where speech becomes an action and saying something means doing something (Rapi, 1998: 3). The concept of performances as enacting fixed identities was used by Goffman (1959). He saw a front stage which was ordered and performed. This was supported by the 'backstage' which was not in public view. However, concepts of performativity can move beyond understandings of preexisting identities which are differentially performed and instead can be seen, following J. Butler, as formative.

As well as deconstructing the sex/gender binary, J. Butler asserts that there is no inherent stability to gender and, because gender constructs sex, there is no coherence to sex. In her book, *Gender Trouble*, she contends that gender is performative:

... a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeals over time to produce the appearance of substance.

(J. Butler, 1990: 33)

Gender is not pregiven but is an achievement. Subjectivities or, more specifically, identities, are understood here as performative. In other words, who we are and how we understand ourselves is (re)made. Whereas Goffman (1959) saw a pre-existing actor, J. Butler (1990a, 1992) contends that gender is performative in that it constitutes, as an effect, the very subject it appears to express. Through what we 'do' we become doers and the doer does not precede the doing. In other words, our gendered identities are produced through 'stylised acts' and our identities do not exist before we do an intelligible gender. There is no 'I' which precedes that performance (J. Butler, 1992; 1997b). These performances are 'stylised': they design us in specific ways which are understandable within the norms of our society (see section 3.1). Consequently, identities are seen as an 'effect of performance' (V. Bell, 1999: 3).

J. Butler, having been accused of neglecting the body in *Gender Trouble* (1990a), explicitly addressed the body in *Bodies that Matter* (1993). However, as has been argued above, the body is not considered a pregiven entity. J. Butler purports that the body is not material but constantly *materialising* and one is not simply a body, *instead 'one does ones body'* (J. Butler, 1997b: 404, my emphasis). Grosz (1994) argues that the cultural and historical representations and inscriptions of the 'real' material body constitute it as such. She sees the body as 'a series of processes of becoming, rather than a fixed state of being' (Grosz, 1994: 12). Consequently, as with identities, bodies are understood as formed through performativitities. Moreover, the symbolism of 'woman/girl' is made through discourses and constitutes the materialities of the body. J. Butler speaks of 'girling' (1993: 232) which is the process whereby one becomes viable as a person and as a woman through the citation of norms. J. Butler (1993) thus understands gender as

the interaction between appearance and psyche. Consequently, there is no materiality without discourse and no discourse without materiality – they are mutually constitutive through performativity.

These acts do not simply constitute identities and bodies, they also constitute identities and bodies as compelling illusions (J. Butler, 1990a; 1997b). The illusion of a pregiven gender is maintained through repeated performances. The necessity for these reiterated performances illustrates the instability of the categories themselves as well as their failure to establish a stable body (J. Butler, 1990b; 1992; 1994; Shildrick, 1997). Consequently, if there is no reality of gender outside of its performance, then there is no recourse to an essential sex or gender, which gendered performances express. Bodies merely copy 'material fixity' (Shildrick, 1997: 13). Any 'real' sex grounded in the body is a cultural formation which is produced through performative enactments. It is an 'illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the frame of reproductive sexuality' (J. Butler, 1990b: 336-337). J. Butler contends that identification is a fantasy, as there is no pre-existing gender core to identify with. Gender is, therefore, 'the fantasy enacted by and through the corporeal styles that constitute bodily significations' (J. Butler, 1990b: 334). In other words, gender is a fantasy which (re)produces sex as 'natural' through recitation, for the purposes of reproductive sexuality. There is nothing, therefore, about the binary system of gender/sex which is given (J. Butler, 1997b).

3.2.3 Performativity and Space

J. Butler (1990a) contests the pre-existence of both sex and gender within a binary frame, rendering both identities and bodies as contingent, unstable and performatively constituted. A focus on 'gendered, sexed and sexualised embodiment' centres subjectivity as 'always fractured and multiple, and contests hierarchical dualisms' such as mind/body, gender/sex and straight/gay (Johnston, 2000: 181). J. Butler's work,

however, offers few possibilities to investigate gender beyond the psyche (Hawkesworth, 1996). The body in her work is individual and may refuse relations with other bodies (Rose, 1999). The social, however, is constituted beyond the individual:

Particular versions of femininity and masculinity are constituted in their circuits as meaningful bodies and embodied meanings. Through body-reflexive practices more than individual lives are formed: a social world is also formed.

(Connell, 1999: 465)

Whilst the social forms individual lives, performances are not isolated to individual bodies and have consequences beyond individual psyches. Although it is unfair to argue that J. Butler does not acknowledge this, particularly in relation to the heterosexual matrix (see below), her focus, arising from her psychoanalytical roots, is on the psyche and individual performances rather than interactions. Consequently, she ignores the social and cultural interactions which form the symbolic and the material. As Aitchison (1999a, b, c; 2000a), identifying the social-cultural nexus, contends the social and the cultural are intimately interlinked and interdependent. This nexus is central in exploring intersections between materialities and discourses, bodies and identities. Perhaps because J. Butler does not examine spaces between the social and the cultural, and is particularly indifferent to empirical research, she is almost the only major theorist who does not mention space (Brown, 2000). Brown (2000: 35) argues that the literary bias of performativity slides uncomfortably over geographers' contentions that 'place matters'. Consequently, J. Butler, whose work *is* theoretically rigorous, does not consider context, social space or place.

Bodies perform interactively and productively, reacting and interacting (Grosz, 1994: xi). If, as has already been argued, performances make bodies and identities, relational performances form these in context, that is, in particular times and spaces. Social space, as the site of interactions between people, objects and places, composes our daily lives through its accommodation of micro-social processes. Thus, socio-spatial relations are formative of bodies and identities and also the spaces/places themselves. Social space is often assumed to pre-exist its performance or the context exists and is entered into by

actors who react to their physical and cultural surroundings (Gregson and Rose, 2000). However,

I want to argue that space is also a doing, that it does not pre-exist its doing, and that its doing is the articulation of relational performances.

(Rose, 1999: 248)

Therefore, space formed through its doing also requires constant reiteration to produce the illusion of fixity. Moreover, bodies and their environments are co-constituted with each crucial to, and connected to, the other (Grosz, 1998; Sullivan, 2001). In the previous chapter and earlier in this chapter it has been noted that place can be understood as fluid. Chapter 9 will further explore and (re)theorise the connections between physical environments, bodies and identities. Here it is suffice to reiterate that the space/place binary can be seen as similar to the sex/gender binary in assuming there is fixed place and socially constructed space. Hence, following J. Butler's (1993a) arguments regarding the materialities of bodies, place, along with space, can be seen as continually (re)produced.

Nelson (1999) offers one of the most sophisticated critiques of the use of J. Butler within geographical work. Similar to Gregson (1983), who saw geographers as under-critical of Giddens (Chapter 2 section 2.2), Nelson argues that geographers need to be more critical of J. Butler and particularly of her conceptualisation of the subject. Nelson (1999: 339) does not reject performativity. However, how J. Butler theorises performativity:

... forecloses inquiry into why and how particular identities emerge, their effects in time and space and the role of subjects in accommodating or resisting dominant fixed subject positions.

(Nelson, 1999: 339)

J. Butler's subject, according to Nelson (1999: 336), is removed from time and place because she equates people with subject positions offered within discourses. Nelson contradicts other readings of J. Butler's subject as volunteeristic, for example D. Bell *et al.* (1994). Instead, she sees J. Butler's subject as compelled and unreflexively repeating.

J. Butler (1997a: 10) contests the reading of subjects as individuals, arguing instead that individuals can occupy and constitute the 'site of the subject' but do not do so continually. Nelson (1999: 351) argues that locating performances in time and place and theorising how situated knowing subjects do identity deepens our intellectual project and enables diverse political projects as well. The challenge for Nelson is therefore:

how to conceptualise identity as processual, indeed as performative without acceding to a problematic deconstruction of conscious agency and subjectivity and without abstracting 'the subject' from its constitution in time and space.

(Nelson, 1999: 351)

It could be argued that J. Butler's theorising of subject positions and removal of the subject from its context is a result of the absence of empirical studies in her work. Whilst some may argue that this weakens her work, I see her theorising as having the potential to inform empirically based studies such as this one. Her conceptualisations of gender and sexuality have certainly influenced the conceptualisations of gendered and sexualised relations outlined in this thesis. I agree with Nelson (1999) that whilst some aspects of everyday life may become unreflexively repeated they do not start as such. Some aspects of everyday performances are always conscious and reflected upon (see Chapters 6, 7 and 9).

Gendered performances and enactments are located within histories, cultures and discourses, all of which are formed through power relations:

... "stages" do not pre-exist their performances ... rather specific performances bring these spaces into being. And since these performances are themselves articulations of power, of particular subject positions, then we maintain that we need to think of spaces too as performative of power relations.

(Gregson and Rose, 2000: 441)

Importantly, this research moves beyond performativity as occurring on a particular stage to conceptualising 'stages' or places as (in)forming and being formed through performativities.

3.3 Power, Gender and (Hetero)Sexuality

This section will explore one possible conceptualisation of power. This discussion begins by exploring how power is constituted in the micro-relations of everyday life and, in turn, forms identities, bodies and spaces. Having established the thesis's conceptualisation of power, the discussion turns to heterosexuality as a form of power relations which are both constitutive and 'exclusionary'.

3.3.1 Power and everyday life

There are many different forms of power. Following Foucault (1980), the forms of power considered here are conceptualised not as centralised, possessed by a ruler, governor or state, but as 'dispersed throughout society, and exercised at a micro-level' (Bryson, 1999: 37). Aitchison (2000a) differentiates structural and cultural power. Structural power can be seen as formal structures of power within the social-cultural nexus. Cultural power, on the other hand, is that produced through social interactions. In Chapter 2 section 3.1 on liberal feminism, I argued that power is not simply contained within formal societal structures and equality in the law or company regulations may not lead to equitable practices. Gatens argues that in the last two hundred years many formal barriers have been removed but, 'there is more to be said about methods of exclusion than formalised principles of equity can address' (Gatens, 1996: 25). Structural changes (in statutes for example) may not result in changes in everyday cultural practices. The social-cultural nexus conceptualises the structural and the cultural as distinct but interrelated. Moreover, this understanding recognises the importance of power relations within and beyond the structural (Aitchison, 1999a; b; c; 2000a; b). Therefore, 'by acknowledging the inter-relationships between structural and symbolic power, it may be possible to offer a more complete interpretation of gender [and (hetero)sexual] power relations' (Aitchison, 2000c: 189). Although different forms of power co-exist, this thesis focuses on cultural power relations.

Foucault (1977) used Bentham's panopticon to illustrate how institutions such as prisons, schools and factories survey and control persons through self-surveillance. The panopticon was a prison which was designed such that the guard in the centre could see into every cell but the prisoners could not see the guard. It was, therefore, possible to exercise power prior to any offence being committed, because prisoners self-policed their behaviour. This was because they never knew when they were being watched and, as a result, put themselves under constant (self-)surveillance. This form of power is 'permanent in its effects if discontinuous in its actions' (Foucault, 1977: 201). In other words, although those subject to surveillance may *not* be watched the *possibility* of being observed means they constantly police their behaviours. Understanding power in terms of self-surveillance enables us to conceptualise micro-social relations as powerful. Our everyday interactions are subject to potential scrutiny and, consequently, how we act draws upon what we consider appropriate, as well as what we perceive others to understand as correct in that context. The discussion chapters explore this form of power in terms of othering processes; these are processes which make participants feel other to the 'norm'.

Power relations, formed between individuals through processes of surveillance and self-discipline, are often invisible. What is 'appropriate' is often not explicit but exists as 'taken-for-granted common sense'. Garfinkel (1967) illustrated that actors depend on social orders which are often unrecognised. This perception of an order is not a real structure but is formed through interactions. 'Common sense' is thus understood as a meaning system which is common to, or shared by, social actors (Garfinkel, 1967). This thesis will explore non-heterosexual women's taken for granted assumptions, which are not homogenous. For example, in Chapter 7 some women see 'passing' as obvious, whilst other women understand 'transgression' as self-evidently important in contesting othering processes.

'Common sense' is never neutral but instead favours dominant hegemonic 'orders' (Wheelan, 1995). Consequently, common sense can be seen as a puissant form of power relations because certain relations are 'obvious' and consequently relatively

unquestionable (Cresswell, 1997; Wheelan, 1995). This, in contrast to the imposition of societal structures, is a relational form of power. That is, power is not imposed but is (re)formed through interactions between people and can be consensual:

> ... common sense...produces the strongest adherence to an established order. People act as they think they are supposed to; they do what they think is appropriate in places that are also appropriate... When individuals and groups ignore this socially produced common sense, they are said to be 'out-of-place' and defined as deviant.

<div align="right">(Cresswell, 1997: 340)</div>

What is interesting, then, is both *what is and what is not* taken for granted (Haste, 1993: 89), those aspects of everyday life which do not require explanations or justifications, as well as those which are commented on, observed and visible. The other is often visible as different and the invisible 'norm' is also (re)produced through relations of power. Chapters 6 and 8 investigate the visibility of 'deviant' sexual and gendered performances and the paradoxical absence of everyday vocabulary to describe these experiences.

Common sense power relations do not exist simply at the isolated site of the individual but are formed between people. This conceptualisation of power sees it as diffused through the micro relations between individuals. Power relations, therefore, constitute the domain of the social within common sense norms and codes which are heavily policed. Power produces the 'domain of the psychic which inheres with the social' but does not exist before the social and is susceptible to historical change (McNay, 1999: 186). Moreover, the social can be seen as composed of relations of power, through which power is not held but redeployed and reappropriated in context. These actions frequently draw upon, and thus reinforce, 'common sense' understandings (Sawicki, 1991). The socio-spatial dialectic, that is the mutual formation of space and society through social relations and interactions, can be understood as produced through these power relations.

Although power is appropriated and used in specific contexts there are elements of durability and order in how it is employed and maintained (Bordo, 1992; 1997). Words, meanings and claims to knowledge form patterns or discourses, organise our understanding and connect to how power is exercised in our society (Bryson, 1999: 37). Moreover, certain forms of power and space reoccur (Rose, 1999: 248). Therefore, as Nast and Pile (1998: 409) argue, power networks are not without form, nor are they 'subordinate to just anyone's whims and will'. An emphasis on performativity does not mean an assumption of fluid, forever changing identities. On the contrary:

... taking the temporal performative nature of identities as a theoretical premise means that more than ever, one needs to question how identities continue to be produced, embodied and performed effectively, passionately and with social and political consequences.

(V. Bell, 1999: 2)

Identities, often perceived as fixed, are (re)performed within 'common sense' codes and norms. V. Bell contends that this understanding enables us to question 'how' identities (and from our discussion above, bodies and places) are (re)formed effectively. She argues that this has social and political consequences. Therefore, this conceptualisation of power enables an examination of how society is ordered as well as informing subsequent critiques of othering.

This is not to suggest that these power relations are permanent and stable. On the contrary, through constant repetition networks can portray an image of stability that is then taken as natural and reproduced as such (J. Butler, 1990a; 1993; 1997a). Power as performative is in a constant state of flux. In this way, the ongoing discourse of becoming a woman is open to resignification and intervention. J. Butler argues that even when gender appears to congeal into reified forms, the 'congealing' is itself 'an insistent and insidious practice, sustained and regulated by various social means' (J. Butler, 1990a: 33). Brown (2000: 31) contends that J. Butler's theories of performativity reconcile individual's resistance to power and the constant oppressive factors such as gender and sexuality. In other words, power networks are simultaneously fixed and fluid (Nast and Pile, 1997: 407). Here, common sense, perceived as given (or fixed), can be

71

understood as resulting from relations and performances which are fluid. Hence, although power is conceptualised as fluid its 'congealed' forms can be seen as 'fixed' by those who are subject to relations of power.

Power relations (re)produce a social order which is often considered fixed. On the other hand not only are orders and hierarchies produced through power networks and relations, individuals are also made through the effects of power (Ramazanoglu, 1993; J. Butler, 1997a). Power makes viable subjects and subjects viable (J. Butler, 1993; J. Butler, 1997a). In other words, the conditions of our existence as human are enabled through defining what human is. Norms thus govern the 'formation of the subject and circumscribe the domain of liveable society' (J. Butler, 1997a: 21). For Foucault the person is 'both subject and subjected in that the knowing self is simultaneously constructed by what he knows' (Shildrick, 1997: 45). J. Butler (1997a: 27) goes on to contend that subjection is 'the paradoxical effect of a regime of power'. The 'conditions of existence', which are understood as 'the possibility of continuing as a recognisable social being', require that the 'subject in subordination' is made and maintained (J. Butler, 1997a: 27). Similarly, J. Butler's thesis rests on the notion of agency being affective. That is, the subject does pre-exist its agency, but is made as a condition of that agency (Pettit, 1999: 1). Therefore, the subject's existence is contingent upon and integral to, relations of power and the norms which constitute 'liveable society'.

Power, in turn, also produces a domain of unviable, '(un)subjects'- objects, who are 'neither named nor prohibited' (J. Butler, 1991: 20). To be explicitly prohibited is to be named and able to offer a reverse discourse (Skeggs, 1998). However, being 'implicitly proscribed is not even to qualify as an object of prohibition' (J. Butler, 1993: 20). Consequently, the dominant names and produces the other in order to exist, but there is a domain of unviability which is unintelligible and outside of common sense. Within the domain of gender, for example, man and woman are the only two viable options (see Chapter 8). Analysing discourse can expose the grounds that enable certain things to be spoken whilst other things cannot be stated and are rendered impossible (Probyn, 1999: 138, see also Chapter 5 section 4.9).

Power is constantly being (re)produced through our enactments and relations. It is not added on from the outside but is subtly present in the bodies of individuals. By defining the intelligible, performances and enactments are constituted through these domains. In order to exist within common sense assumptions one must fit within the dominant or its identifiable other. Therefore, performativity is always a reiteration of principles and networks of power are continually fixing us, placing us and naming us (Llyod, 1999: 201; Probyn, 1998: 138). In what Foucault terms 'technologies of the self', bodies are inscribed by power relations and are therefore social and historical entities (McNay, 1992: 3). However, as I have contended above, bodies are not simply inscribed with social constructions. Materialities of bodies can be understood as sedimented effects of power (Butler, 1993a; 1997a). Power is thus not internalised, it is incorporated. Bodies are produced that:

... signify the law as an essence of their selves, the meaning of their soul, their conscience, the law of their desire. In effect the law is at once fully manifest and fully latent, for it never appears external to the bodies it subjects and subjectivates.

(J. Butler, 1990b: 334)

Therefore, as power is not simply imposed from above it is impossible for individuals to be 'outside' these power relations. They constitute bodies and who we are (Gatens, 1992). Performativity then involves the 'saturation of performances and performers' with power (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 448). This 'saturation' produces matrices of social orders, bodies and identities. Moreover, 'social orders', bodies and identities are made in context and, consequently, power forms places/spaces (Massey, 1999a; b).

Young (1995: 209) argues that no individual woman's identity will escape 'the markings of gender', but how gender marks her life is her own. The concept of power outlined here exists between structure and agency, such that these are mutually formative and interdependent within relations of power. This is to imply, as Young (1995) does, a form of robustness to power, which stretches beyond the individual. However, contrary to Young, at a micro level power is understood as informing macro processes. Therefore, 'the markings of gender' are formed through performativities and power relations

informing how gender is conceptualised. Conversely, how one's life is 'marked by gender' is contained within normative gender discourses and performativities. Power relations form, yet extend beyond, the individual but do not exist without individuals. Therefore, power may not be solely imposed from above. Thus, webs of power both constitute and are constituted by individuals. This is not an unreflexive repetition of pregiven power relations (Nelson, 1999), but often a conscious performance within what is understood as common sense. Where structure and agency are mutually formed, the subject is not reduced to societal power, nor is power reducible to individual agency (J. Butler, 1997a).

Thrift has spent 'the past few years' searching for 'elements of life which continually and chronically undermine all forms of power' (2000: 269). This pursuit can be seen as part of his advocacy of non-representational theory (see Chapter 2 section 2.3). It is interesting that such a project is being pursued by an established, white, male academic who has the privilege of not having to consider the effects of power relations which put him in this position (see Chapter 4 section 3 for a discussion of reflexivity and situated knowledges). He argues that powerful systems are constantly being undermined by the undertow of everyday practices. I would contend that these everyday practices are formed through and, in turn, constitute power relations (see Chapter 6). He asserts that power is 'constituted across (and through) many registers of experience' (Thrift, 2000: 270). I agree but contend that this merely proliferates common understandings and (ab)uses of power. Thrift only cites (re)uses and subversions of power. He contends that the literature on power ignores creativity and, without imagination and creativity, a whole series of classes of human life can be missed and human societies reduced to 'the play of power' (Thrift, 2000: 272). However, as this section has argued, how we understand ourselves and are constituted as humans is intimately interconnected within systems of power. These systems of power are not only spatialised but also produce social spaces (Massey, 1999b). Consequently, understandings of space as both created through, and creating, power relations contest the existence of spaces without power because in order to come into being space must be produced through performative relations of power.

Through the daily exercise of surveillance, everyday power relations are often rendered invisible. The task of power is to take charge of life and this needs continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms. A normalising society is the outcome of a 'technology of power' centred on life (Foucault, 1976: 144). This thesis sees power relations as (re)producing everyday lives and persons through techniques of surveillance and self-discipline. Foucault (1977: 208) understands these as 'relations of discipline'. These power relations are also incorporated onto bodies such that they constitute identities and bodies making them viable and intelligible. Power, as performative, is understood as being in a continuous state of flux yet appearing constant and unchanging.

3.3.2 Heterosexuality and Power

It is through sex – in fact, and imaginary point determined by the deployment of sexuality – that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his [sic] own intelligibility (seeing that it is both the hidden aspect and the generative principle of meaning), to the whole of his [sic] body... to his [sic] identity.

(Foucault 1976: 155-156)

If a regime of [hetero]sexuality mandates a compulsory performance of sex, then it may be only through that performance that the binary system of gender and the binary system of sex come to have intelligibility at all. It may be that the very categories of sex, of sexual identity, of gender are produced or maintained in the effects of this compulsory performance, effects which are disingenuously renamed as causes, origins, disingenuously lined up within a casual or expressive sequence that the heterosexual norm produces to legitimate itself as the origin of all sex.

(J. Butler 1993b: 29)

Foucault, above, contends that in order to be intelligible to yourself, you have to pass through a sex, but this sex is an effect of sexuality. Foucault (1976: 156-157) argues that sex, as an act, is produced as desirable within sexuality, and sex is historically subordinate to sexuality. J. Butler above goes on to contend that the very categories of sex and gender may be produced through the heterosexual norm. This section will use

the concepts of power discussed above, to argue that sex and gender exist in domains of intelligibility which are produced for the purposes of heterosexuality. Heterosexuality in turn renders certain forms of gender and sexuality 'deviant' and 'unnatural'.

Power, as has been argued above, produces the domain of liveable society defining what is and what is not intelligible. J. Butler (1990a: 9) argues that gender is the effect of specific forms of power and 'constraint is built into what language constitutes as the imaginable domain of gender'. Specifically, she contends that in order to be intelligible as human, one must perform within the common sense dichotomous norms of gender intelligibility. Through these performances the person becomes human and conversely the notion of a 'truth' of sex is produced through 'the regulatory practices that generate coherent identities through the matrix of coherent gender norms' (J. Butler, 1990a: 17). These regulatory practices and the 'imaginable domain' exist within the framework of heterosexuality such that men and women are conceived as opposites meant to come together within the heterosexual matrix. This thesis investigates the experiences of existing as other to this matrix.

To be intelligible as female one must be opposite to, and not, male (and vice versa) and this requires 'a stable and oppositional heterosexuality' (J. Butler, 1990a: 22). Consequently, part of the temporality of sexual regulation is sexing the body (J. Butler, 1999: 19). 'Sex' is not only something that one has, or a description of what one is: it is a norm 'by which 'one' becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life' as a human being (J. Butler, 1993: 2). Chapter 8 explores the experience of existing beyond and between male and female.

Young (1995: 201) contends that gender is often experienced as 'a felt necessity' that is preordained and natural. Consequently, gender is not a set of 'free floating attributes' (J. Butler, 1990a: 24). Instead the 'substantive effect' of gender is (re)formed and 'compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence' (J. Butler, 1990a: 24). Moreover, sex and gender are not 'arbitrarily connected' (Gatens, 1996: 13). Sex-appropriate behaviours, such as masculinity and femininity, are 'manifestations of a historically based, culturally shared fantasy about male and female biologies' (Gatens,

1996: 13). The coherence of gender results from regulatory processes that aim to make gender identities homogeneous through compulsory heterosexuality (J. Butler, 1990a: 31). Becoming a gender is thus a laborious process of becoming 'naturalised' as a social being (J. Butler, 1990a; 1997a). Consequently, as I argued in the section on power, there are social orders which congeal to give the illusion of stability but are here conceptualised as unstable, multiple and performatively constituted in context.

Sexuality and gender are intimately interconnected in the power relations which produce humans. These relations privilege one form of sexuality over another and form genders in relation to this conceptualisation:

The acquisition of gender identity is thus simultaneous with the accomplishment of coherent heterosexuality. The taboo against incest, which presupposes and includes the taboo against homosexuality, works to sanction and produce identity at the same time that it is said to repress the very identity it produces. This disciplinary production of gender effects a false stabilisation of gender in the interests of the heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality. That the model seeks to produce and sustain coherent identities and that it requires a heterosexual construction of sexuality in no way implies that practicing heterosexuals embody or exemplify this model with any kind of regularity. Indeed I would argue that in principle no one can embody this regulatory ideal at the same time that the compulsion to embody the fiction, to figure the body in accord with its requirements, is everywhere. This is a fiction that operates within discourse, and which, discursively and institutionally sustained wields enormous power.

(J. Butler, 1990b: 335)

Along with the fiction of gender, heterosexuality is also conceptualised as fictive. J. Butler argues that homosexuality is both produced and constrained for the purposes of maintaining a stabilised and coherent gender and sexuality. Consequently, in binary terms, heterosexuality is the primary or privileged term and homosexuality is its constitutive other. The notion of a gender core has already been contested and here I wish to highlight the oppositional formation of heterosexuality.

J. Butler (1990a; 1993b) contends that the self cannot exist without its other, which is seen as a copying of the original (see Chapter 2 section 2.2). Moreover, the copy is needed to define the original. As the copy comes first, the original is merely a copy (J.

Butler, 1990a; 1997a). This renders the whole framework insecure as each position inverts the other. Consequently, heterosexuality requires an intelligible conception of homosexuality in order to remain intact. If it were not for the notion of the homosexual as a copy, there would be no construct of heterosexuality as origin. However, J. Butler argues that the whole framework is unstable, homosexuality is not merely a copy of heterosexuality, but constitutes heterosexuality and brings it into existence. Chapter 7 will use this conceptualisation to explore acts of 'passing' as imitations of an imitation.

Heterosexuality requires the prohibition of homosexuality's conception to make it culturally intelligible. Systems of heterosexism and homophobia are grounded in the sighting/citing of difference (Probyn, 1998: 139). Heterosexuality's power lies in its 'common sense' status. Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1996) argue that, in contrast to conscious lesbianism, heterosexuality is often not consciously deliberated but often considered 'normal'. Difference is thus understood as the common sense 'perversion of the normal: not-white, not-heterosexual, not-feminine' (Probyn, 1998: 139).

The fiction of the heterosexual ideal is juxtaposed with an abnormal homosexuality and this serves to exclude and marginalize those who exist outside the heterosexual norm:

Not to have social recognition as an effective heterosexual is to lose one possible social identity and perhaps to gain one that is radically less sanctioned, the unthinkable is thus fully within culture but fully excluded from dominant culture.

(J. Butler, 1990a: 77)

As a compulsory performance heterosexuality not only enforces heterosexual norms but also (re)iterates gender norms. As (hetero)sexuality is intimately connected with gender, those who fail to 'do their gender right' or within specific 'norms' regularly suffer ostracism, punishment and violence (J. Butler, 1993b: 24; 1997a: 405). Heterosexuality is conceptualised as powerful, transcendent and as plural webs of power. It constitutes individuals informing our sexualised and gendered behaviours and interrelations, which make us viable as human. The experiences of existing outside heterosexual and gendered norm can be understood as including, and being formed through, intense feelings such as

rejection, alienation and despair (c.f. Kleinmann and Copp, 1993; Widdowfield, 2000 see also Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9). However, these feelings are not always negative and, as J. Butler contends, there are 'transgressive pleasures' produced by those very prohibitions (J. Butler, 1993b: 24, see also Chapter 7).

3.3.2.i Heterosexualisation of everyday space

J. Butler's focus on the individual again precludes an examination of the social relations which constitute the spaces of everyday lives. J. Butler's work enables us to explore bodies, identities and spaces/places as constituted through relations of heterosexual power but there is no examination of everyday othering processes which are the focus of this thesis. Moreover, considerations of space/place are notable in their absence. Geographies of sexualities have centralised space exploring the fluid and mutual constitution of sexual spaces and sexual identities.

Within geographical enquiry there has been an exploration of the heterosexualisation of everyday spaces. Whilst this at times misappropriates J. Butler's work (see Nelson, 1999), it does offer some insight into the formation of (hetero)sexualised spaces. It has already been contended that space/place are fluid and can be understood as produced through doing within power relations and common sense norms. These common sense norms often regard space as implicitly heterosexual, validating displays of affection between men and women. In this way, the dominant sexuality in everyday spaces is heterosexuality. Valentine (1993a, b, c; 1995b) illustrated that lesbians use space differently at different times in accordance with what they understood as 'safe'. Consequently, it is argued that lesbians and gay men can police their behaviour in heterosexual space invisibilising homosexual identities (Kirby and Hay, 1995; Valentine, 1996). In terms of the self/other dualism (see Chapter 2 section 2.2), homosexuality becomes the invisible other in everyday heterosexualised space. Overt displays of lesbian and gay identities can also be heavily policed by heterosexual processes in everyday spaces with these ranging from jeers and stares to physical

violence (Valentine, 1996: 154). Therefore, through processes of surveillance and self-surveillance, space is *made* 'gay' or 'straight' through relations of power which hierarchise sexualised performances.

Reiterating processes of policing and self-surveillance creates space as heterosexual and most (heterosexual) people are unaware of these practices of power (Valentine, 1993b: 396). As with identities and bodies the repetition of heterosexual performances creates the *illusion* of space as preexisting and as 'naturally' heterosexual thereby invisiblising the sexualised power relations which make it as such (D. Bell and Valentine, 1995; D. Bell *et al.*, 1994). In other words, space is heterosexualised and this is an insecure appearance which has to be maintained through regulatory regimes (D. Bell *et al.*, 1994; Valentine, 1996). Moreover, 'gay' spaces are also continually negotiated (Skeggs, 1999). Non-heterosexual women's experiences of the heterosexualisation of everyday spaces of food and eating will be explored in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 uses these understandings to (re)conceptualise the formation of space incorporating non-heterosexual women in the formation of this space. Chapter 9 (re)considers the place/space binary and explicitly (re)considers the physical environment in terms of power and performativity.

3.4 Potentials and Problems of Poststructural Feminism

I have long had the stubborn conviction that things don't have to be the way they are now.

(Probyn, 1998: 134)

The understanding of poststructural feminism outlined in this chapter has enabled an understanding of 'the way things are' as maintained through power relations which give the illusion of fixity. However, the chapter has yet to explore the possibilities of feminist poststructuralism for effecting change. Feminist poststructuralism is often conflated with postmodern feminism and, as has already been argued (Chapter 2 section 3.2), both are contested terrain within feminism. This section explores problems with feminist

poststructuralism, that have been highlighted by some feminists, and addresses these 'problems' looking to the possibilities of feminist poststructuralism. It will do this under three headings: the deconstruction of 'woman'; materialities, discourses and power; and politics and queer.

3.4.1 Deconstructing 'woman'

Lesbian feminists and black feminists challenge the notion of a common uniformly experienced 'patriarchy' and the 'common basis' of 'women' (see Chapter 2 sections 3.4 and 3.5). Here the category 'woman' has been rendered unstable. Moreover, the categories of lesbian, gay and queer are no longer secure (Adams, 1998; Probyn, 1999). It can be contended that 'woman' when it is employed as a apparently material and intelligible category can foreclose on the instability of this category (Lewis and Pile, 1996: 23). However, as was argued in Chapter 2 section 3.6 some feminists contend that the death of the subject has come too soon for feminism (Alcoff, 1997; Hartsock, 1990; Zimmerman, 1997). It is seen to ignore the 'real' politics of gaining equality for women. It is believed that where 'woman' is deconstructed power relations are also ignored (Walby, 1992).

Whilst recognising the importance of liberatory politics, J. Butler (1992) contends that these should be counterbalanced with the deconstruction of the subject. However, deconstructing the subject can be seen as not only apolitical but antipolitical (Flax, 1992; Walters, 1996). There is a pertinent concern that once again women will be excluded and forgotten by neutralising the gender of the subject, thus by default rendering deconstructed subjects male (Auchtmuty, 1997; Hartsock, 1990). J. Butler (1992), however, does not purport the disappearance of the female subject. On the contrary, she contends that this category should be fluid. Consequently, deconstructing terms and categories does not involve their negation or rejection, instead we should 'continue to use them, to repeat them, to repeat them subversively, and to displace them from the

contexts in which they have been deployed as instruments of oppressive power' (J. Butler, 1992: 17). In this way, J. Butler's arguments do not equate with the disappearance of 'women' or 'lesbians'. Instead, they highlight that inscribing the category 'woman' (or 'lesbian' or 'feminist') is a political project always contingent and imbued with power relations, thus, enabling us to think beyond categories which may be oppressive.

As I argued above, feminist discourse in part creates gender. Therefore, it matters when, why and by whom these categories are called upon:

If there is a fear that, by no longer being able to take for granted the subject, its gender, its sex, or its materiality, feminism will founder, it might be wise to consider the political consequences of keeping in their place the very premises, that have tried to secure our subordination from the start.

(J. Butler, 1992: 19)

Therefore, keeping categories of 'lesbian' and 'woman' fluid and changing is a political act in itself for once we force closure we *enforce* exclusion (J. Butler, 1991; 1992).

In terms of politics, there is an importance in denaturalising 'woman', 'lesbian', 'heterosexual' and, thus, opening for debate the power relations which form these categories. This is possible if it is accepted that they are constructed and not pregiven. However, I do not agree that these constructions are devoid of power relations. Instead, I see power as constituting categories such as woman, man, lesbian and straight. These categories are constantly performed and (re)formed within dualisms which privilege one term over the other. Some feminists have argued that women should unite to challenge patriarchy and in this way fight for equal rights. Similarly, lesbians and gay men can from coalitions under the sign 'gay'. These identity politics are seen as forwarding the cause of equal rights (see Chapter 1 section 3). Strategic essentialism, whereby categories are used despite being contested, is at times necessary as deconstruction can lead to 'political paralysis' (Wilton, 1995: 43). Thus, there is an apparent paradox in the political use of the theories of deconstruction. Shattering identities can have negative impacts on social movements but by not challenging categories differences are

reinforced (Gamson, 1995). This understanding celebrates the political potency of identity movements. The diversity within feminism may mean that alliances are necessary, but not that there is no diversity between women or that there is only one form of oppression. Conversely:

There can be no one single locus of resistance, any more than there is a single locus of oppression, but that does not mean that there cannot be a legitimate, even collective project to disrupt the power of regulatory control and classification.

(Shildrick, 1997: 59)

Consequently, when we speak of exclusion and inclusion, we need also to question the terms of inclusions and the categories these rely upon (see Chapter 7 section 2). Moreover, recognising the multiple loci of power, the inclusion/exclusion dualism becomes problematic. Similar to the criticisms levelled at identity politics, focusing on only one form of 'exclusion' may ignore interlocking forms of difference.

3.4.2 Discourses, Materialities and Power

J. Butler (1990a) asserts that there is no person, sex or sexuality outside the relations and discourses of power which produce and regulate those concepts for us. J. Butler's focus on discourse is problematic for feminists who understand material experiences as existing outside and beyond the discursive. They argue that although experiences cannot be named they are no less 'real'. However,

... if discourses cannot be deemed to be outside, or apart from, power relations, their analysis becomes crucial to an analysis of power. This is why language, signifying practices and discourses have become central stakes in feminist struggles.

(Gatens, 1992: 133)

In arguing that neither materialities nor discourses exist without the other, their mutual constitution can be seen as a feminist issue.

J. Butler has been accused of ignoring the relations of power which subordinate women and have material effects in their everyday lives (Esterberg, 1996). However, as the previous two sections have attempted to demonstrate, J. Butler does not reduce gender to a volunteeristic subject who exists outside social relations. On the contrary, as Nelson (1999) argued, J. Butler's subject can in some senses be seen as unreflective and lacking agency. Therefore, to relegate J. Butler's understanding of performativity to the wardrobe, 'to clothes and the seemingly endless possibility of assuming and casting off genders - is a serious misreading' (Jagose, 1996: 89). It ignores her emphasis on power relations and the continued materialisation of the body. Identities and bodies are not all equally available to us, nor are they all equally valued. Bodies, identities and spaces are constituted within power relations and discourses but these discourses, whilst fluid, do not have equal status (Shildrick, 1997: 13).

With an emphasis on the productivity of power, particularly in creating viable and unviable norms, poststructural theory does not conceptualise agency outside of power relations. J. Butler's theorisation of agency contends that the subject is made through that agency (J. Butler, 1997a; Pettit, 1999: 1). Consequently, J. Butler, and other theorists who use an understanding of performativity, are often understood as negating an understanding of power, because they (we) do not conceptualise power in terms of domination. Moreover, resistance is seen as making power (for example homosexuality producing heterosexuality) and power is understood as defining the limits of resistance through processes of intelligibility. Within feminist poststructural theories it is argued that human beings have 'little agency to resist or transform dominant discourses and therefore produce new identities' (Roseneil and Seymour, 1999: 4-5). However, power, in the act of appropriation, may alter such that the 'power assumed or appropriated works against the power that made the assumption possible' (J. Butler, 1997a: 13). J. Butler, therefore, argues for the subversive redeployment of power because, although *we cannot not do gender, we can do gender differently*: 'there is only the taking up of tools

where they lie, where the very 'taking up' is enabled by the tools lying there' (J. Butler, 1990a: 145). Consequently although power defines the terms of the resistance, the tools available can be used to challenge this dominance. Chapter 6 explores the tools available for use and Chapter 7 investigates two ways women use them.

This (re)use of power relies on understandings of power and is unstable because it is (re)produced through reiterations. Moreover, dichotomies and dualisms are unstable at the very moment of defining themselves because, the 'spectre of the other always already lurks within the selfsame' (Shildrick, 1997: 60). As Shildrick contends:

There are always counter-discourses, moments of resistance which undermine the stability of the naturalised and normalised model ... the boundaries which organise us into definable categories are in any case discursively unstable, and it is not so much that resistance is required to override them as constant reiteration is needed to secure them.

(Shildrick, 1997: 59-60).

Understanding discourses and materialities as products of, as well as constituting, power enables (re)appropriations and subversions of gendered and sexualised power. Intentional and unintentional subversions are examined in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 section 7.

3.4.4 Politics and Queer

Having argued that power is unstable and performatively (re)formed, the political project I wish to examine (re)uses 'queer theory'. The notions behind 'queer' are that there is no 'normality' and through transgression and resistance 'the norm' may be exposed as a construction. Queer theory works to contest heterosexual normality overlapping with feminist poststructuralism in terms of understanding the fluidity of power and identities. However queer does not investigate the power relations between men and women which are central to feminist analyses (Wilton, 1995: 38). Queer theory

does however explore 'the borders of sexual identities, communities and politics' (Nasmaste, 1994: 224). J. Butler, as one of the most famous 'queer theorists', argues that:

The construction of coherence conceals the gender discontinuities that run rampant within heterosexual, bisexual, and gay and lesbian contexts in which gender does not necessarily follow from sex, and desire, or sexuality generally, does not seem to follow from gender; indeed, where none of these dimensions of significant corporeality 'express' or reflect one another. When disorganisation and disaggregation of the field of bodies disrupts the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence, it seems that the expressive model loses its descriptive force, and that regulatory ideal is exposed as norm and a fiction that disguises itself as a developmental law that regulates the sexual fiction it purports to describe.

(J. Butler, 1990b: 336)

J. Butler's political project, which can be seen as 'queer', then rests on exposing the norms of sex, gender and (hetero)sexuality as contingent and unstable. Queer therefore contests both the male/female binary and the heterosexual/homosexual dichotomy (Wilton, 1995: 35). This relies on a conceptualisation of power as unstable. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), J. Butler argued that drag had the potential to expose the fiction of gender as fixed (see Chapter 8).

J. Butler does acknowledge that all subversive practices are potentially recuperable (J. Butler, 1993a). However, she still contends that subversive practices are possible and have 'to overwhelm the capacity to read, challenge conventions of reading, and demand new possibilities of reading' (J. Butler, 1994b: 9). Thus, she recognises the potential for recuperation but argues that we need to pursue moments of degrounding. These moments include practices which 'shake the ground' such that we do not know where we are standing (J. Butler, 1994b: 10). These practices draw on impure resources because there is no 'outside' to power. Additionally, it could be contended that feminist poststructuralism does not want to set up *one* way of subverting/challenging gender norms. Instead, as J. Butler (1994b: 34) argues, subversion cannot always be planned or calculated and therefore cannot be proscribed. Therefore, my use of feminist poststructuralism challenges existing gender frameworks but does not proscribe universal solutions.

Understanding sex and gender as constituted and performed rather than given has important political effects. What is called for, once again, concerns *'coming to see differently what has been there all along'* (Zerilli, 1998: 449, my emphasis). What 'has been there all along' can be equated to common sense personal (power) networks implying that deconstruction can be a potent political project. However, Alcoff (1997: 8) contends that destabilisations merely make space for politics; they are not politics in and of themselves. Limiting politics to material interventions (re)creating the material/discursive binary is problematic. Instead, understanding the mutual constitution of discourses and materialities enables a critique of formative power relations:

What is politically at issue is not the expansion of some spaces (the margins) at the cost of others (the centre), nor 'resisting' through finding/creating a 'space' where dominance is less effective, but rather transforming, subverting, challenging the constitutive relations which construct spaces in the first place.

(Massey, 1999: 284).

Massey's conception of space (and I would add bodies and identities) as formed through constitutive relations of power is useful. This thesis takes up Massey's challenge in a number of ways. Firstly, the methodologies and methods sections explore the constitutive relations which formed the research spaces and participants' accounts. Secondly, the discussion chapters explore 'othering' and not inclusions/exclusions that can be seen in terms of the margins/centre argument. Throughout the discussion chapters the constitutive power relations which form heterosexual space are the focus and Chapter 9 centralises the formation of place in the imaginings of non-heterosexual women.

3.5 Conclusion

Feminist poststructuralism is the ongoing journey between feminism and poststructuralism. ON the one hand, analyses of gender significantly alter, reform and remake poststructural theories. On the other hand, poststructuralism (in)forms our

conceptualisation of gender and sexuality as fluid. There are four key elements of feminist poststructuralism which (in)form this thesis and will be investigated in the chapters which follow. Firstly, the deconstruction of dualisms, introduced in the previous chapter, was conceptualised here in terms of sex/gender. Secondly, the fluidity and performative theorisation of subjectivities, identities and bodies are understood as both discursively and materially constituted. Thirdly, place, as fluid, was (re)conceptualised here as performative. The final important concept is that everyday common sense power relations are conceptualised as formative. This conclusion will further summarise the main points of this chapter, highlighting the important issues for this thesis.

This chapter argued that sex or gender do not pre-exist their doing and the binary of male and female is a cultural formation not pregiven or fixed. Furthermore, power is conceptualised as produced at the micro level through everyday interactions and relations and these interactions and relations (re)form bodies, identities and spaces. Power is seen as existing in the form of common sense norms which are policed and self-surveilled at the site of individual bodies and between people. Heterosexuality is conceptualised as a system of power, which needs to be constantly enacted and embodied in order to exist. Those who exist outside the ideal of heterosexuality are often punished and excluded as heterosexuality looks to define and prohibit its other in order to exist. For the purposes of this thesis this 'other' takes a number of forms. Firstly, it is the enactment of intimate relationships outside of heterosexuality. Secondly, as heterosexuality defines male and female as opposite, those who transgress the boundaries of normative genders are also outside heterosexuality. Chapters 6, 8 and 9 investigate the othering processes which render women as 'out-of-place' both in terms of gender and sexuality. Chapter 7, focusing on sexuality, will examine how women appropriate these processes.

Another aspect of feminist poststructuralism which is important here is the political. Although political aims and practices are often assumed only to be located within identity politics, this chapter has contended that deconstruction, when associated with a

critique of power, can be politically potent. Important to this project is the understanding that discourses, materialities and power are fluid and thus open to (re)appropriation. The final and 'political' aspect of feminist poststructuralism I wish to highlight is that of exposing the (heterosexual) norm. Queer theories and practices aim to show that 'normal' heterosexuality and genders are merely formations and are not 'natural'. Subversive practices can expose this norm as a construct and these practices should be diverse and multiple. Chapter 7 explores passing and subversion in terms of everyday experiences and enactments. Chapter 8 examines the subversive potentials of women being 'mistaken' for men.

The thesis will now explore my conceptualisation of feminist methodologies and appropriation of these in relation to the empirical research (Chapter 4). This will draw on the present and previous chapters' understandings of diverse forms of feminism to explore reflexivity and power relations in the context of my research. Chapter 5 will then outline how this research was carried out. It will explore issues of using friends in research and how this research evolved throughout the course of the study. Chapter 5 then outlines the details of the procedures used to (re)construct women's accounts. In this way, the next two chapters will build an account of the empirical research undertaken for this thesis drawing on the underpinning theoretical perspective of poststructural feminism as outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Four:

Methodology

Chapter outline

4.1 Introduction

This chapter and the next discuss the empirical research undertaken for this thesis. This chapter (re)uses concepts from chapters 2 and 3 to discuss methodologies and epistemologies. The concepts of a diverse feminism, problematic universal truths and power are used to outline how the empirical research for this thesis was produced. From the outset, just as everyday life is formed, research is also understood as made. Focusing on discussions of methodologies in this chapter I aim to explore some of the many debates within feminism and how these intersect with the research I conducted. In this way poststructural feminist understandings are (re)appropriated in both this chapter and the next to outline how the research for this thesis was conducted. In particular, the chapter explores issues pertaining to how the research was formed and incorporates theoretical understandings of methodologies.

In order to discuss the formation of research, methods and methodologies are separated and the focus here is on methodologies. Methods are understood as research techniques, and methodologies as *the way* we use research techniques and the worldview or theoretical orientation that guides the choice of methods (Dyck, 1993; Harding, 1987, 1993). The chapter begins by exploring debates regarding the existence or necessity of a feminist method. This section will use the qualitative/quantitative division to examine methodological debates often understood in terms of 'methods'. Following this, the diversity of feminist methodologies and epistemologies will be examined.

4.2 Methods or Methodologies

This thesis has both a methodology and a methods chapter. In this section I will justify the separation of methods from methodologies using previous feminist research and debates. The section begins ostensibly with a discussion regarding 'feminist methods'. However, I will problematise these debates arguing that these were not about the

techniques of research. Instead, these debates addressed methodological issues. These discussions often took the form of a qualitative versus quantitative argument.

4.2.1 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research

Qualitative methods are those which search for in-depth understandings of social phenomenon. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, use statistics and numbers and often focus on the macro scale in order to establish patterns and variables in relation to particular phenomena. However, the terms qualitative and quantitative can imply research frameworks as well as indicating the research methods used. Understanding methods and methodologies as interchangeable, such that techniques of research cannot be separated from the paradigms which they originated from, has resulted in debates in feminism regarding the existence of, and the necessity for, feminist methods. Where male paradigms had silenced women's voices, feminist methods were sometimes deemed necessary to address these omissions. It is contended that feminist empiricism, that is research which began in the 1970's to add women into the social science academic agenda, is often associated with this debate (Stanley, 1997b).

Qualitative methods, particularly unstructured interviews and, more recently, focus groups, are sometimes believed to be the most appropriate for addressing women's exclusion as they enable women to speak of their experiences, opinions and ideas (Tomm, 1987; Dyck, 1993; Smith, 1988; Wilkinson, 1999). As women have been excluded from research, qualitative methods are believed to be necessary to explore women's lived realities (Eichler, 1997; Finch, 1991; Maynard, 1994; Stanley, 1997b);

Qualitative methods... are often employed because substantively they can document the social power relations affecting gender and sexuality, and epistemologically they can open up the gendered construction of knowledge.

(Lawson, 1995: 450)

Finch (1991) points out that these debates not only rely on the usefulness of qualitative methods but that they also depend on a critique of more conventional quantitative research methods. Tomm (1987) contends that because quantitative methods predefine categories they cannot accommodate new and emergent ideas in research. These categories are believed to be predominantly designed by and for men. Therefore, women are either excluded or made to 'fit' into these categories. Surveys, in particular, are seen as unsuitable for feminists as they often focus on households or individuals in a way that renders gender relations invisible. Obviously this is problematic for feminists as the gendered power relations inherent in social life are ignored (Tomm, 1987). However, the critics of the techniques of quantitative research usually challenge the *assumptions of positivistic research* which silence and exclude women from analysis, rather than the actual *methods* of quantification.

Quantitative methods make assumptions based on the market nature of the public sphere. These assumptions tend to ignore social context and the complexity of social phenomena.

(Driscoll and McFarland, 1987: 189)

Consequently, by not separating methods and methodologies, quantitative methods can be rejected or dismissed.

Stanley (1997b) argues that when justifying their own studies, it was the critics of feminist empiricism who (re)produced the quantitative/qualitative debate. Consequently, it appears that the critics (re)made feminist empiricism as purely qualitative. Stanley (1997b) purports that the feminist methodologists' version is entirely different and did not focus on methods but instead was concerned with

presuppositions (ways of seeing and understanding), methodological procedures (broad ideas about suitable approaches to investigation) and epistemological claims-making (claims about the knowledge seen as resulting from those procedures).

(Stanley, 1997b: 206)

Therefore, these arguments concerning 'quantitative/qualitative' methods are not about the *techniques* of qualitative or quantitative methods. Instead these arguments concern *how these methods are appropriated*. Altering the terms of the debate in this way enables further exploration of the possibilities of quantitative methods.

Some early research began by 'counting women to show that women count' (Mattingly and Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995: 429). Oakley (1998: 722-723) argues that procedures within 'malestream' research, which are inconsistent with feminist research, can be adapted without abandoning the basic techniques themselves. Quantitative methods are useful for highlighting broad contours of difference and measuring aspects of women's lives which lend themselves to this type of analysis but are inadequate in addressing the 'how' and 'why' questions (Finch, 1991; Mattingly and Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995; McLaffery, 1995). McLaffery (1995) contends that quantitative methods can have political potential and influence policy. As Rocheleau argues, '[n]umbers ... are invoked as tools of empowerment or as necessary tools in struggles against power' (Rocheleau, 1995: 461). For example, Aitchison (2001a) explored women's representation in leisure research quantifying the presence of women in journals both as authors and editors in order to reveal the extent of male domination and control of 'knowledge production, legitimation and reproduction' (2001a: 2). Although we need to be wary of uncritically using numbers and counting, quantitative methods have a place in poststructural geographical feminist research (Lawson, 1995). Quantitative methods, for example, can be employed to identify social divisions and challenge the homogeneity of the category 'women' (Lawson, 1995; McLaffery, 1995; Oakley, 1998). Consequently, as Lawson (1995) contends, it is not the techniques of inquiry which should be closed off, but the objectivist value neutral epistemological positions.

The above discussion has assumed an *a priori* distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods. However, the terms of the debates address issues beyond the actual techniques and using a qualitative/quantitative dichotomy may repeat the patriarchal character of many dualisms (Oakley, 1998). Lawson (1995: 451) argues that the coupling of quantitative and masculine approaches is formed through history and

therefore not inevitable. She goes on to contend that emphasising difference between quantitative and qualitative methods 'obscured considerable overlap in the *actual operations* involved in both sets of techniques' (Lawson, 1995: 451, original emphasis). On a more political front, Oakley (1998) contends that the 'paradigm argument' polarises qualitative and quantitative methods hierarchising different types of research methods. This may enable women to discriminate against other women. Moreover, she argues that this argument may be counterproductive in that we hide behind history rather than looking forward to what an 'emancipatory (social) science' could offer. Hierarchising research methods can impede critical thinking into the development and uses of ways of knowing (Oakley, 1998: 722). In this way, Oakley argues that focusing on finding 'a feminist method' (and 'a feminist methodology') is counterproductive to advancing critical feminist thinking and research.

4.3 Feminist Methodology/Methodologies?

The *a priori* distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods can be understood as methodological debates about epistemologies which inform how methods are used rather than debates about the methods themselves. The separation of methods and methodologies is messy as there can be no method without its employment and similarly, without methods there would be no possibility of a methodology. However, distinctions between methods and methodologies make a diverse range of research tools available within plural methodologies and epistemologies. Distinguishing methods and methodologies may enable the use of a wide variety of methods and different combinations of methods. Feminist discussions of methods and methodologies, whilst they have not introduced new research tools, have questioned the terms within which these research tools are employed and understood (Harding, 1987; Rose, 1993; Tomm, 1987; Lawson, 1995). Therefore, the use of the terms interchangeably can be seen as problematic. This section will explore my understanding of methodologies, exploring debates regarding the existence of a singular feminist methodology.

Although the research methods may be the same, how they are appropriated can differ drastically. Therefore, Kelly *et al.* argue that:

> what makes research 'feminist' is not the methods as such, but the framework within which they are located, and the particular ways in which they are deployed.

<div align="right">(Kelly et al., 1994: 46)</div>

Kelly *et al.* are discussing 'methodologies'. Hodge (1995: 426) contends that methodologies are 'powerful extensions of epistemological and methodological positions'. Therefore, feminist research needs to take account of 'feminist goals' (Hodge, 1995; Mattingly and Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995; McLaffery, 1995; Moss, 1995; Rocheleau, 1995). Here boundaries between methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies are understood as fluid and blurred. Consequently, feminist research is considered here as the interweaving and integration of these.

Hammersley (1992: 202) argues that there is no distinctive feminist methodology as coherently different from non-feminist research. Setting up a distinctive feminist methodological paradigm, in Hammersley's (1992: 203) opinion, creates dogmatism and obstacles to open debate. Hammersley proposes that there is *an* identifiable and distinctive methodology which feminists, as a coherent and uniform group, are attempting to establish as a paradigm. Moreover, he argues that the long reliance on traditional forms of knowledge does not need the addition of a feminist methodology.

Hammersley's arguments evoke 'emotional reaction(s)' (Ramazanoglu, 1992: 208). Traditional forms of knowledge based in masculine perceptions of the world have negated and ignored women's experiences and are 'blatantly sexist and racist, and privilege middle class males' (Ramazanoglu, 1992: 208). As communities, academia and individual disciplines and subject fields work to exclude those who do not 'fit' (Longino, 1993). Moreover, feminism has been understood as heterogeneous and plural. Gibson-Graham (1994: 206) regard the postmodern turn in feminist methodology, which has dislodged the certainties of feminist research practice, as liberating 'a plethora of exciting philosophical, political and cultural endeavours'. Stanley and Wise (1993)

argue that this plurality should be encouraged, respected and celebrated, preventing the rise of one hegemonic Feminist (sic) practice, methodology, epistemology or ontology. Recognising that there are multiple co-existent feminisms negates Hammersley's argument that we can dismiss *a* feminist methodology, as there *is no one homogenous feminist methodology, epistemology or ontology to dismiss.* Gelsthorpe (1992), in response to Hammersley's assertion, contends that there is not a convincing case for a feminist methodology:

... who said there was? Feminists have expressed methodological preferences, some of which are more obviously in sympathy with feminist aims, but as with other disciplines there has been no widely acknowledged consensus on methodology. Hammersley has demolished "a case that never was".

(Gelsthorpe, 1992: 217)

Having explored some categories of feminism in Chapter 2 section 3 this section will briefly outline three 'feminist epistemologies' and feminist 'methodologies', which illustrate the diversity of feminist methodologies negating the existence of *a* feminist methodology.

Harding (1987, 1993) argues problematically that there is a correct feminism. She perceives her version of 'feminist standpoint theory' as a 'successor science' and a superior form of knowledge, mirroring Hammersley's assertion of *a* 'feminist methodology'. She argues that within a sexist, racist, classist and heterosexist society, marginalised groups have more insight into the dominant structures of society than those who are in the centre. Harding's 'feminist standpoint' focuses on women's lives as they are understood as producing more complete, less distorted and therefore 'better' knowledge than that produced by men (Maynard, 1994). Bar On (1993: 85) points out that attributing 'epistemic privilege' to marginalised groups is not a feminist invention. The New Left and postcolonial studies also attribute epistemic privilege to marginalised groups. Moreover;

[B]oth the assumption of a single center from which the epistemically privileged, socially marginalised subjects are distanced and the grounding of their epistemic privilege in theory identity and practice are problematic.

(Bar On, 1993: 91)

Bar On (1993) continues the discussion began in Chapters 2 and 3 by contending that there are multiple forms of power not simply based on patriarchy. Similarly, Stanley and Wise (1990, 1993) argue that while Harding acknowledges these oppressions she does not give enough attention to the multiple forms they adopt. There are thus many 'silences' in her work.

Another advocate of a 'feminist standpoint' position is Dorothy Smith. In her book, *The Everyday as Problematic* (1988), she argued that women's experiences should be acknowledged and that women should speak for themselves. Her version of feminist standpoint theory argues for partial and situated knowledges that explore women's everyday experiences from the standpoint of women. She bases her analysis in the exclusion of women from positivistic universal research, which she perceives as a male-centred version of the world. Smith then proposes a feminist methodology which not only incorporates women but challenges traditional male methodologies that have excluded women. This is a far more palatable version of feminist standpoint theory but is not without its problems. Most importantly, while Smith proceeds from the standpoint of women 'like her' it is unclear how she would accommodate women who are unlike her: black women or people she would 'morally disagree with' (Stanley and Wise, 1990: 36). Therefore, as with Harding, interlocking systems of difference remain underacknowledged and underexplored.

I have drawn heavily on Stanley and Wise to critique both Smith and Harding and therefore it is appropriate to explore Stanley and Wise's work (1983, 1990, 1993) including their notion of 'fractured foundationalism'. They argue that the guiding principle of feminist research should be the use of feeling and experience to explicate the personal and the everyday. Stanley and Wise argue that we need a more diverse understanding of 'feminist standpoint theory' to incorporate multiple and differing

points of view, such as those of non-heterosexual women, black women and disabled women. They argue for feminist standpoints, which recognise that 'the experience of 'women' is ontologically fractured and complex' (1990: 22). Gelsthrope (1992: 215) agrees and argues that women and men do have uniquely valid standpoints but that women (or men) are never just that as they are also young, old, partnered/unpartnered as well as many other factors which differ from others in the category 'woman'. In a poststructural sense subjectivities are fluid (see Chapter 2 section 2.2.ii). Therefore these standpoints are not only multiple within the groups 'women' and 'lesbian', they are also transitional and are formed temporally and spatially. Stanley and Wise do not explore this fluidity.

In place of *a* feminist theory, Stanley and Wise argue for pluralistic feminist theory. These theories may disagree and differ but they are 'mutually appreciating' (Stanley and Wise, 1990: 45). It is apparent that although Stanley and Wise (1990, 1993) acknowledge diversity within the category of women, their 'fractured foundationalism' still assumes commonality amongst women. They speak in terms of 'women's oppression' and argue for the possibility of a 'lesbian' ontology without acknowledging differential power relations, diversity and fluidity within these groups. This thesis seeks to explore fluidity and diversity within the category 'woman'.

To return to the point which began this section, methods, methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies are interlinked and, as the above discussion has aimed to show, mutually informative. In place of *a* feminist methodology, there are complexes of feminist methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies which can be appropriated in individual research projects. Similar to the fluidity between subject and disciplinary boundaries outlined in Chapter 2 section 2.3, the boundaries of feminist methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies are fluid. As feminist research methodologies have infiltrated wider social sciences and, conversely, as feminist methodologies have adopted and adapted practices from wider social sciences, there is nothing that can be categorised as distinctly 'feminist' (McCormack, 1987: 27). The internal plurality and the slippages between feminism and wider social sciences mean that it is difficult to

categorise feminist methodologies. However, although feminist methodologies are difficult to define, and perhaps should not be bounded, they can be understood as sharing a critique of power relations in the research process (c.f. Moss, 2002).

On occasion it is problematically purported that research must be conducted and written up in a particular way to claim the label of feminist research (Stanley and Wise, 1993). These principles include: centralising of consciousness raising, transforming patriarchal social institutions, rejecting hierarchical relationships and using collaborative research (see for example Cook and Fonow, 1990; Morris *et al.*, 1998). Whilst there is value in highlighting areas which feminists have addressed and the related salient concerns, feminist 'principles', where they are presented as required, may impede rather than enable research. Rather than attempting to explore numerous feminist principles, this chapter will work from the premise that individual research projects can justify their own use of the term 'feminist research' (c.f. Stanley and Wise, 1983; 1993). Issues that have been addressed within feminist methodological debates will be considered in terms of the empirical research for this project. This has two main aims, firstly to justify my claim to the label of 'feminist research' and, secondly, to illustrate the complexity of methodological issues when examined in a specific context.

4.4 Reflexivity: Intersubjective Positionings

In Chapter 2, I contended that postmodernism contested the existence of universal truths. Here, it is contended that the 'view from nowhere' does not exist (Longino, 1993: 137). All knowledge is produced in particular contexts and it matters who, how, where and why this knowledge is formed (Harding, 1997; Stanley and Wise, 1983). Consequently, social research may require an account of the positionality of the researcher and, in this way, reject claims of universality. This contextualisation of knowledge is achieved by openly and honestly reflecting on the research process and the position of the researcher in relation to participants (England, 1994; Kleinmann and Copp, 1993; Lohan, 2000;

Morris *et al.*, 1998; Twyman *et al.*, 1999). In this way the researcher can become a research tool, offering further insights into the accounts formed (Falconer Al-Hindi and Kawabuta, 2002). Harding (1993) argues that politically guided research, which places the researcher on the same plain as the researched, produces better knowledge, referring to this as 'strong objectivity'. This is because identifying the researcher's role in the construction of knowledge provides more insight into the knowledge produced. It is contended that *all* research is produced subjectively and that excluding the researcher from the write up perpetuates the myth of objectivity without addressing the underlying 'biases' inherent to all research (Cook and Fonow, 1990; Harding, 1987; Hirsh and Fox Keller, 1994; Jones III *et al.*, 1997; Maynard, 1994; McCormack, 1987; Morris *et al.*, 1998; Oakley, 1998; Price-Chalita, 1994).

Important to this section and to this thesis are understandings of 'betweeness'. These understandings develop from spatialised conceptualisations of performativities examined in Chapter 3. Betweeness is where intersubjectivity rather than objectivity characterises the relationship between the researcher and her participants (McDowell, 1992: 406). Katz (1994: 72) argues that her positionality is made in 'spaces of betweeness'. England (1994: 82) contends that the research itself is a process which is an 'ongoing, intersubjective (or more broadly, a dialogic) activity'. Consequently, research as 'performative' is formed between the researcher's world and those being researched and is personal both to the researcher and the participants. This section will begin by problematising simplistic notions of positionality prior to exploring my position in relation to the participants within my doctoral research and particularly my position in relation to my friends. The remainder of this chapter and the beginning of the next investigate further these relations in specific contexts.

It has been suggested to me that as a non-heterosexual woman I bias the research. This view is based on the assumption that heterosexuality is normal and consequently a 'gold standard' from which to judge difference. Breakwell (1995: 239) contends that 'the characteristics of a researcher (for example, demeanour, accent, dress, gender, age, etc.) will influence the respondents' willingness to participate and to answer accurately'. He

admits that 'interviewer effects' cannot be eliminated but he suggests that steps can and should be taken to control such effects. The bias that he is referring to is commonly associated with those who deviate from the 'norm' of white, middle class, heterosexual and male who are seen to be value neutral. However, as has been argued 'neutral' and 'objective' knowledge is understood as impossible (see Chapters 2 and 3). Consequently, as all research is 'biased', it is important to explore which 'biases' are pertinent to individual research projects.

One method which has been employed to produce reflexive accounts of the research process writes the researcher in in order to negate or exclude their influence. This is known as bracketing, where the characteristics of the researcher are bracketed (white, male, heterosexual) and assumed to have a uniform effect. Perhaps worse is where because particular aspects are acknowledged, they are not addressed beyond an initial concession to their potential relevance. In this way readers are left to decipher meanings behind categories and these are not applied to the research (Baxter and Eyles, 1997: 508).

Another use of identifiable characteristics is to claim commonality between researcher and participant, reproducing the researcher as an 'insider'. Whereas anthropologists have often warned of the dangers of 'going native', Finch (1991) argues that a woman doing research on women shares their powerless position and in this way is able to engage with them in a way a man could not. James and Platzer (1999: 79) believe that because lesbians are othered, their study benefited from an involvement by other lesbian 'insiders'. They go on to contend that as they were lesbians they had easier access to lesbian participants and the individuals involved in their study were more trusting and less suspicious. Consequently, I could 'acknowledge' that I am a white, non-heterosexual woman in my twenties and, having stated my biases, proceed with the research. Or I could contend that as a white, non-heterosexual student in my twenties I share particular sexuality, class, race and age oppressions and privileges. I could argue that as an 'insider', I 'found' 'better' information than an 'outsider' could.

One particularly salient characteristic for this study is my sexuality. Kitzinger (1988: 74) made the participants in her study aware of her sexuality as 'lesbian' and her participants subsequently commented that had this not been the case they would not have agreed to be interviewed. My identity as a 'lesbian' was mentioned by one participant:

3) Did you enjoy being involved in the research? Why/Why not?

Yes, because it was nice to have the opportunity to talk to another lesbian about something I don't talk about a lot.

(Evaluation 2)

In this way I could claim that I am producing 'better' information as women identified me as an 'insider'. As a non-heterosexual woman I had access to women who would not speak to heterosexual women/men about their sexualities. Moreover, as thirteen of the women in this study were friends, I may have had access to women who would not speak to strangers about these issues (see Chapter 5 section 2.1 for details of participants and the inclusion of friends in research).

However, the interactions that form research are more complex than this. Herod (1999) contends that the assumption that an 'insider' will automatically produce better knowledge than an outsider is problematic, just as it is contentious to assume that an 'outsider' will produce more 'objective' knowledge than an 'insider' will. Winchester (1996) argues that different circumstances can establish different forms of empathy. Participants are more likely to be at ease discussing issues around sexualities with someone who may have a level of understanding and empathy, whereas they may not feel the same if we were discussing a different set of issues. However, Rhoads (1997) was able to conduct research with gay and bisexual men despite his identification as a straight man. Similarly, Valentine (2002: 123) found that on occasion she had less in common with some lesbians than she did with 'personable' homophobic couples. In this way, I wish to suggest that simple identification of characteristics is not sufficient for reflexive analysis. Participants and I differed in our lifestyles, views and opinions. Our apparent homogeneity, if the focus is solely on particular categories, masks difference both between participants and myself, and between participants (see Chapter 5 section

2.1). Therefore, individual accounts cannot be considered superior or inferior solely on the merit of particular sets of categories.

Lohan (2000: 109-110) argues for 'responsible reflexivity' in which there is a 'mutual shaping' of the analysis of our own and others' lives. In this way, research, as has been argued, is conceptualised as being formed in the *spaces between the researcher and the participants*, negating assumptions of uniformity based on particular characteristics (England, 1994; Moss, 1995b). Research is understood as constantly being (re)performed and (re)interpreted and thus it does not pre-exist its performance. This has wider implications than reflexive analysis for this thesis. As has been argued in Chapter 3 section 2.3 interactions between individuals form social life. Thus the spaces of betweeness which form research also form everyday life, and inform the discussion chapters. Here it is suffice to note that there is an intertwining of spaces, places and subjectivities when constituting research (Dyck, 2002). In this way, research is reconceptualised from *gathering* exercises, which search for indisputable facts, to projects which produce unique interactions and relations in particular times and spaces (Collins 1998: 2.2; Herod, 1993). As a result, simply acknowledging particular characteristics is not sufficient because this does not address the fluid and inter-subjective nature of research.

Reflexive analyses in accounting for the intersubjectivities of the researcher and the researched beyond simplistic categories can illustrate the formation of research in spaces of betweeness. However, this is not as simple as 'reading' situations and relations. Rose (1995, 1997) contends that 'transparent' reflexivity is impossible. We can never fully know ourselves, other people or the relations which exist between these. Rose argues that 'the imperative of transparent reflexivity assumes that [the] messiness [of research] can be fully understood' (1997: 314). She, therefore, contends that full contextualisation is impossible. In its place she proposes a performative understanding of reflexivity where researcher and researched are seen as mutually constitutive:

This understanding insists that we are made through our research as much as we make our own knowledge, and that this process is complex, uncertain and incomplete.

(Rose, 1997: 316)

Rose thus argues for an alternative form of reflexivity that is formative, fractured and eternally uncertain. She (1997: 317) locates knowledge within 'webs' and 'gaps', which are 'saturated in power', and also with ambiguity (power relations within research will be further addressed in the next section). As Rose (1997: 317) argues, reflexive analyses are a 'fragile, fluid net of connections and gulfs'. Consequently, any reflexive account will always be partial.

Rose's arguments are extremely pertinent here. This project is built on an understanding of relationality and this necessarily includes the research process. Therefore, I see my positionality as formed intersubjectively and negotiated throughout the research process and any account of these processes is inevitably tempered with exclusions. Consequently, it is acknowledged that any account of this continual process is partial. Although we can only have partial knowledge, the spaces of betweeness, which are the spaces of research, are important (Staeheli and Lawson, 1994). The remainder of this section will address some intersubjectivities and negotiated identities that formed my positionality. The perceptions of me were not universal to all participants but the accounts below offer some of the ways participants, particularly friends, related to me. I begin with me not for narcissistic reasons but to address some of the arguments surrounding the inclusion of the researcher into the research. Moreover, although I am the focus of this section I set this reflexive account in the context of the 'betweeness' of research which forms both participants and myself.

Who I am and how I am understood intersects the boundaries of my personal life with this PhD (re)forming the participants, the accounts produced and myself. Bringing already established friends into my PhD has (re)formed their understandings of me and what I do and, in turn, I have learned a lot about my friends through the interviews and focus groups (see section 4. 1 for a discussion of power and knowledge). The details of how I came to include friends in this research and how these relations produced this thesis will be addressed in the following chapter. Here, however, an outline of my negotiated identities is important.

As friends became part of this research there was more of a personal cost for me (see also Chapter 5 section 2). Mixing social life, sport and work with my research meant that, similar to most students, my PhD was an aspect of every facet of my life. I was never totally 'out of the field'. Whilst I included friends in this research I did not include my partners or ex-partners. Although Newton (1993) found her intense relationship with her 'best informant' rewarding, I felt that including my partner, at the time of data collection, would have been 'too close' emotionally and professionally. This section partially explores my positionality within the messy relations which form research. It focuses on the mutual constitution of me, as both friend and researcher, and the spaces of research.

Many of the participants occupied similar social settings to me. Even where participants were considered acquaintances some knew me, if only by sight. I go out socially on the 'gay scene' and believe I am considered approachable and 'friendly'. My positionality was therefore partially formed through my association with leisure/pleasure rather than work. In this way, my identities were partially constructed through the spaces in which I met, knew and established friendships with participants. Consequently, the PhD itself was seen as less intimidating than if an unknown researcher had undertaken it. Moreover, in attempting to make interviews and focus groups comfortable I dressed as participants would expect me to, which was always informal. This contributed to the formation of the research spaces as informal, along with their location in participants' homes and in participants' spare time. Consequently, the spaces of the interviews and focus groups were often produced through associations with leisure/pleasure, in terms of time, space and bodily presentation and also through prior contact with me socially. In a sense, both the research and myself as a researcher were actively and consciously (re)positioned as 'friendly'.

Friends and acquaintances often describe me as 'clever'. However, these people usually only understand me as such when they find that I am doing a PhD or, as most people understand it, 'training to be a lecturer'. This illustrates the reformation of my identities in relation to my PhD. I did not wish to advance an understanding of me as 'expert', so I

actively associated myself with the label 'student' as I saw this as less intimidating. Despite my associations with academia, I am often perceived as a friend, peer or student and therefore as non-threatening. Where people are at or have been to university they relate to me with an understanding of being a student. Occasionally friends who were participants ask me when 'the project' has to be handed in and see the study as a piece of coursework done by a student which has (re)formed me and this research as unimportant beyond 'getting a good mark'.

All the women in the study understood me as a non-heterosexual woman, partially because of the spaces that I socialised in (particularly when I was not in a relationship) but also because of this PhD. When I disclosed what I was researching it was usually assumed that my interest in the topic extended beyond academic concerns and, in this way, my sexuality was (re)defined in relation to my research (c.f. Rhoads, 1997). Thus, through performing my identity as a researcher I am also forming my sexual identity. However, on occasions where I do not wish to disclose my sexual identity I do not give the title of my research and instead, I speak about 'Geography and Leisure Studies'. Consequently, throughout the project I negotiated my identities in relation to my research project and my perceptions of specific situations. During the research, there were often particular connotations to 'outing' myself as a researcher investigating non-heterosexual women. I am often understood by participants as an 'out and proud', 'politically correct' lesbian or, in other words, that I have strong political ideals and opinions.

This research process was (re)formed in relation to my position as a friend, student and 'lesbian' along with particular associations of time and space with 'leisure' time/space. This is not to negate the very real relations of power along ethnicity, class, sexuality and gender boundaries. Rather, it is to contend that the formations of researchers' identities are not necessarily confined to these categories. It is important to explore possibilities and intersubjective relations beyond categorisations as these relations (in)form research. This does not negate an examination of power which is the focus of the next section,

continuing the exploration of intersubjectivities between myself as researcher and participants in this study.

4.4 Research for Women?

'Traditional' research is critiqued for treating participants as objects of research. It is argued that the researcher wields total power and can thus ensure that his or her agenda is fulfilled without consideration for those involved. Participants are thus 'subjected' to the research rather than 'participating' in it. Feminist research, it is argued, attempts to rectify this power imbalance by empowering participants. To do this a number of strategies have been adopted, two of which appear to predominate. The first is to produce research *for* rather than *on* women and the second is to co-construct research such that the participants become co-researchers (Cook and Fonow, 1990; Griffin, 1995; Harding, 1987; Hubbard, 1999; Maynard, 1994; Moss, 1995a; Oakley, 1981; Oakley, 1998; Price-Chalita, 1994; Stanley, 1997b; Stanley and Wise, 1990). These two principles interlink and overlap as part of the justification for having women as co-researchers is that this prevents exploitation and research *on* women. However, power relations in research can be understood as complex. Chapter 3 conceptualised power as relational, that is power is produced in context between individuals in accordance with 'common sense' norms and codes. Here the focus will be on intersubjective power relations in research.

This research did, to an extent, involve women as co-researchers. The participants undertook diaries and auto-photography when I was not present. Moreover, as I am continually feeding back to participants and attempting to incorporate their comments into this thesis, women are involved in the final write up (see Chapters 5 section 2.2 and 4 section 10). However, I did not employ women in the designing or writing up phase. Consequently, co-researchers can be involved in varying degrees and, for this project, women undertook data collection and had a say on some written content.

This project did not aim to change the material conditions of participants' lives or include them as co-researchers, although it does offer them a space in which to voice their opinions and recount their experiences. From the pilot study onwards, it was clear that the participants saw the research process as 'helping me out' and not as immediately beneficial to them. However, some women did say that they enjoyed the research because it gave them an opportunity to reflect on themselves which they would not otherwise have had. Because this project did not immediately benefit the women involved, I cannot claim that it was 'for' these women. It could, however, be argued that it is for the benefit of 'women' in general. Whilst it would be nice to claim such a lofty aim, I do not agree that the category of 'woman' is coherent enough to justify any one project 'helping women'.

On the other hand this research is not *on* participants either in that the research actively avoided exploiting or manipulating the women who participated. This section will explore how power relations were actively negotiated and how particular aspects of the research were designed to challenge my power as a researcher. Therefore, this PhD claims that it is neither *for* women nor *on* them but, instead, accounts were produced *with* the participants of this study. As with reflexivity this problematises simplistic criteria which define a project as 'feminist'.

4.4.1 Power Relations and Research

This section will discuss the creation of this research's 'landscape of power' within the context of relations between participants and myself as the researcher. Whilst feminist researchers have attempted to address the imbalance between researcher and researched, the assumption that we can create these completely equal relationships within research has been contested (McDowell, 1992; Moss, 1993). It is recognised that within academia the researcher's voice will be privileged (Doyle, 1999; McDowell, 1992). Consequently, this section will begin by acknowledging that as a researcher I wielded particular forms

of power and I was not able to entirely reject hierarchical relationships, as Morris *et al.* (1998) suggest. However, having illustrated some of the ways in which I was empowered, I will then explore how power was negotiated throughout the research process.

As a result of lesbian and gay men's outsider status James and Platzer (1999: 74) contend that there is a differential power imbalance between researchers and researched. As friends, some participants spoke to me in interviews as they do in other settings. They challenged me and I hope felt free to express their point of view. Moreover, as a friend I believe women trust me not to degrade or insult them in the final piece of work which is also often perceived as non-threatening. Although I have explained that the work will be disseminated within academic circles, as I contended above, what a PhD involves is often not fully understood. I believe that involving friends in this study enabled a more comfortable, relaxed atmosphere where the women trusted me and did not understand me as a threat. However, this puts me in a position whereby I could potentially exploit individuals not only as participants but also as friends.

Denscombe (1998: 109-112) contends that the interview technique is important where the research seeks in-depth insight into the topic and research is on sensitive issues, emotions, and experiences. Using qualitative techniques enabled me to explore women's personal thoughts and experiences of their everyday lives (see Chapter 5):

Val: I don't wear my heart on my sleeve very often and that's probably why I tend to keep this private sort of life. Probably talking to you about it is the first time I have ever sort of opened up really and said exactly what I think and talked about how I feel amm.

(Val, individual interview)

Although I had only met Val the week before her interview, she was open and candid in the interview as were most participants. Following her interview, and all the interviews and focus groups, I had in-depth information about particular aspects of participants' lives. I acknowledge that as the researcher and a friend I learned a lot about participants and therefore wield a particular form of power. This extends beyond the research

110

situation because of the social networks in which I socialise and from which the sample was formed. As a friend I gained in-depth knowledge of my friends and acquaintances and this made confidentiality essential, such that nothing that was said in the interviews or focus groups was repeated in social settings or chance meetings.

As the researcher I wield certain forms of power and this can be seen in the research process. I designed the research and asked the majority of questions in the focus groups and interviews. Moreover, I control the interpretation and dissemination of the accounts formed by the participants along with the final write up. Issues of power became obvious in unexpected ways. My control over the final write up was clearly evidenced in the anonymising of the participants. Whereas some participants would not have participated unless this was the case, Pat wanted to be identified in the study:

KB: Well it will all be, everything you do will be completely confidential and all that. Do you want to do, do you want to pick another name for yourself?

Pat: No

KB: Okay I'll do that then

Pat: No Pat Butcher

KB: Okay

Pat: Can I, can I?

KB: Okay I'll call you

Pat: Can't I just be real me?

KB: Amm no because if you are the real you then everyone else has to be the real them as well so ...

Pat: Can I be Pat Butcher?

(Pat, individual interview)

Saktones (1997: 23) argues that participants have a right to anonymity but does not specify whether the researcher has a right to impose this 'right' where it is not desired. Although I use a pseudonym for Pat, I am uneasy about this choice. I choose this option because academic convention suggests that in sensitive research all participants should be given pseudonyms and I am unsure of the consequences of defying this convention.

This uncertainty is partially due to the understanding that there are potential dangers beyond our knowledge (Rose, 1997). However, in removing Pat's autonomy to choose whether her identity is revealed or not I feel I have used my power as a researcher and not enabled Pat to make her own choice. On the other hand, Pat informs her friends and acquaintances of her participation in this research. Moreover, 'Pat' is a nickname she has been given. Therefore although I wield a certain amount of power in a research context, in a social context this power can be renegotiated.

4.4.2 Negotiating Power: Challenging the Researcher/Researched Relationship

Having acknowledged my position of having particular forms of power, I now wish to contend that relationships are more complex than researchers simply imposing their power on the researched. Both participants and I actively negotiated research relationships.

From the outset I did not coerce or pressurise women to be involved as this would have been counterproductive. Consequently, all the participants were asked, not told or forced to be in the study. Three friends who I asked to participate declined, illustrating that there was the possibility of not being involved. Whilst Flowers et al. (1998) did not have negative responses from any of the men they asked to be involved in their study, I believe that because some women did say no the possibility existed for women to refuse to be involved in the study. Nevertheless, because of the interpersonal relationships between women, resulting from the use of snowball sampling, there is always the possibility of peer pressure. I, however, did not witness overt forms of this.

Women who chose to be involved often postponed interviews and focus groups with little advance notice. One participant finished her interview after twenty minutes when she and I left, unexpectedly, to collect her girlfriend from the train station. This followed a phone call she received during the interview. I could not, nor did I try to, control these

situations. It would not have been feasible to impose interview dates and times on participants. In this way, power lay with participants as to whether and when they wished to be involved. I adapted to their schedules and this meant I was not in a position of total power.

Winchester (1996: 123) argues that interviewers should 'expose something of themselves' to make the interviews more of a two-way conversation. As Oakley puts it:

[P]ersonal involvement is more than dangerous bias – it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives.

(Oakley 1981: 58)

Researchers' active participation can help and encourage participants to tell their stories (Beer 1997: 125). Moreover, by telling participants of your life the power imbalances in relation to knowledge may be addressed. However, this has the potential to recreate the researcher as 'having the right answers' and validating only my views and opinions. Therefore, although I answered questions that I was asked, I did not volunteer information during the course of the interview or focus group. After the interviews and focus groups, however, I often recounted stories or discussed aspects of my life with participants if it was invited and appropriate and in this way shared knowledge and attempted to address the unequal power-knowledge relationship which characterises 'research on women'.

Wilkinson (1999) argued that power in focus groups is shifted to the participants and, consequently, focus groups can be used as a 'feminist' research method. In focus groups participants sometimes included their 'heterosexual' housemates, illustrating that I was not always 'in control' of who participated in the discussion. Reed and Payton (1997: 769) were unable to 'control' the power relationships within their focus groups where participants knew each other and one member dominated the group. Thus the researcher does not necessarily control the appropriation of research methods, particularly focus groups. During interviews and focus groups individuals and groups often discussed their own priorities and experiences sometimes in regard to food, other times not. Although

113

occasionally I did bring the discussion back to the interview schedule, I did this after the participants finished articulating their thoughts. This has implications beyond the original research context as tangents can be productive (see section 4.5).

Despite being the 'leader' of focus groups, coupled interviews and interviews these discussions were often described by friends as similar to everyday interactions. These relations, whilst not devoid of power, are not set into a rigid researcher/researched framework of power. Power was negotiated in terms of our everyday relations as well as the context of the research. Consequently, for example, there was turn taking in conversations. In focus groups the power dynamics between friends were often clear particularly when one woman spoke more than the others in the group. Often these women's ideas and opinions were not challenged. Therefore, throughout the interviews and focus groups power can be seen as relationally produced, negotiated, fluid and dynamic. Moreover, power also existed between participants and this will be further explored in Chapter 5 section 2.

To further address potential researcher/researched power imbalances, participants were kept informed throughout the research process. Firstly, any information that I had and they wished to have prior to, during and after the study, was available to them (see Appendix 1.2, 1.3). The initial letter detailed all aspects of the study and included a summary sheet which outlined the research techniques and processes of dissemination and confidentiality. Any questions participants had regarding the research were answered before, during and after their involvement. All participants were asked to sign a consent form to ensure they understood that the information would be used within a research project (see Appendix 5). Transcripts were sent to participants although these were often greeted with nonchalance or feigned interest. However, on one occasion the participant was keen that one aspect of her life should not be included and went through the transcript and asked me to remove two paragraphs, which I did. In this way participants could edit transcripts, empowering them to include only information they wished to be used.

In addition to addressing power imbalances in the writing up process, Baxter and Eyles (1997) argue that participants know their own opinions and experiences and member checking thus enhances credibility. As part of the research I did feedback informal information, such as my thoughts on interesting themes, to participants in social settings and also more formally by sending copies of conference papers (see Appendix 7). Conference papers were accompanied by a letter (see Appendix 4.1, 4.2) explaining what the paper was used for and included a stamped addressed envelope in which women could return their comments. Although no participant objected to, or sought to change any of the papers, participants did give feedback. This most often took the form of an informal conversation in social settings. However, one participant, Ruth, chose to write a letter explaining her thoughts and feelings regarding two conference papers. This letter informs the discussion chapters.

Wainwright (1997) asks for caution in returning conclusions to participants suggesting that accepting participants' everyday understandings rather than critiquing and analysing these may not allow in-depth insights. However, making participants powerless in redressing what I have written is not acceptable in this research. I take on board Wainwright's (1997) reservations and the discussion chapters move beyond simple descriptions. However, for this research it is important that participants do not feel misrepresented or misquoted. This would disempower women who I believe should not be powerless in the reproduction of their lives. Moreover, their views on this thesis are informative and valuable. In this way notions of 'validity' and 'reliability' associated with 'member checking' (Miles and Huberman, 1985) are insignificant. Instead, it is important that participants are given recourse to challenge the analysis and write up of the thesis, challenging my total control over this process.

Informal feedback methods were informative but also (hopefully) addressed power imbalances in writing by giving participants an opportunity to challenge my interpretations. However, friends may not want to be insulting or derogatory towards me and I therefore enclosed an anonymous evaluation form. In this way, I hoped to enable negative as well as positive comments. This was not the case and five evaluation forms,

which were returned, were all positive, perhaps indicating that my power as a researcher and a friend is stronger than I envisaged. Participants realised evaluations were being returned to me and consequently they may have felt that they could not be negative. Moreover, power relations outside and beyond research can form research spaces, further illustrating the 'messiness' of research.

Receiving one's spoken words in a written format can be disempowering because they can make participants seem 'inarticulate' (Ruth, feedback letter). This then reinforces the image of researcher as expert and authority. I sent transcripts and academic papers that a number of participants did not read. Transcripts are not easy to read and transcripts of focus groups can be particularly difficult to follow. I considered it more important to send participants what I 'got out of' their words. I wanted participants to see what I had written, but I did not consider the implications of the exclusive style of academic writing (c.f. Chapter 2 section 3.6). Although participants tended to look for their pseudonyms and see how I had spoken of them, the papers were designed for academic audiences and consequently were probably inaccessible or even boring to a lay reader. Therefore, simply applying procedures does not necessarily address power imbalances between researchers and researched. They may even reinforce particular imbalances, for example between the researcher as expert and the researched as powerless.

Power relations in research are complex and negotiated. In this section I have explored the betweeness of research in relation to negotiated power relations focusing on friendships in research. Although as a researcher I could have and did wield particular forms of power, I understand power as relational and thus negotiable. In other words, power does not pre-exist its performance and potential inequities can be addressed. This is not to suggest that the research process can be devoid of power relations. On the contrary, the research process is formed through relations of power (both within and beyond research spaces) but these are not pre-given and they can be negotiated. From recruiting to writing up I attempted to address potential power inequities. Moreover, participants negotiated the research to suit themselves in terms of times and places.

However, power relations extend beyond and (re)form the research process and simply applying procedures was not sufficient. I discovered that power relations negotiated through texts, i.e. transcripts and conference papers, can reproduce the researcher as 'expert' and the text as incontestable. Consequently, power as relational is reproduced in particular ways throughout the research process although a note of caution is acknowledged as power relations and their associated processes are not always transparent or fully knowable. What is offered here is my account of the power relations that were known to me. The next section will further explore the negotiation of research related power relations by friends in relation to what has been understood as the 'hit and run' approach to research.

4.4.2.i Reciprocity

The relationship between ethnographer and informant is more accurately seen perhaps as a mutual exploitation.

(Crick, 1992: 147)

Feminist authors have contended that researchers should not exploit individuals simply for the purposes of the research. This is termed the 'hit and run' approach whereby researchers 'arrive in the field', gather data and then leave. Oakley's (1981) research is often held as an example of good practice in ensuring research is *for* rather than *on* women (see for example Finch, 1984). Oakley contends that finding out about people is best achieved in a non-hierarchical environment. Inherent to this relationship is the sharing of experiences and giving something back to the participants. For the participants in Oakley's study this gift was personal satisfaction. It also involved the development of a relationship over time rather than a 'hit and run' approach to research (Oakley, 1981). Skeggs (1999: 217) contends that longitudinal ethnography, in contrast to the hit and run approach of focus groups, develops intimate, trusting and loyal

relationships over time. This project moves between these two extremes, it is not ethnography but neither does it subscribe to the approach of entering the field for a short period of time, extracting information and leaving.

Whilst this research did not create a 'non-hierarchical environment', this section will explore how using friends partially addressed the exploitation of participants synonymous with the 'hit and run' approach. Reciprocal research relationships have been documented in anthropology. For example, Crick (1992), in his anthropological study of tourism in Sri Lanka, arguably had a form of reciprocal relationship with Ali. Crick did not understand Ali as an informant or as a friend and Ali moved between these two categories through their reciprocal relationship. Ali enabled Crick's research and in return Crick directed business and commission towards Ali. As a result of forming my doctoral research with friends, they often perceived their involvement as 'doing Kath a favour'. Consequently they felt they could ask me for services and courtesies in return. These took a number of different forms, from sharing a drink in the pub, to doing numerous odd jobs including helping someone to move house. On one occasion, Andie asked me to help her move her things from her ex-girlfriend's flat. However, her ex-girlfriend had not lived at the flat for two months and there was no electricity. This would have been bearable had there not been frozen food in Andie's freezer which had become rancid. In addition, all her dishes were in the sink and unwashed since Andie had left. The following morning we conducted an individual interview after cleaning her new flat and going shopping.

I did impose particular limits on the 'favours' I would do in return for participants' involvement in the study. I restricted gestures to those I considered appropriate for friends. On two occasions it was either overtly stated or implicitly suggested that potential participants wished to form more than friendship in return for their participation in the research. On both of these occasions I did not take up the women's offers of participation in the research as I was unwilling to involve them on those conditions. I felt it would be misleading to include them as I did not wish to take up their offers of 'dates'. As I have stated above I did not involve partners or ex-partners in the

research. In this way, I restricted participants to those who were friends and I believe I avoided potential complications of including partners, ex-partners and potential partners in research.

Although my relationship with friends was reciprocal, I do not understand this as action research. The participants did not directly benefit from the actual research and my doctoral research did not directly impact the material realities of these women's lives. However, I did attempt to avoid the 'hit and run' approach and offered to help with different activities when I could. Moreover, as friends, participants sometimes assumed that I would return 'the favour' as an aspect of our friendship. On occasion, however, collecting information and then leaving was inevitable, particularly with acquaintances that I do not have any contact with. Moreover, outside of formal channels of feedback, I had very little to offer participants who I did not know or who I did not develop friendships with.

This section has explored my justification of this project as being produced *with* women. Although this project began within feminist methodologies, the reciprocal aspect discussed here was not envisaged at the outset. The next section will investigate other developments which took place throughout the research process.

4.5 Evolving Research: Making Feminist Research

Research on women makes the lives of women visible but it is feminist perspectives that demand social change.

(Henderson and Bialeschki, 1999: 168)

Chapter 2 argued that there is no, nor should there be, one feminist political goal. Similarly, in this chapter it has been contended that multiple forms of feminist methodologies co-exist. Consequently, it is not contended here that there is one aim of

feminist research. Using Henderson and Bialeschki's understanding above, the processes of feminist research are not simply a question of 'adding women in'. Feminist research should analyse gendered power relations and effect social change (c.f. McDowell, 1989). While gender research can provide a space in academia for research on women, gender relations, masculinities and femininities, what is distinctive about feminist research is its call for social change. Moss (2002) contends that what makes a methodology 'feminist' is its politicisation. Precisely what counts as 'social change' or 'politics' is open to debate and should not be bounded (Moss, 2002). In this way, feminist research can remain diverse. This broadens Cook and Fonow's (1990) assertion that feminist research should be about 'consciousness raising' to a diverse and unspecified understanding of 'social change' and 'politics'. Millen (1997) contends that in her research on non-feminist women an overt agenda of consciousness raising would have been counterproductive. Therefore, she contends that too orthodox a definition of what constitutes feminist research may inhibit rather than facilitate research that could develop important insights for women (Lohan, 2000). Perhaps then what 'counts' as feminist research should be explored individually with authors reflexively placing themselves and their projects in relation to previous feminist debates (Stanley and Wise, 1983). This chapter has explored two issues in order to justify the use of the term 'feminist methodologies' in relation to this project. This section will now examine how this research has evolved to consider issues of power and social change, and consequently claims to be within 'feminist research'.

This research began by exploring how women enact identities and experience daily life outside the heterosexual norm through the case study of food and eating. It was reasoned that the daily 'facts' of eating are all too often taken-for-granted along with the power relations which (re)produce everyday food spaces. Consequently, the research began with a focus on food and this was reflected in interview and focus group schedules (see Appendix 2.1-2.4). However, the research constantly evolved, particularly throughout the duration of data formation. Using focus groups and semi-structured interviews enabled participants to discuss and develop issues that were pertinent to them. Whilst Krueger (1998) allows for the possibilities of what he terms 'serendipitous questions' in

focus groups, he contends that these should be closely regulated as they may lead the discussion off on a 'different trail' with 'unknown consequences' (Krueger 1998: 47-48). By allowing people to 'speak their minds', issues which I had not considered came to the fore and became important. Moreover, interviews and focus groups were used in such a way that participants had the opportunity to say as much or as little as they wished. These women spoke more about issues that interested them and it became clear that sexualities and gender were important to them.

The emotive stories participants told altered my perceptions of what the focus of the study should be. It became apparent, following initial analysis of accounts in September 2000 (see Chapter 5 section 4.9 for a discussion of the processes of analysis), that a focus on food, as a mechanism for understanding daily socio-spatial power relations, was often limiting. Women in this study had other aspects of their experiences, perceptions and understandings which they wished to discuss. Consequently, following this initial analysis, the focus on food became less important (although not ignored) and other issues pertaining to sexualities and genders were explored. Particularly important are the stories recounted in Chapter 8 regarding being mistaken for a man and Chapter 9 pertaining to the distinction between towns and cities. These were not part of the initial study design but have become important (see Chapter 5 section 3 for the details of how this research has changed).

This project started from the marginal location of non-heterosexual women to challenge the foundations of heterosexual assumptions of naturalness. From these beginnings it became apparent these women's lives were subject to everyday exclusions and that they had developed sophisticated negotiating techniques. Moreover, the heart rending stories women told of their experiences of prejudice transformed this project to one which wishes to highlight and explore their experiences. I hope that in this way this research will inform academic thinking, challenging inherent prejudices and 'provide knowledge useful to the struggle for gender equity' (Mattingly and Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995: 428). This research highlights multiple and diverse experiences of heterosexism, homophobia and what I term 'genderism'. Using these accounts I hope to challenge dominant ideas

and opinions which (re)place heterosexuality as 'normal' and define 'woman' in regimented and exclusive ways. I see this as idealistic and part of a wider project of contesting the heterosexism inherent in our society and, through this process of contestation, hopefully instigating 'social change'.

It could be argued that to claim the label 'feminist' research authors need to justify their claim to this label as well as how and why they are using it. In other words, the criteria for judging what feminist research is should not be reduced to universal 'requirements'. My research does not consciously attempt 'consciousness raising' with the participants. However, in an individual interview Janet contended that being involved in a focus group had enabled her to consider the prejudices she suffered everyday rather than simply dismissing them or attempting to laugh them off. She reconsidered these issues again when she read the focus group transcript and in her individual interview, leading to rich and in-depth insights. Moreover Ruth, having read two conference papers, wrote 'thank god I am not the only person who feels like this' (Ruth, feedback letter). In this way participants' experiences were legitimated and the research process was, on occasion, personally empowering.

This research neither offers to change the material conditions of women's lives nor does it aim to influence or change policy. This project began in the interstices between gender research and feminist research. It was designed in terms of feminist research in that it aimed to make explicit the research process, challenging power relations between researcher and researched. However, it could also have been placed within gender research (understood as being apolitical although this does not have to be the case) at the beginning. This claim could have been made as some of the initial research questions spoke of exploring relational aspects of food and eating which could be seen as apolitical. This research has evolved to explore only issues of power and exclusions and does not investigate general eating practices. Moreover, the research has an overt agenda of challenging, with a view to changing, attitudes towards non-heterosexual women. For example, I have published an article in the 'lesbian lifestyle' magazine, *Diva* (Browne, 2002, see Appendix 7). The aim of this article was to legitimate the experience of

genderism (see Chapter 8) to those who may have experienced this form of prejudice but do not have contact with academia.

4.6 Conclusion

The recognition of difference and positionality, of the embodied nature of knowledge, and the key theoretical advances here, make it clear, however, that the search for what methods text books call 'scientific' knowledge, for 'objectivity' and non-involvement in the lives and feelings of the people we study must also be abandoned.

(McDowell, 1992: 413)

This chapter conceptualised research as performative and as (re)made through spaces of betweeness. Moreover, research is understood as formed through relations of power (England, 1994; McDowell, 1992). In order to explore these issues and the embodied nature of knowledge distinctions between methods and methodologies were established. Methodologies are understood as underpinning and informing the techniques of research methods. Methodologies are conceptualised as overlapping and informing, as well as being informed by epistemologies and ontologies. Whilst distinctions between methodologies and methods are drawn, epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies were not separated.

Following Rose (1995, 1997), research is seen as intersubjective and formed through, and forming, both the positionality of the researcher and the interpersonal relations of power between researcher and participants. In this chapter, I rejected simple categorisations of researchers' positionings. Instead, I conceptualised my positionality in relation to the participants and their understandings of me. I see these positionings as multiple and fluid (c.f. Valentine, 2002). The accounts produced in this chapter and by the participants are thus understood as partial and exclusionary and therefore simplifying of the 'messiness' of research (Rose, 1997).

This chapter argued that this research was neither *for* women nor *on* them but, instead, that the research was conducted *with* the participants. I contended that using friends in research challenged simplistic conceptualisations of researcher/researched power relations. Power as relational was seen as negotiated and thus salient when designing, conducting and writing up research. Drawing on the concept and practice of reciprocity, power was conceptualised as negotiated both within and beyond the research process to produce the accounts formed.

The chapter finished by arguing that this research now places itself within feminist research. This positioning has evolved through the process of doing this research. The research began as a theoretical investigation into the spaces of food and eating and has moved on to consider and centralise issues of power and othering. This is because the stories the women told in relation to their everyday lives and experiences of othering were so powerful I did not want to negate or ignore them. Whilst I do not claim the ability to change women's lives I see addressing issues of power and othering as political.

Although separate it is recognised that there are 'grey areas' between methods and methodologies. In this way, the chapter sought to make explicit the messiness of research, recognising the embodied nature of knowledge. The next chapter will continue this endeavour beginning with an exploration of 'grey areas' between methodologies and methods and then moving on to outline research methods.

Chapter Five

Methods

Chapter outline:

5.1 Introduction

This chapter details particular research issues pertaining to the research methods used and then outlines details of the techniques used to make this thesis. It continues from Chapter 4 in openly reflecting on how the research methods were appropriated and in making the procedures used explicit. In this way, this chapter addresses Baxter and Eyles' (1997) assertion that research should be rigorous and this can be achieved by detailing the research process. Understanding the partiality of all research accounts, but recognising the importance of reflexivity, this chapter aims to make explicit the techniques used to form this research and the issues I encountered relating directly to these techniques.

Whereas Chapter 4 explored methodologies, this chapter details the *techniques* or methods used to conduct this research. However, there are 'grey' areas between methodologies and methods. This chapter begins by exploring these by investigating snowball sampling and how the evolving research informed, and was informed by, the research methods used. These sections transgress the boundaries of methods and methodologies, illustrating the fluidity and permeability of these borders.

This research was undertaken with 28 women recruited using snowball sampling. Accounts of their understandings and experiences were formed using six focus groups, three coupled interviews, 23 individual interviews, 22 diaries and six sets of auto-photographs. These accounts were analysed using discourse analysis. Feedback and other ethical considerations were also addressed. The final section of this chapter details these processes used for conducting this research. It takes a decidedly methods focus, describing how this research was conducted and detailing procedures and justifications which have not been addressed elsewhere.

5.2 Friendship, feminism and fieldworking(s)

5.2.1 Snowball Sampling

This section explores the formation of research through interpersonal relations and, in particular, friendships. When research aims to focus upon specific individuals, groups or experiences which are not validated by society recruiting participants can be problematic. These individuals and groups are often 'hidden' because openly identifying with specific factions or lifestyles can result in different forms of discrimination. This makes these individuals difficult to research and makes random sampling impossible (Faugier and Sargenant, 1997). Faugier and Sargenant (1997: 791) argue that the 'more sensitive or threatening the phenomenon under study', the more difficult sampling will be. Sexualities is a 'sensitive' subject because, as participants transgress dominant heterosexual codes, there are risks including a loss of employment, harassment and even violence. Consequently, as D. Bell (1997: 414), has suggested 'probably the singular most difficult aspect of researching sexual geographies is that of access'.

Studies using snowball sampling have employed individuals' social networks in order to access 'hard to reach', 'sensitive' populations (e.g. Valentine, 1993a; b; c; Goossensen *et al.,* 1997; Sarantakos, 1998). Valentine (1993c: 114) used existing lesbian social networks to recruit participants and outlines her use of the snowballing method as 'contacting one participant via the other'. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981: 151) defined their chain referral sample as 'created through a series of referrals that are made within a circle of people who know each other'. Snowball sampling relies on the behaviour or 'trait' under study being social and sharing with others the characteristic of interest (Faugier and Sargenant, 1997: 793). In this study snowball sampling is understood as the use of my personal networks and friendships and the use of their contacts, friends and networks in order to recruit participants for the study. Thus, similar to Biernacki and Waldrof (1981), some participants were friends with each other and some were in relationships with each other. Moreover, I would have considered 13 of these women to

be my friends prior to the study. The remaining 15 were acquaintances or strangers to me and were asked to participate by women who were already involved in the study.

A number of anthropologists have described how they became friends with their participants after entering the field (e.g. Crick, 1992; Newton, 1993). Hendry (1992), prior to entering the field in Japan, had a friend which she was reluctant to use upon embarking on her research. She later employed this friend as a co-researcher. Although this relationship eventually turned sour, Hendry was given access and information that would not have been possible without her co-researcher. My research involved pre-existing friends from the outset. By friends I mean that we would meet regularly, outside of the research setting and considered each other to be 'friends'. However, these boundaries are fluid particularly where repeat methods are used. In this study I used focus groups, coupled interviews and interviews. There was a gap of between one week and six months from the time of participating in a focus group or coupled interview to an individual interview. During this time I often met participants when I was out socially. Consequently, strangers, when they first became involved in this research, sometimes became friends as the research progressed:

KB: What did you think of like the, first interview and this interview and stuff ... were they okay? Were you nervous?

Leanne: Yes, no I was much more comfortable in this one [interview]. The first one [coupled interview] I was a bit nervous cos I was like 'oo I don't know what she's going to ask me.' And I still I guess didn't know what you were going to ask me but I guess *I didn't care cos I thought I think it has probably helped that amm you are not a complete stranger now.* Cos it was like you were a complete stranger before it was like 'this complete stranger is coming to my house asking me questions [about] what I do. (KB: laugh) I don't know what to say' sort of thing (KB: yeah). And now it's just like, 'ahh she's asking me questions it will be fine'.

(Leanne: individual interview, six months after coupled interview with Nat, my emphasis)

Leanne and I had become friends in the six months between the focus group and the individual interview. It was partially through this research that our friendship developed. Therefore, I recognise that research relationships and friendships are fluid and altered over the course of this study. Although snowball sampling is used extensively,

particularly in relation to research on sexualities, there is a dearth of explorations of interpersonal relationships which (in)form the snowball sampling technique.

5.2.1.i Inclusions

Initial contact with potential participants can be made in a number of ways. Farquhar (1999) used established 'lesbian' groups recognising that her sample was biased towards women who were already 'out' and were attending an existing group targeted at lesbians. Similarly, Rhoads (1997), as a heterosexual man with no lesbian or gay networks, went to lesbian, gay and bisexual student association meetings to involve gay and bisexual men in his study (c.f. D. Bell, 1997). These students again had to be performing overt non-heterosexual identities and be attending particular groups.

For this research I began with my own personal social networks and asked friends from social, sport and work settings to be involved in the research. They in turn asked their friends and partners if they would participate. For some participants their sexuality was a very personal issue and they would not have allowed me to disclose this information to a third party. Therefore, starting with my personal social networks enabled me to access women who are often hidden from anonymous researchers yet connected into social networks such as sports teams. Most of the women in this study did not attend specific lesbian groups (c.f. Rhoads, 1997; Farquhar, 1999), although some of the participants socialised on 'the gay social scene'. In this way, I was able to include women who were not 'out and proud' and whose voices are often left unheard or invalidated. Moreover, using this method enabled me to gain access to women who would not answer advertisements and who, I believe, had to be asked individually. These women do not access gay newspapers or other forms of non-heterosexual media and would not have answered advertisements in mainstream media. Silverman (2000) argues that sampling procedures should not be 'purely personal'. Whilst this sample was not 'purely' personal, beginning with personal social networks is personal. However, this enables access to women who are 'hidden' from lesbian and gay groups.

The personal aspect of snowball sampling also allows participants to 'check out' the researcher and the research. In this research, friends enquired about the project and asked questions about what was expected of them and how I would use the information they gave me. Throughout the study, using friendship networks involved more than friends simply introducing me to their friends. Those who did not know me often asked their friends about me and the research. For example, Stevi spoke to Ruth about the study. Because Stevi enjoyed the coupled interview Ruth was more than happy to be involved and looked forward to her individual interview. This is important due to the sensitive nature of the project where participants may be wary about revealing their sexual identities and other details about their lives to a complete stranger. The process of finding out about the project was very important, with friends who had participated in the research telling their friends about their experiences. This often put their friends at ease and gave them a sense of what the project was about prior to their involvement. As a friend I believe I was trusted with these details. Moreover, because their friends trusted me, I think that women who I did not know also believed that I would not abuse the information they would give. Consequently, the benefits of snowball sampling extended beyond recruitment. However, prior to addressing these issues, it is important to recognise the limitations of this form of recruiting.

5.2.1.ii Exclusions

Miles and Huberman (1985: 235) argue that representativeness should be strived for and define this as 'an instance of a general phenomena'. However, representative studies of sexualities are problematic because of the difficulty of establishing a sampling frame and the problem of defining a gay or lesbian lifestyle (Heaphy, 2001). Snowball sampling is seen as a biased sampling technique because it is not random and it selects individuals on the basis on social networks (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981; Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Faugier and Sargenant, 1997). Although it is acknowledged that snowball sampling is exclusionary there is often little recognition of who may be excluded from this sampling procedure.

I see my position as a young, white, non-heterosexual woman who lives in a town in the UK as central to the sample which formed the research (see Chapter 4 section 5.1 for a further discussion of reflexivity). These categories have influenced who is involved in my social networks and, thus, who was involved in the study.

All the women in this study were between the ages of 18 and 45, with the majority of the sample consisting of women between 18 and 30. Of the participants, 46 per cent were between the ages of 21 and 26 with 50 per cent of women being aged 18-26 (see table 5.2). These women can be seen as having similar experiences. For example, perhaps because of their age, a number of the women were university students (this may also be because the majority of the women involved in this study were from town 1 which contained a university, see table 9.3). As a result, they lived in shared student accommodation. Moreover, some students and the women in what might be termed the 'unskilled manual' class had similar experiences relating to lack of money. In addition, the women spoke of their experiences and perceptions of socialising in clubs and pubs which can be associated with this age group.

Table 5.2: Summary of participants' ages

Age	Number	Percentage
18-20	4	14
21-25	13	46
26-30	5	17
31-35	3	11
36-40	2	7
41-45	1	3
Total	**28**	**100**

None of the women in this study understood themselves as disabled and they were all white. R. Butler (1999) argues that disabled lesbians and gay men can be excluded from gay social settings such as bars and nightclubs. Similarly, Bassi (2002) contends that

white, gay male commodification of social spaces in Birmingham has resulted in a white scene in what she terms a 'brown' city. Social settings were important spaces in which to meet friends and acquaintances who were involved in this research. This could partially account for this form of homogeneity of the sample. Moreover, the other networks of sport (that I was personally involved in) and paid and unpaid 'work' that I used can also be exclusionary in terms of disability. Consequently, using individuals from these spaces and networks excludes those who do not access particular spaces or are not involved in specific networks. One consequence of this was that my sample was mainly white, 'working' class, able bodied women in their early to mid 20's.

Categories are problematic when it is assumed there is homogeneity within them. With small numbers of participants, it would have been necessary to categorise the population and assume that one or two people can speak for a sector of the population, such as 'black' or 'disabled'. This could amount to 'tokenism' and reinscribe particular categories of difference making assumptions of homogeneity within predefined categories. Therefore this research did not actively recruit women who fitted into categories such as 'disabled' or 'black'. This could be seen as a severe limitation to the study particularly as the resulting sample is homogenous *if we only look at analytical characteristics such as age, class and ethnicity.* However, I wish to contend that solely using particular categories to base assumptions of similarities and dissimilarities is problematic. Women in this study differed from each other and from me. For example, students have different levels of parental support and class backgrounds. In the discussion chapters I aim to further illustrate differences between participants and in this way refute assumptions of complete homogeneity on the basis of predefined categories.

Snowball sampling does not include individuals who are not involved in the social networks on which the technique relies. For this study, women who are not connected in some way to my social networks or to the networks of other participants could not have been involved. However, women may be non-heterosexual, are known to the women already involved in the study or myself, but are not friends or acquaintances. These women were not involved in this research. These women are people that other

participants and I would not associate with or consider friends or even acquaintances. Consequently, some non-heterosexual women within our known networks were not asked to be involved. Had these women been asked to participate, they might have chosen not to be involved. Moreover, had these women been approached and agreed to participate the situation has the potential to be extremely awkward. This would be the antithesis to the relaxed and comfortable atmosphere I aimed to create in interviews and focus groups. In one instance a woman agreed to participate and then withdrew following the dissolution of our friendship. Consequently, even within the people I knew there were a number of non-heterosexual women who were not involved in the study.

Women introduced me to women they believed would like to be involved and, consequently, screened who I was given access to. In conjunction with this, there may have been self-screening where women indicated to their friends or partners that they would not be involved. For example, one woman chose not to be involved because, although she was a friend of another participant, she did not know me. She told her friend, who participated in the study, that she did not wish to discuss her private life in front of me, illustrating the sensitivity of this research. Another couple did not want to be involved because, as friends, they did not want to reveal 'too much' to me. Snowball sampling relies on individuals' willingness to be involved in research and consequently some people will always be 'hidden'.

Commensurate with my readings of poststructural feminism my research never intended to use a 'representative' sample nor did I attempt to speak for all non-heterosexual women. Whilst it is hoped that this study will have applicability elsewhere, I do not wish to generalise. Consequently, for this study I did not select 'proportionally from all groups or types' (Baxter and Eyles, 1997: 513). Heaphy (2001) argues that studies of sexualities tend to focus on the white, urban, middle class, young lesbians or gay men. Every study which uses snowball sampling will be specific to the networks it accesses and this should be made explicit. It is important then not to claim representativeness and particularly not to claim to have included all aspects of 'lesbian and gay lives'. Making explicit who the sample consists of enables an understanding of who we are speaking

about rather than assuming to speak for all non-heterosexual men and women. Acknowledging the specificity of this sampling technique does not negate it, rather it enables a fuller understanding of the exclusions of this particular method. This is not to say that there is a way of including all individuals. All recruitment procedures will exclude as well as include and interpersonal relations are pertinent to snowball sampling.

5.2.2 Beyond Sampling: Friendships and the Research Process

Baxter and Eyles (1997) argue that 'skewing' a sample should involve recognition of how this impacts the research. Sampling (in)forms accounts in interviews, focus groups and coupled interviews as well as the writing up process. Consequently, the interpersonal relations which form research do not only occur at the time of 'data collection'. This section explores the interpersonal relations of snowball sampling from the stage of recruitment to writing up.

5.2.2.i Focus Groups, Coupled Interviews and Interviews

Within the mainstream research techniques literature it is assumed the participants will be strangers to the researcher. These textbooks then proceed to discuss how rapport can be established (see for example, Robson, 1993; J. Bell 1999). Consequently, using friends or acquaintances within research can be seen as problematic as it 'biases' the process, particularly where it assumes that there is a truth to be discovered (Miles and Huberman, 1985). In fact, studies which use friends are the antithesis of positivistic research which argues for the 'neutrality' of the 'objective' researcher and distance between the researcher and her/his participants. Researchers who are friends with participants may be seen as 'too close' to the participants to 'step back' and evaluate what is 'really' occurring. However, as argued in Chapter 4, notions of a universal

'truth' are problematic and it is important to outline the relations which (in)form research accounts.

Within focus groups, Morgan (1998: 49) suggests that strangers enable participants to think about taken for granted assumptions. Participants will have to explain their everyday actions or behaviours because they would not be obvious or known to the other members of the group (Morgan, 1998: 49). As the moderator in situations where I did not know the participants, I served as an audience to which the details had to be explained (Myers, 1998). However, as a friend this was not always the case and stories that I knew about were referred to but not elaborated on. In these situations I was not a neutral 'audience' but contributed to the discussion whilst focusing on the participant's interpretation of the events. Focus groups differed in relation to how I knew the participants and their relationships with each other. Moreover, particularly in coupled interviews, there were intimate interactions which, as a friend, I was not a part of but was sometimes party to. Thus, each focus group and coupled interview was a unique set of interactions.

In addition to the researcher being a stranger, market research literature on focus groups contends that participants should not know each other. It is contended that where sensitive topics are being addressed the major benefit of using strangers is that the people in the focus groups will be more willing to speak to those whom they may never meet again (Holbrook and Jackson, 1996; Morgan, 1998). Due to the small size of the lesbian scene and overlapping social networks, participants may have to travel long distances in order for them to be complete strangers with no common social networks or overlapping friendships. This may be financially unviable. Moreover, despite assertions to the contrary, I believe that focus groups with strangers may have discouraged women from getting involved where issues of sexualities are the focus.

Throughout this research I aimed to make the research process relaxed and enjoyable. I believe that friendships made some of the focus groups more fun and less intimidating than had they been run by a stranger or consisted of strangers. Moreover, focus groups and coupled interviews enabled participants who did not know me to be involved and

feel more comfortable as they were with their friends or partners. Women spoke of being comfortable in the presence of people they knew:

KB: Do you have any comments you want to make about the focus group?

Mary: amm actually felt quite comfortable doing it (KB: yeah) yeah. Its weird but its probably because I eat with those people whereas if it was people who I didn't really know it'd be strange (KB: yeah) because I spent all my time, I did spend all my time with them.

(Mary, individual interview one month after focus group)

There was a lot of laughter in the focus groups, they were fun to conduct and, I hope, fun to be a part of (c.f. Longhurst 1999). Positive research experiences were important as negative experiences could have been recounted to other potential participants, discouraging them from being involved.

Friendships between participants and between participants and myself informed the accounts formed:

KB: mm did you feel that you were able to say anything you wanted to say [in the focus group] or was there somethings you didn't?

Andie: Yeah, cos I felt I was lucky in the sense that I was feeling, I felt completely comfortable with the people I was with cos I know them. I think if it would have been a complete stranger there might have been things that I would have said that I, that I could have said that I wouldn't of said.

KB: but because it was friends it was cool?

Andie: yeah, it was more it wasn't like an interview or a focus group or anything like that. It was more like a when you go down the pub and sit down and have a conversation, where it is just chilled out and having a laugh and stuff so it was quite cool.

(Andie, individual interview, two weeks after focus group with Julie)

As I was considered a friend, Andie did not distinguish the focus group from other interactions we may have had such as sitting in the pub having a conversation. As a result she said things that she may not have had the group been conducted by and consisted of strangers. Focus groups enabled diverse types of communication such as 'anecdotes, jokes, teasing and arguing' (Kitzinger, 1995: 299). Knowing other

individuals in the group can also make interactions similar to those that (re)create everyday life:

Di: there was more kind of wise cracks as well everyone was making like little wise cracks, which kind of effect, which you don't have to do when you are on your own (KB: yeah) (laughs +KB).

(Di individual interview, one month after focus group with Mary, Michelle and Nina)

One aspect of using friends in focus groups was the 'banter'. Women who knew details about their friends' lives often joked or laughed with each other and, as Di noted, this does not occur in individual settings of interviews. Moreover, this relies on people being friends with each other.

Wilkinson (1998) suggests that researchers should not ask highly personal questions in focus groups. I would feel uncomfortable challenging participants' opinions and ideas. However, in the focus groups participants elicited information from each other by challenging each other's ideas and recollections and asking questions which I was often not prepared to ask. Participants did not always share the same opinions and on one occasion they overtly disagreed (see Chapter 7 section 3). These debates and discussions often gave rise to a multiplicity of views and opinions, not simply one argument or viewpoint and these were not always resolved (Gibbs 1997). The debates also led to a deeper discussion of the issues and were possible partly because, in some focus groups, friends felt secure enough to disagree with each other. It is exactly these ordinary social processes which have the potential to recreate stories and discourses about opinions and experiences (Kitzinger, 1995; Wilkinson 1999a; b).

Focus groups and coupled interviews created group dynamics which formed different accounts to those in the individual interviews. They gave access to attitudes and interpersonal relations not available by simply responding to questions (Kitzinger, 1995). However, a note of caution is acknowledged. Participants were friends with each other outside the research and, therefore, it was important to them to keep their interpersonal relationships intact. This meant that on occasion certain issues were not addressed:

KB: did you, you said to me I know the other day that you didn't really get a chance to say what you wanted to say.

Lorraine: ... The way Janet is I feel bad about saying stuff. God it sounds really weird. Amm about sort of how obvious lesbians can be. ... It's not that I have anything against it. But I don't talk about it, what I think about other lesbians, cos Janet is one of those that I would say. And I knew it would hurt her feelings and I don't mean it in a way that is bad or in a way that is wrong or that she should change or anything like that but my own personal view about them sort of thing (KB: yeah). Do you know what I mean? (Later in the interview) If I was going out with someone who looked oh it sounds really bad, *this is what I don't say in front of Janet* and I don't mean it as in, but looks you know looks kinda feminine and that that is just my type.

(Lorraine individual interview 2 weeks after focus group with Janet, emphasis added)

In the interview Lorraine elaborated on issues she had not addressed in the focus group and reasoned that she had not voiced some of her opinions because she did not want to hurt her friend's feelings. She contradicts Heaphy *et al.* (1998) who argue that where coupled interviews, or in this case focus groups, and individual interviews are used participants will attempt to (re)create coherent stories. Moreover, because of our friendship, Lorraine had suggested to me prior to the interview and in a social setting that there were issues which she had not addressed in the focus group. Therefore, my friendship with her outside the research setting influenced the accounts produced during her individual interview. This was an important aspect of involving friends in research. Previous knowledge of participants' lives informed the interview in that I was able to ask their opinions about particular incidents and comments and use examples of incidents when appropriate.

There were also other reasons for participants not expressing their views in focus groups or coupled interviews:

2. Were you able to express everything you wanted to say? What didn't you say?

Yes I felt very comfortable speaking to Kath. It was a very relaxed atmosphere. However I felt very nervous in the focus group and anything I didn't say in the group I said individually which was fine and very enjoyable.

(Evaluation 4)

138

Whereas this participant felt 'nervous' in the focus group, she found the interview 'relaxing'. On occasion the different interactions produced different accounts (see Chapters 7 section 3 and 8 section 4.2). In addition, a number of the participants recognised that theirs had been a dominant voice in focus groups and coupled interviews:

Leanne: it would be nice to sort of, of cos I think I talk more than Nat (ex-partner) as well cos I just tend to talk more than Nat anyway. So it was like I didn't really give her a chance to speak (laughing, KB: laugh) so it's probably good that you are doing individual ones as well (KB laughs)

(Leanne, individual interview, six months after coupled interview)

In both focus groups and coupled interviews one participant often spoke more than the others (Reed and Payton, 1997). This was addressed in individual interviews that enabled participants to speak about their experiences and opinions in-depth. Therefore, interviews gave participants the opportunity to speak about issues and share opinions that they would not discuss in front of their friends or partners. Heaphy *et al.* (1998) conducted interviews with both couples and individuals within couples comparing inter-couple difference. Using individual interviews enabled a comparison of intra-couple and intra-group accounts.

Using interviews may have partially addressed the problems of focus groups. As a friend, however, participants may have refrained from discussing particular issues with me or expressing points of views in order not to offend, insult or upset me. These may not be known to me. Mitchell (1997) argues that in the case of school children they cannot separate the focus group from their lives. This is because they exist in an enclosed social context of a school where fellow participants were also school mates. Mitchell was able to use interviews to elicit stories that the participants would not recount in focus group situations. Mitchell's research has resonance here. I have argued above that participants did not discuss certain issues in focus groups because of their friendships with other participants. However, unlike Mitchell's study, I am a member of some participants' social networks. Thus interviews did not remove participants entirely from their social contexts and, because of my friendships with certain participants, I was

given particular accounts of their opinions and experiences. What participants choose to tell any researcher will be selective and, acknowledging my position as a friend, I recognise that the accounts formed will be partial.

One of the main justifications for using interviews in this research was that women who were not involved in focus groups or coupled interviews could still participate in the study. There were six participants who were only involved in individual interviews and at the time of the study I would not have considered any of these women 'friends'. These interviews did not seem as in-depth as those conducted after focus groups or coupled interviews. This may, in part, be because of the use of friends in focus groups and coupled interviews and the development of friendships through these data collection methods. (It may also be that further probing of issues raised in focus groups was possible in interviews, making these more in-depth than interviews where issues were introduced). Moreover, as a friend I had a certain amount of background information which had to be established in interviews with women I did not know. As a result, interviews without focus groups or coupled interviews, did not explore issues to the extent that focus groups and interviews with friends and acquaintances did. This is not of course to negate the usefulness of data from these interviews. Instead it is to highlight that accounts formed differed due to the interpersonal relationships which are inherent to snowball sampling.

5.2.2.ii Beyond the formal research methods: informal feedback and the messiness of research

Newton (1993) developed a close relationship with her 'best informant' over the course of her ethnographic study (see also Crick, 1992; Hendry, 1992). Throughout this research not only was the research formed, but my friendships were also enhanced and reinforced. These friendships were important as social settings, which originally served as opportunities to meet potential participants, became spaces in which informal feedback could be given. Consequently, the spaces of research intersected with my

social spaces and extended beyond formal research methods. Using personal networks in the research enabled participants to have input into the research beyond their involvement in research methods.

Where I have met women socially or in different situations they comment on the research and their part in the research. They often tell me further stories of exclusions they have experienced since their involvement in the research process. In addition, I have discussed with participants in social settings how I will use some of the information. In this way, informal feedback has ensured that I have their informed consent not only during the research process but also in the analysis and interpretation. I always ask their permission to use any extra information they may give me in a social setting. Some information I know and have used without being told, for example who they are or have been in a relationships with. I believe participants expect me to do this in order to make sense of their stories. On the other hand, I have had no contact with some of the women, who were acquaintances or introduced to me for the purposes of this research, since their participation in this research. Although I have sent them their transcripts and a copy of papers written, they have not responded. This is, of course, their choice but it highlights differences in levels of involvement between friends and strangers. Where friends can have informal discussions the lines of communication between strangers can and are more likely to remain very formal.

5.3 Evolving Research

As has been noted in the previous chapter this research has evolved to claim a basis in feminisms. Baxter and Eyles (1997) argue that we need to be explicit about key changes in research direction. Bailey *et al.* (1999), basing their arguments in grounded theory, contend that an audit trail should be made. However, as the research process is not entirely knowable I will not document an audit trail that perpetuates this myth. In its place, this section explores how focus groups, coupled interviews and interviews

evolved over the course of this study. It will then examine how changes in the study affected the appropriation of auto-photography and diaries.

5.3.1 Focus Groups, Coupled Interviews and Interviews

Within all focus groups and interviews the majority of time was spent discussing issues pertaining to sexualities. Research schedules were altered due to these discussions, however, what earlier participants said informed the alteration of the schedules such that all the women spoke about similar issues. Focus group and interview schedules were initially designed with half the schedule exploring questions surrounding food such as patterns noted from diaries, food practices and changes in eating habits. The other half of the schedules explored experiences of restaurants, home, work, shopping, holidays and celebrations relating to sexualities and feelings of comfort (see Appendix 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4). As the focus became *sexualities, genders,* and processes of *othering* the schedules included questions on towns and cities and gender and reduced the number of questions pertaining solely to food (see Appendix 2.5, 2.6). However, questions still addressed experiences of restaurants, home, work, shopping, holidays and celebrations. Food and eating practices were discussed at the beginning of all interviews, coupled interviews and focus groups. These discussions served to relax participants and appeared to make them feel comfortable. One disadvantage of starting with food was that on some occasions in both interviews and focus groups, participants perceived discussions that were not directly related to food as 'wrong'. Consequently participants in focus groups tried to return each other to food and in individual interviews participants apologised for moving away from the topic. However, 'tangents' were developed and Chapters 8 and 9 are a result of participants 'straying' off the topic.

5.3.2 Diaries and Auto-Photography

The interviews, coupled interviews and focus groups drove the changing focus of the research. The use of diaries and auto-photography were affected by this change. However, whilst the structure of interviews and focus groups changed, the structure of diaries and auto-photography did not. Consequently, photographs and diaries have become much less important than was originally envisaged.

The diaries offered a medium for individuals who are adept at communicating through writing and used to writing diaries (Elliott 1997). Because, as Corti (1993) argues, diaries can address issues of poor recall, they can inform interviews and focus groups both through the discussion of relevant entries and through the exercise of writing down everyday events thus making them conscious. The diaries were very successful in getting participants to focus on their food and eating patterns and, in this way, provided a stimulus for the initial stages of the interviews and focus groups:

1: What did you think of the interviews, focus groups, diaries and where applicable, photographs?

The diary was a useful way of focusing my thoughts and a way of actively examining my relationship to food and eating.

(Evaluation 2)

However, as the emphasis of the research shifted and more general issues pertaining to everyday experiences of sexualities became pertinent, diaries became less relevant. Although some of the information is of use, the main purpose of the diary became to introduce women to the study and to enable them to begin their verbal accounts with something they knew about. As the study progressed participants questioned the use and 'relevance' of the diaries:

KB: what about the diary? What did you think of the diary?

Jenny: I don't quite see the relevance of it cos it doesn't yeah it covers your feelings a little bit but it doesn't seem to be that concerned with. I don't know its just I'm not quite sure it just doesn't seem to fit in 100 per cent (Me: yeah) like with everything that we've discussed I don't know ... [Goes into next room

to get the diary comes back and reads] comments observations or notes. It doesn't actually ask you about your feelings (Me: yeah) which seems that's what. Yeah that's what I was thinking well you're asking me about my views as to when I do this and this and this so maybe you should ask about our views when we are actually eating or whatever.

(Jenny, individual interview)

Jenny recognised that the majority of the focus group and interview which she was involved in had focused on issues of 'feelings' and her views of her sexuality. Consequently, a diary that explores when and where she eats but does not specifically ask for records of feelings was not as related as it could have been.

Photographs aimed to explore visual accounts of women's everyday experiences and to include objects as well as people. Participants were asked to take pictures of their food and eating practices and these were envisaged as contributing to analyses of food and eating practices. Consequently, the majority of pictures that have been returned are illustrative of general eating practices. These would be relevant had the study gone on to explore these eating practices in more depth. However, because of the change of emphasis in the study these pictures are not illustrative of the processes that will be described and analysed in later chapters. Consequently, they are not used in this thesis.

5.4 Research Methods: Further Details

This section will detail the pilot study, how participants were contacted, focus groups, coupled interviews, interviews, recording and transcribing, diaries, auto-photography, analysis, feedback and ethics. The multi-method approach was not used as a form of triangulation for validity (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 194; Miles and Huberman, 1985). Instead, the use of multiple methods offered participants a number of ways of being involved in this study. It is contended that each of the data collection methods form different and complimentary accounts and the following discussion reflects on the use of these methods.

5.4.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken with four women, all of whom were involved in a focus group. Two women participated in individual interviews. This followed a number of false starts with three different groups of women cancelling arranged focus groups. The pilot study revealed to me how difficult it is to arrange focus groups, indicating how flexible I, as a researcher, needed to be. It also demonstrated that focus groups and interviews were appropriate methods for this study and that the diaries were understandable. However, the study was not focused enough at that point and the women were confused as to what the aim and purpose of the study was. Participants appeared to believe that the study revolved around *what* was eaten rather than the *social relations* surrounding eating. Thus, the redrafted initial letter was more detailed and emphasised sexuality. Following the pilot study I decided that exploring leisure activities beyond food was too vast for one study. Consequently, the focus group and interview schedules were altered and issues pertaining to general leisure activities were removed (Appendix 2.1-2.6). However, the accounts produced in the pilot study addressed issues that were explored in subsequent research and they are therefore included in the discussion chapters. The pilot study did not 'finalise' questions or issues to be discussed and this enabled the research to evolve according to participants' accounts.

5.4.2 Contacting the Participants

Participants were recruited using snowball sampling and their details are outlined in table 5.3. Once the participants had agreed to be involved I asked for contact details if I did not know them. They were then sent an initial pack, which contained a welcoming letter, a description of the methods to be used, a diary (see Appendices 1.2-1.4) and a disposable camera. Focus groups, coupled interviews and interviews were organised at the participants' convenience and participants contacted the day before to confirm the times and places to meet. Women were asked to be involved in as many aspects of the

research as they wished. All of the participants were involved in some form of verbal data collection.

Table 5.4: Details of participants

Name	Age	Methods
Marie	35-40	D, FG, I (Pilot May, 2000)
Hilary	30-35	D, FG, I (Pilot May 2000)
Susie	25-30	D, FG (Pilot May 2000)
Gina	20-25	D, I (July 2000)
Sandra	20-25	AP, D, FG, I (July 2000)
Helen	20-25	AP, D, FG, I (July 2000)
Mel	20-25	AP, D, FG, I (July 2000)
Emma	40-45	CI (July 2000)
Jean	35-40	CI (July 2000)
Ruth	20-25	AP, D, I (July 2000)
Andie	20-25	AP, D, FG, I (August 2000)
Julie	20-25	D, FG, I (August 2000, November 2000 individual)
Virginia	25-30	D, CI (August 2000)
Stevi	25-30	D, CI, I (August 2000)
Nat	20-25	AP, CI, I (September 2000, individual February 2001)
Leanne	20-25	AP, CI I (September 2000, individual February 2001)
Jillian	30-35	D, I (October 2000)
Pat	18-20	AP, I (October 2000)
Carol	30-35	D, I (November 2000)
Lorraine	20-25	FG, I (November 2000)
Janet	20-25	D, FG, I (November 2000)

Val	25-30	D, I (December 2000)
Mary	18-20	AP, D, FG, I (December 2000, January 2001 individual)
Michelle	20-25	AP, D, FG, I (December 2000, January 2001 individual)
Di	18-20	AP, D, FG, I (December 2000, January 2001 individual)
Nina	18-20	AP, D, FG (December 2000)
Angela	20-25	AP, FG, I (January 2001)
Jenny	25-30	AP, FG, I (January 2001)

Key:

AP   Auto photography

D   Diary

FG   Focus Group

CI   Coupled Interview

I   Interview

5.4.3 Focus Groups

This study consisted of six one-off audio taped focus groups. There were between two and four people in each focus group and each group lasted between an hour and an hour and forty minutes. Focus groups were conducted in one of the participants' homes with friends and partners who did not live there coming to this house. This appeared to be comfortable for participants who were used to spending time in friends' houses. In interviews, focus groups and coupled interviews, schedules were kept beside me or on my lap in a plastic folder and were referred to as a prompt when needed. However, I tried to look at these as infrequently as possible to enable the conversation to flow and to dissuade the assumption of a list of questions that needed answers. Moreover, notes were not taken during the focus groups, coupled interviews and interviews as this appeared to be distracting and unnerving to participants who may have felt that they were being

'analysed'. Notes and observations were made after the focus groups, coupled interviews and interviews in my research diary.

Burgess *et al.* (1988a; b) suggest that repeat focus groups provide the opportunity to see the development of group dynamics and trust within the group. Repeat focus groups, although they may provide more detailed and in depth information, were not considered practical for this research (c.f. Holbrook and Jackson, 1996). Combining multiple focus groups and interviews may have resulted in the overburdening of participants with resulting recruitment and drop out problems. Moreover, as the women in the focus groups knew each other they did not need to develop relationships in the context of the focus group. An additional concern in the use of multiple focus groups was the (im)possibility of getting the same groups again:

KB: would it (the focus group) be different now?

Mary: yeah

KB: why? ...

Mary: amm, oh my god, I couldn't think of anything worse. It would be an absolute nightmare. Di would be fine (KB: yeah) for Di everybody else. *No couldn't do it.*

(Mary individual interview one month focus group, my emphasis)

The focus group that Mary was involved in consisted of a group of friends who had fallen out over the Christmas period between the focus group and the individual interviews (a period of three weeks). The breakdown of their interpersonal relations meant that there would have no possibility of repeat focus groups.

It is recommended that focus groups should consist of between six and ten people (Kruger, 1994; Morgan, 1998a; b). However, where participants have a lot to say and will 'get into' the topic under discussion it is recommended that focus groups should be smaller (Morgan, 1988; Kruger, 1994). Moreover, Longhurst (1996), in her study of pregnant women, found that in her two 'successful' focus groups defined in terms of numbers and which consisted of five and six people, women felt 'uncomfortable' especially when the issues being discussed were considered 'personal'. In contrast

'failed' focus groups of 'only' three people provided in-depth information. This view is supported by Cote-Arsenault and Morrison-Beedy (1999) who found that when discussing extremely emotional topics, such as prenatal loss, the group size should be limited to four or five.

For this study the participants did have a lot to say. On one occasion, Morgan's (1998b) assertion that there would be more pressure to speak in smaller groups was notably reversed. The largest focus group consisted of four people and in it Di felt pressure to speak:

Di: amm it was a bit kind of weird. It felt as if we were all making like a really big effort to kind of saying something. It wasn't just kind of natural (KB: yeah) we were trying to think of things to say (KB: yeah)

(Di Individual interview, one month after focus group)

Di felt as though she was required to speak in the focus group that she was involved in, whereas participants in smaller groups did not report this. Perhaps this could be due to the necessity of 'turn-taking' in bigger groups, which was as important in smaller groups consisting of two or three people. In addition, women were able to be involved with one or two close friends and did not have to share their stories in front of strangers or people they vaguely knew. This would have been necessary if focus groups were to consist of between six and ten people.

5.4.4 Coupled interviews

Coupled interviews were used in this study where participants were in an intimate relationship with each other and were willing to be interviewed together (c.f. Valentine, 1997). Coupled interviews were organised by consulting with one or both partners and a time and date arranged. The same schedule was used for focus groups and coupled interviews. In coupled interviews emphasis was placed on their relationship, such that

couples produced accounts of their joint experiences. Two of the three couples interviewed lived together at the time of the coupled interview.

Coupled interviews differed from focus groups in that there was much more discussion of joint activities and experiences. Moreover, in coupled interviews participants did not speak about being nervous or not wishing to say something in front of their partners; this was much more common in focus groups with friends. Perhaps this shows the level of trust in the relationships in which these women were involved. It may, on the other hand, illustrate that women valued their relationships over this research and were concerned that their partners may discover something they had not told them. However, Nat said that she had learned aspects of her partner's life that she did not know prior to the coupled interview. This is perhaps illustrative of the in-depth nature of coupled interviews. Nat saw this as a positive aspect of being involved in this research as it gave her the opportunity to learn more about herself and her partner. In coupled interviews I felt like an 'outsider' to the couple whilst still being considered a friend.

Because some of the 'focus groups' consisted of women who used to be in a relationship and still lived together the boundaries between focus groups and coupled interviews were blurred. Moreover, similar to focus groups, coupled interviews had a group dynamic where the participants introduced and explored ideas and opinions. Therefore, the accounts formed in coupled interviews closely resembled those in focus groups.

5.4.5 Interviews

In this study 23 audiotaped semi-structured individual interviews which lasted between 30 minutes and an hour-and-a-half were conducted. An interview schedule was used in the same way as the focus group schedule (above). Where women were involved in the focus group they were asked to be involved in an individual interview. Five women who participated in coupled interviews and focus groups were not involved in the interview stage. Six women who were not involved in focus groups or coupled interviews were

interviewed. Times and dates for interviews were arranged individually, either at the end of the focus groups or coupled interviews or by telephone, text, email or face-to-face contact. These dates were between one week and six months after focus groups or coupled interviews when they had been employed. Prior to each interview participants, where appropriate, were sent copies of focus group and coupled interview transcripts. Interviews took place when and where the participants decided. They were conducted in participants' homes (in sitting rooms, bedrooms and kitchens) with one exception as one woman wished to be interviewed in her girlfriend's home.

5.4.6 Recording and Transcribing

All the focus groups and interviews were tape-recorded. This was seen as offering a more detailed recollection of the accounts and the possibility of verbatim accounts (Denscombe, 1999). Moreover, although tape recorders can be intimidating I believe taking notes may have made the participants feel uneasy. Transcribing the focus groups and interviews gave me an intense familiarity with the data and has also enabled me to analyse as I transcribed (Lapadat, 2000). Some analysts explore particular linguistic features in conversations through finely detailed phonetic transcripts (e.g. Kitzinger and Frith, 1999; Bunzel, 2000). Myers and Macnaghten (1999: 184) argue that detailed transcripts allow the reader to reconstruct much more flavour and detail of the talk and arrive at better grounded interpretations of utterances. However, the assumption that a transcript can be a 'neutral' or 'accurate' representation of the spoken word is problematic (Coates and Thornborrow, 1999; Lapadat, 2000). Coates and Thornborrow (1999: 595) contend that the transcripts are written language and not spoken language and that transcription is 'always a partial affair'. Consequently, transcription decisions should be accounted for (Coates and Thornborrow, 1999; Lapadat, 2000).

I decided not to use phonetic transcripts. This was because, although I wish to investigate the accounts the participants produced and the language used, I felt that the

level of detail used by conversation analysts was unnecessary. Transcription therefore documented intelligible words that were spoken, significant pauses and actions (where remembered). In addition, quotes in the text have been 'cleaned up'. This process does not eliminate the false starts, umm's and amm's etc. but it does include punctuation and shortened quotations. This clarity was deemed necessary in order to make the accounts easier for the reader to understand. It is acknowledged that other analysts may have approached this transcription differently but it is contended that this would not necessarily make the analysis 'better' and that this transcription suits the purpose of this thesis (c.f. Lapadat, 2000).

5.4.7 Diaries

Diaries were sent in the initial letter to participants (one was sent as an attachment to an email at the participant's request) and 23 were returned (see Appendix 1.4). The term 'logbook' was used in letters to participants and to describe the activity of recording food and eating practices as 'diary' implies a vast volume of personal information. However, within this write up the logbooks will be called diaries, as they closely resemble the 'diary technique' discussed in the literature (e.g. D. Bell, 1997; Zimmerman and Weider, 1977; Corti, 1993).

In the diaries participants were asked to keep track of social activities and eating and drinking for a week, within four columns (what activity did you do, where did you go; with whom; when, start time, finish time; comments observations notes). There were instructions for completion of the diaries on the front cover and an example of a completed day on the first page (see Appendix 1.4). Participants varied in the level of detail provided in the diaries (Zimmerman & Weider 1977). Although there was the opportunity to write long narratives, participants did not write more than a few sentences in the notes pages.

J. Bell (1997) contends that, on occasion, participants can alter how they act in order to fill in the diaries:

Ruth: amm on a Friday *I was quite good cos it was my day off and I was dead conscious of the fact that I normally binge totally on my day off but* (KB: yeah) *but I thought I am writing down everything I eat so* (KB: laugh). *And I had to be really careful as well cos if I nicked any of their [her housemates] food it was like 'I can't write that down in case they see it.'* (KB: laugh) Which I don't normally do. (KB: yeah) No but basically got up about 11 made breakfast. Divina [housemate] came round for a shower which was a bit embarrassing because she saw I had written no one and she went 'I was here'. I was like 'yeah but you weren't actually sitting with me watching me eat my breakfast' or anything

KB: so did a lot of people like take a look at the diary then?

Ruth: amm well Divina and, well on the first day cos I left it one there so obviously they had a nosey but not really cos I kept it to myself

(Ruth individual interview)

Ruth suggests she altered her behaviour as a result of filling in the diary. Moreover, Ruth concealed particular elements of her eating patterns from her housemates. Had she filled in the diary detailing these practices her housemates may have read the diary. In this way, the interview with Ruth illustrated the importance of verbal accounts but also pointed to the potency of the diary in making Ruth consider her eating practices on her day off and in relation to her housemates.

Responses to completing diaries varied. Whilst some participants enjoyed filling out the diaries and reflecting on their eating patterns, others found the process of completing diaries burdensome or 'annoying':

KB: what did you think of (the diaries)?

Nina: how annoying, write down fucking everything. But it was a bit of a nightmare cos we all sort of decided like Thursday we were going to do a non-eating 3 days. So we've eaten about 4 pieces of toast in the last three days.

Michelle: like Friday, Saturday, Sunday, two things are filled in

Nina: apart from going to the pub

(Mary, Michelle, Nina, Di: Focus group)

Nina suggests that not eating made the diaries irrelevant and she found the act of recording her eating patterns frustrating. Consequently, diaries were not always seen as opportunities to express opinions and perceptions but were instead viewed as cumbersome requirements for this study.

Moreover, for some participants the underlying aim of the diaries was unclear. Consequently, although the diaries were seen as 'straightforward' a number of participants were unsure what 'I wanted'.

KB: do you have any comments on the research, on the diaries on the interview?

Val: amm it was quite detailed I think that was a good thing and I thought the instructions for the logbook were quite clear, now you might read the logbook and think 'no this is not what I wanted' amm

(Val, Individual interview)

Val, here, is uncertain that what she has recorded is what I required for this study. In this way although the instructions were clear, and the example understandable, the underlying purpose of the diaries was not transparent. This was exacerbated because the study changed. Moreover, because the emphasis altered to sexuality the diaries have become less important than what was originally envisaged (section 5.3). However, some of the diaries still offer important insights which will be discussed in the proceeding chapters.

5.4.8 Photographs

Auto-photography has been used to produce accounts of everyday environments and realties (e.g. Aitken and Wingate Joan 1993; Cunningham and Jones 1996; Folkestad, 2000). Participants in this study were given cameras and asked to take pictures of their food and eating practices. Four undeveloped cameras were returned and two developed sets of photographs were given to me. Where undeveloped cameras were returned, participants were sent copies of pictures. Cameras, which were returned, had between

three and 20 pictures taken on them. In addition, developed sets of pictures contained between four and 26 pictures. Collier (1967) suggests that photographs can be helpful in interviewing. However, none of the cameras or developed pictures were returned in time to be used in interviews. Harper (1994: 30) acknowledges that the camera can be intrusive and therefore must be used within the wants, needs and cultural perspectives of the subjects. It was expected that some participants would not want to undertake auto-photography because of issues of confidentiality and sensitivity regarding sexuality. However, a number of participants who agreed to be involved found that they did not have time or they did not want to take pictures of food and eating. This could perhaps be attributed to the mundane nature of food which was not considered 'exciting' or interesting enough to be the subject of photographs.

5.4.9 Analysis

An integral part of documenting the research process is accounting for the analysis and interpretation of data (Boyatis, 1997; Silverman, 1993). This section is necessarily longer than the other sections as it incorporates a discussion of the use and justification of discourse analysis. The section begins by detailing the procedures used for coding the data, before moving on to address discourse analysis.

5.4.9.i Coding and categorising

The transcripts from the focus groups and interviews were read and reread to identify themes which were important and reccurring (Stewart and Shamdasari, 1990). The interviews, coupled interviews and focus groups were analysed during transcription. Shortly after they were transcribed a hard copy was printed and my comments, thoughts and initial observations were written in the margins.

Cote *et al.* (1993) argue that software programmes can assist the organisation of qualitative data. NUD*IST 4 was used as an indexing tool with themes and sub themes being formed using the data collected and subsequently used to code the data (Crang, 1997b; Gahan and Hannibal, 1998; Johnston and Carroll, 1998). Following initial analysis transcripts were imported into NUD*IST 4 for further coding. Large themes were identified and broken down into sub themes and these were broken down further where appropriate. NUD*IST 4 was used because of the available expertise and software in my department. However, prior to undertaking NUD*IST 4 training I was unsure as to the applicability and value of the package. After a training day the software was seen as an effective indexing system that supersedes Word processing packages in terms of ease of coding and retrieval. In this way NUD*IST 4 is used as a tool to aid the coding and categorising of transcripts and not as an analysis tool.

Categories and sub-categories were the nodes and sub-nodes within NUD*IST 4 and stories and opinions were collated in these nodes. Where interesting themes emerged which were not connected to existing categories free nodes were established. Each transcript was individually coded and then recoded when the precise categories and sub-categories were decided. All the transcript segments within the codes can be retrieved and brought together and these are indexed back to the original transcripts. Collating the information in this way enabled comparison between accounts of similar issues. Developments of thoughts and ideas were explored by returning to the original transcripts to establish the context of the segment under scrutiny (Catterall and Maclaren, 1997; Myers, 1999).

In this study there were two sets of coding in September 2000 and February 2001. In September two focus groups, three coupled interviews and nine individual interviews were imported into NUD*IST 4 and 82 themes and sub themes were created. These were placed within three overarching themes (general eating, heterosexism, research). The biggest and most interesting category was heterosexism. The remaining three focus groups and 12 interviews were imported into NUD*IST 4 for coding in February 2001. Following the February 2001 analysis four main themes were established and recognised

as the basis of the discussion chapters: everyday exclusions/othering; living with heterosexism; genderism; towns/cities. Although 'general eating' contained a lot of interesting accounts, I decided to focus on issues of power in everyday life. The 'research' theme was used to write this current chapter and Chapter 4 and, in this way, participants' accounts (in)formed these two chapters.

5.4.9.ii Discourse analysis

The indexing and categorising of transcripts is not the analysis itself 'but preliminary to make the task of analysis manageable' (Potter and Wetherall, 1992: 52). Discourse analysis was seen as more favourable than other forms of analysis such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as it does not assume a 'reality' which is to be discovered (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999). Similarly, content analysis only enables us to look at what was said and, therefore, is insufficient as it does not explore meanings (Myers 1999: 185). Discourse analysis incorporates more than the grammatical constructions of sentences and can be used to explore meanings within the texts of focus groups and interviews (Tannen, 2001). Moreover this form of analysis can explore how everyday actors 'enact power by representing the world in this way rather than that, how some accounts of the world influence other accounts, and why certain accounts fight an uphill battle to be heard at all' (Miller, 2000: 345).

Discourse analysis can draw together feminism and poststructuralism by recognising fluidity and diversity in texts yet keeping a political agenda. Therefore, this form of analysis is appropriate for this thesis (see Chapter 3). However, discourse analysis and poststructuralism have been accused of focusing on texts to the neglect of women's 'real' everyday experiences. Although Fairclough (1992) includes interviews, focus groups and photographs as texts, discourse analysis appears to focus on publications and commercially produced texts (e.g. Mills, 1998; Brickell, 2000). Whilst these studies are important, little work has been done on texts produced for research, such as interviews

and focus groups. If we are to look at language in the context of everyday practice, these texts are salient considerations.

Discourse analysis was used here to identify and investigate meanings of and power relations inherent within phrases and words used. This thesis uses discourse analysis to examine non-heterosexual women's accounts of their experiences and perceptions. Mills (1998) argues that it is important to explore discourses and texts beyond the identification of sexist language, which may not be allowed or desirable. She (1998) identifies, using discourse analysis, 'subtle sexism' and argues that complex explorations of power are important. This study uses discourse analysis to investigate 'subtle heterosexism' and genderism.

Discourse analysis rests on understanding words as productive (Miller, 2000). 'Discourse is a contingent, manufactured entity; there is nothing natural or absolute about its particular form' (Potter and Wetherall, 1994: 56). Moreover, discourses, in different ways, position people (Fairclough, 1992: 4-5). Discourse analysis is used in this thesis to give insights into taken-for-granted power relations which are manifest in how women speak of their everyday lives (Miller, 2000; Remlinger, 1999). The accounts are analysed both in terms of what was said and how it was said.

Diaries and pictures taken were examined in relation to established codes and themes. The comments/observations/notes sections of the diaries are particularly pertinent to the discussion chapters and these were read in relation to accounts formed in interviews and focus groups. Diaries were coded in relation to the themes discussed above and discourse analysis was used to explore the relevant texts.

Participants' accounts formed in interviews, focus groups and through the use of diaries will be read as stories produced in these particular contexts. Within the text extended quotations will be used to reinforce the context and attempt to reaffirm the intended meaning (Catterall and Maclaren, 1997). Moreover, on occasion the quotes from both focus groups/coupled interviews and interviews are used. These quotations illustrate that these methods form particular accounts and both are used not for the purposes of

triangulation but to give further depth and insight to the accounts. The stories and narratives formed in and through the research methods are categorised and interpreted by me to produce the discussion chapters. Consequently, the stories which I will tell in these chapters are my interpretations which are seen as partial and amongst a number of possible stories that could be told.

5.4.10 Feedback

This section will detail the procedures used for feeding back to participants (see also Chapter 4 section 3). Participants in this study have been given a number of opportunities to comment on this research process. During the individual interviews and focus groups participants were asked what they thought of the study and the methods used. The majority of these comments were positive. When women participated in focus groups/coupled interviews and individual interviews transcripts were returned between the focus groups/coupled interviews and the interview. They were accompanied by a letter explaining abbreviations and comments (see Appendix 3.1) and confirming arrangements for interviews where they had been made. In individual interviews participants were asked about these transcripts. After the final interview the transcripts were sent to participants along with a letter, an evaluation form and a self-addressed envelope (see Appendix 3.2, 3.3). The evaluations were anonymous and aimed to give participants an opportunity to reflect on the research process without the pressure of face-to-face interaction. Six evaluations were returned and they have been positive (see Chapter 4 and Appendix 6). Due to the use of personal networks, there was also the possibility of informal feedback when I met participants in social and other settings (see Chapter 4 section 2.2). Where this occurred I wrote down their comments at the earliest available opportunity.

Two papers which have been written for conferences have been returned to the women who were quoted in them, along with a letter (see Appendix 4.1, 4.2). The letters

explained what the paper was used for and included a stamped addressed envelope in which women could send their comments. Ruth answered this with an insightful letter which was used in this chapter and Chapter 4. I then wrote her a letter thanking her for her comments (see Appendix 4.3). Participants who were included in the article in *Diva* (Browne, 2002) were contacted individually. Due to the time gap between their participation and the final thesis participants often do not wish to be further concerned with the study. Therefore, unless participants requested a copy of the final version of the thesis or parts of the thesis, they have been 'left alone'! This is significant because this research has asked a lot of participants and it is important not to overburden participants such that they become annoyed and are dissuaded from participating in future research.

5.4.11 Research Ethics

The participants were kept informed of all aspects of the research. This began with an initial letter outlining the research and a short summary of the research methods (see Appendix 1.3). The opportunity was available for participants to see the RD1 (Research Degree research proposal), which outlined the study. The aim was to enable participants to have a clearer idea of the research, however no participants wished to see this (see Chapter 4 section 4.1). Moreover, the procedures for feedback to participants kept them informed throughout the duration of the study (see section 4.10). Participants were asked to sign consent forms and this ensured that they knew that what they were saying would be used as part of a research project and they gave me permission to disseminate the findings.

As this research is sensitive, issues of confidentiality are central. The locations of the interviews and focus groups was confidential and I did not tell anyone where I was going. This was seen as 'safe' for me as a researcher because the interviews and focus group were conducted with people I knew or who had been recommended by trusted friends or acquaintances. However, as a safety measure I did take my mobile phone.

Throughout the research I did not identify participants to each other or to mutual friends. However, on occasion participants wished to tell each other of their involvement. This was a feature of snowball sampling as participants knew each other even if they were not involved in the study at the same time. I, however, ensured that I did not disclose any information to other participants. Participants also left transcripts in their houses and on one occasion one participant's mother read some of the transcript. It can, therefore, be seen that confidentiality is not entirely a matter for the researcher. Participants can also disclose details of their involvement in the study.

However, as a researcher, I did not disclose participants' details either to other participants or in the write up and dissemination of this research. Participants' names and any identifying details have been excluded from this study with names and place names being disguised. Consequently, there is a limit to the background information which can be made explicit. This becomes particularly apparent in Chapter 9 regarding the places where participants lived. No details of towns 1 and 2 or cities 1 and 2 are given. Whilst these details would have helped the presentation of analysis, protecting participants' identities was more important.

To further preserve confidentiality and put participants at ease, I did all the transcribing myself and did not show the transcripts to anyone. Transcripts were anonymised both in terms of names and places (including names of towns and cities, pubs, clubs and streets). On the communal computer in the postgraduate office they were password protected. This was not possible in NUD*IST 4 but in order to get to the transcripts files six other folders have to be opened and therefore the transcripts are relatively hidden. Additionally, transcripts were not shown to anyone, such as colleagues or my supervisor, in order to maintain confidentiality. However, and as a result, there was no possibility of interrater reliability (Boyatis, 1997: 147). This is where another researcher is asked to check the codes are 'correct' by recoding transcripts. To do this would have been to compromise participants' trust in me. All these procedures related to confidentiality and described above were outlined in the initial information sent to participants (see Appendix 1.3). I also verbally explained issues of confidentiality to participants.

5.5 Conclusion

The central tenet of both this chapter and Chapter 4 is that research is (re)made and performative. Understanding that all accounts are partial these chapters have attempted to move between method and methodology to document some salient issues which (re)formed this thesis. Having established a distinction between methods and methodologies this chapter began by addressing the grey areas between this binary. It explored friends in research and how participants' accounts altered the direction of the study. Running through both chapters are issues of power relations, which are seen as fluid and produced in the betweeness of space. The chapter outlined further details regarding the methods used, understood in terms of interactions which formed research spaces. A note of caution is acknowledged, as was argued in Chapter 4, in that the messiness of research and our interpersonal relations are never fully knowable and therefore we can never have 'transparent reflexivity'. I recognise the accounts reflected upon here are partial and are based on my perceptions and understandings not only as a researcher, but also as a friend.

The thesis now moves on to explore the empirical accounts produced through the techniques outlined in this chapter. It is contended that the discussion chapters, along with the methods and methodologies chapters, are also partial. This, however, is not to negate their relevance but instead to contend that they are one of a number of stories that could have been told. Throughout these chapters references will be made to my positionality, power relations in research and the interactions between different research techniques. In this way, the discussion chapters develop the concepts discussed above and recognise the formation of these chapters rather than understanding them merely as neutral 'findings'.

Chapter Six

Everyday Heterosexisms In Food And Eating Spaces

Chapter outline

6.1 Introduction

Dominant ideologies of heterosexuality as 'normal' and 'natural' often result in the othering of non-heterosexual women in everyday spaces. Understanding non-heterosexuality as other to heterosexuality, this chapter investigates processes which daily reconstitute non-heterosexual women as different and out-of-place. As power relations are seen as constitutive this chapter will also explore the (re)formation of bodies, identities and spaces/place in the context of food and eating. Food is understood as an everyday occurrence which is often taken–for-granted but is imbued with power. Food places are also conceptualised as important everyday sites of power relations. Considerations of food consumption enable a (re)conceptualisation of theoretical power relations through accounts of everyday realities (Probyn, 1999a; b). Consequently, this chapter and the next will focus on the spaces of food and eating.

This chapter, like all the discussion chapters, will begin with the literature which is salient to the issues discussed. For this chapter the literature on geographies of consumption and food will be addressed. Having outlined social and cultural geographies in Chapter 2, here the relevant aspects of geographies of consumption will be highlighted. This chapter will go on to outline how the understandings of power introduced in Chapter 3 will be conceptualised in terms of everyday exclusions. The literature on food consumption practices deliberately follow a discussion of power. This is because discussions of food and eating have centralised issues of power. Following this introduction and contextualisation of food and eating the chapter will then explore women's experiences of everyday heterosexisms. It will begin by investigating 'it' in terms of how non-heterosexual women define and discuss both their sexuality and heterosexism. The chapter will then integrate the literature on food consumption and 'it' to investigate three eating places; restaurants, home and work and non-heterosexual women's accounts of these spaces.

6.2 Geographies of Consumption

Chapter 2 section 2.3 introduced particular aspects of cultural geographies important to the thesis and here relations between identities and consumption will be further examined (c.f. Barnett, 1998). This serves as a brief contextualisation of food and eating and as such only addresses a small amount of the vast body of literature which exists. P. Crang (1996: 63) argues that consumption is a 'series of 'entanglements'' and horizontal displacements (rather than vertical assumptions of 'depth' and 'authenticity') that are both formed by and form consumers. Consumption as a process is understood as constitutive forming and informing subjectivities and identities (Jackson, 1993; Jackson, 1994; Miller *et al.*, 1998; Miller, 1995). For example, Adkins (2000) contends that images are commodities and their consumption is constitutive of self-identities. Moreover, Ritson *et al.* (1996) contend that consumption can (in)form group identities. However, although geographies of consumption focus on materialities, as Miller (1995) notes within the geographical and sociological literature on consumption, there has been an absence of the consumer, particularly as an active agent. Consequently, although various consumption environments can be understood as constituting identity and producing meanings which give shape to everyday life, within geographical considerations the environments rather than the consumer have been the focus. Geographies have investigated sites of purchase, from the shopping mall (Goss, 1993; Hopkins, 1990; Morris, 1988), to the high street (Jackson, 1998) to car boot sales (Gregson, 1994; Gregson and Lowe, 1997). However, the dialectic relationship between environments beyond sites of purchase and the constitution of the consumer remain underexplored.

Barnett (1998: 380) contends that one common (and 'poststructural') thread in cultural geographies is the 'recognition of the close relationships between language, power and knowledge'. However, similar to the problematisation of postmodernism, Gregson (1995) purports that material inequalities are absent from geographical consumption literature. She argues that 'geographical literature on consumption highlights clearly the ascendance of the cultural, as opposed to social, theory in social geography' (Gregson, 1995: 139). Geographies of consumption are seen as textually based and grounded in

meaning, identity and ideology (M. Crang, 1997b; Gregson, 1995; Jackson, 1993b; Nash, 2000; Thrift, 1997). There is an absence within these accounts of 'ordinary people' and of analysis of structural social inequalities such as gender, class and sexualities (Gregson, 1995; Jackson, 1993b), a critique often been levelled against postmodern and poststructural theories. Jackson (2000) notes the absence of materialities in the consumption literature, although, his emphasis on commodities does not mirror Gregson's in terms of a focus on social structures. More closely aligned to Gregson is McDowell (2000) who contends that there need to be new ways of theorising complex connections between the 'economic and the social/cultural, between material inequalities, new social divisions and representations of power' (McDowell, 2000: 18). I am dubious of Gregson's (1995) use of the term 'structural', which implies fixed prediscursive 'structures', and McDowell's (2000) emphasis on the economic. Nevertheless, it is clear that analyses of consumption (and culture more generally) should include explorations of power.

With a focus on informal cultural power (that is the power which exists in everyday practices) (c.f. Aitchison, 2000a; b; c; d; 2001a; b), this chapter investigates 'heterosexism' in the daily consumption practices of food and eating. Mort (1995: 574) argues that consumption as 'a meta-concept is used to explain the most disparate phenomena' and searching for one holistic theory is problematic. Consequently, it is acknowledged that this is a partial account with aspects of consumption and culture tentatively, and briefly, outlined for the purposes of highlighting relevant points. Namely that consumption is performative and explorations of everyday consumption practices can provide insights into the relations of power, which not only constitute consumption, but also (re)form bodies, spaces and identities through these performances.

6.2.1 Food

Hilary: I suppose food is a part of everybody's make up. Everybody's got to eat. And it is [a] very, like, pleasurable pastime and it can be a romantic pastime.

(Hilary, individual interview)

166

Geographies of food and eating are contextualised as a subsection of geographies of consumption. Food and eating practices are often imbued with meanings beyond simple nutrition. Grunert (1994: 64) argues that eating behaviours of individuals, groups or cultures are phenomenon in which physiological, sociocultural, psychological and economic factors interact. Food has been investigated in many different arenas from production to consumption. Although there is a vast literature in geography which investigates the production and consumption of food (see Grigg, 1995 for a review of some of this literature), this chapter focuses on certain social and cultural aspects of foodscapes as the spaces/places of food consumption (Yasmeen, 1996). Cultures of foodscapes exist, as D. Bell and Valentine (1997) illustrate, from the site of the body to global arenas. This section moves from the macro scale of culture to explore 'families' and food practices and finally examines the micro scale of the body.

Social and cultural geographies of consumption have recently developed to explore food and eating. Within geographies of food, there is a particular body of literature that focuses on local, national and global 'cultures'. Cook et al. (1999: 226) see food practices as constituting and reflecting cultural differences. They therefore argue that food is an arena of practice in which British and global cultures are formed and established (Cook et al., 1999: 225). Visser (1999) similarly contends that a nation's diet produces its culture and the fluidity of these concepts is illustrated through changes in diets and definitions of 'exotic' food (for further discussions of 'exotic' food see also Cook and P. Crang, 1996; May, 1996; Visser, 1999; Yasmeen, 1996; Zukin, 1995).

Prior to the recent social and cultural geographical interest in food and eating practices, sociological investigations examined food and eating at the site of the nuclear family. Early examinations illustrated the gendered nature of food preparation and consumption in the nuclear family. These often link women with the kitchen and food preparation (Charles and Kerr, 1986; Delphy, 1979; DeVault, 1991; Murcott, 1982; 1983; 1984). Food preparation is seen as reflecting and (re)producing the family and femininity (Beardsworth and Keil, 1997; Yasmeen, 1996). Murcott (1984: 179) argues that 'food symbolises the home, a husband's relation to it, his wife's place in it and their

relationship to one another'. Therefore, food is seen as producing particular social structures and familial relations. Moreover, Burgoyne and Clarke (1986: 162) purport that the context of eating was located in a wider 'framework of interpersonal and structural relationships'. Thus, food and the social relations constitute the 'family' and can reflect wider social structures.

Kremmer *et al.*'s (1998) exploration of co-habiting and newly married couples problematises earlier studies, such as Charles and Kerr's (1986) and Murcott's (1982, 1995). Kremmer *et al.* (1998) contend that food practices within the couples in their study were negotiated rather than located within pregiven structures. Moreover, Greishaber (1998: 664) argues that the meal was an 'ongoing contestation, struggle and negotiation of power relations amongst family members'. Valentine (1999a; 1999b) illustrates that food consumption takes multiple and diverse forms. She (1999a; b) challenges early understandings of homogenous families demonstrating that food is a negotiated terrain and can (re)produce, as well as reflect, the norms of society. However, outside of a small section in Valentine's (1993c) study of lesbian geographies in which she addresses 'social spaces', studies of food and eating have not addressed discourses and materialities of heterosexism. Moreover, as Kennison (2001: 124) contends, there is little discussion in D. Bell and Valentine (1997) (or indeed other studies) of eating in unconventional 'home situations' such as same-sex couple arrangements. The sociological and geographical literature on food and eating has focused on heterosexual arrangements. This chapter addresses this lacuna by centralising non-heterosexual women's experiences.

Aitchison (2000b: 16-17) contends that, in general, geographies have shifted their focus from the global and the regional to examine everyday spaces, including the site of the body. D. Bell and Valentine (1997) argue food is about the body. Food can affect bodily contestations perhaps most explicitly in terms of weight and the 'ultimate' body (see for example, D. Bell and Valentine, 1997; Bordo, 1993; 1997; Fallon *et al.*, 1994; Heenan, 1995; Valentine, 1999a; c; d). Feminist analyses of eating disorders locate bulimia and anorexia within discourses of patriarchy, often ignoring other social differences

(Thompson, 1994). The homogenisation of women's diverse experiences under the term 'patriarchy', as has been argued in Chapter 2, is problematic as it ignores the implications of class, race and sexuality. Similarly Thompson (1994) illustrates that the body is classed, raced, gendered and sexualised through, often contradictory, food and eating practices and bodily ideals. Probyn (1999a: 423) goes on to contend that 'bodies that eat connect us with the limits of class, gender and ethnicity' (and I would add sexuality).

Whilst the focus here is not on anorexic or bulimic bodies, the notion of the body as a site of contestation is important. As with consumption, eating is conceptualised as performative, incorporating, and daily (re)constituting, spaces, bodies and identities. Moreover, as the literature on food and the family has illustrated, eating is a relational activity which not only forms individuals but also produces social groupings through relations of power. Food consumption is an often shared activity and bodily practices are therefore 'inflected by wider sociospatial relations' (Valentine, 1999a: 349).

The everyday sociospatial power relations of sexualities in the context of food and eating are the focus of this chapter. As food is an aspect of everyday life, a focus on food and eating practices can 'return our attention to the forces that regulate our everyday lives' (Probyn, 1999b: 224). Burgoyne and Clarke (1986: 152) argue that the mundaneness of food has led to it being obscured from sociological investigations. The daily 'facts' of eating are all too often taken for granted, both within daily life and in academic study, along with the power relations that (re)produce everyday food spaces. These power relations are conceptualised in terms of the social-cultural nexus, which acknowledges the importance of cultural practices that produce daily life (Aitchison, 1999a; b; c; 2000a; b; 2001b). This chapter will now explore power, language and discourse.

6.3 Let's Talk about 'it'[1]: (Re)naming Subtle Othering Processes

Irigrary (1983) contends that language is masculine and women exist outside of the symbolic economy of this language (see Chapter 2 section 2.2). However, language is also heterosexual, with its other 'homosexuality' similarly existing in a subordinate and often invisible position. J. Butler (1990, see Chapter 3) asserts that power relations form viable subjects and these subjects must be within the imaginable domain. Consequently, as Skeggs (1997a: 121) contends, 'we do not all have equal access to positions in discourse' and some may not have any access at all. Ainley (1995: 146) argues that lesbian language is 'underdeveloped'. In contrast, 'gayspeak' refers to the (re)appropriation of language by gay men and/or the creation of a new and safe language which gay individuals (read men) can use (see for example Bunzel, 2000; Cox and Fay, 1994; Valentine, 1993a). Here 'gay speak' is not the focus. Instead, this section explores non-heterosexual women's use of language, highlighting the inadequacy of our present everyday vocabulary to describe non-heterosexual women's experiences and understandings.

In my study, women had different ways of describing their sexuality. Whilst some participants used the terms lesbian, gay or dyke, others did not. Emma and Jean, for example, spoke of 'the situation' and defined themselves as different to 'the norm'. Similarly, Helen spoke of being different to 'the norm', although she problematised the term normal by asking the question 'What is normal?' (Helen, individual interview). At other times the word 'it' was used as a substitute for the term gay, lesbian or dyke, or there was no word used:

They [her friend's older relations] are perfectly willing to accept *that we are* but they just don't want to be associated with *it*.

(Ruth, individual interview)

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[1] In the main text it will be placed in inverted commas in order to highlight the word's importance. However, in the direct quotes from participants it will be italicised to emphasis the word in that context.

Ruth uses the term 'we are' and presumably here we could put in a label such as lesbian. This is an ontological statement, which constitutes herself and her friends, although she then uses the word 'it'. This separates Ruth, as well as her friend's parents, from the negative associations of 'it', to describe this sexuality. Although her friend's relations are happy with who Ruth and her friend *are* they are not happy with 'it'. The value judgements associated with 'it' can be linked to the potential reactions of significant others:

Julie: I know like through friends like my family that they think *it's* sick see. So I just presume that everyone else thinks *it* is sick. Or they don't know how they are going to react to *it*. Or when they do know they are just not really bothered. And they just you know, they don't really want to know or talk about *it* cos they just think 'oh its your life but I don't want to discuss *it*, *it's* not an issue.

(Julie, individual interview)

In this whole section about her family, Julie never uses terms such as gay or lesbian. 'It', however, is used constantly to infer Julie's sexuality and to discuss her parents' reaction to 'it'. 'It' is used in an ontological sense, in that what fits into these 'its' is 'being gay/lesbian'. The labels are avoided but the connotations are the same, ranging from disgust ('it's sick') to non-recognition ('don't want to discuss it').

Within a 'safe' environment of research conducted by a non-heterosexual/lesbian/gay woman (see Chapter 4 section 3, for a discussion of my positionality in the research) with other non-heterosexual women there was little use of these labels. Some women actively chose not to define themselves, others to use a particular label. However, most of the participants appeared to use 'it' without consideration. I wish to suggest tentatively that although the terms 'lesbian', 'dyke' or 'gay' are available they are not used in an everyday context. It is impossible to know why, but I would like to offer two suggestions. Firstly, due to my sample these women do not identity with these labels (see Chapter 5 section 2). Secondly, the absence of labels in everyday language can be attributed to the non-usage of the word 'heterosexual' in everyday life. Similar to everyday environments where heterosexuality is often assumed (c.f. D. Bell and Valentine, 1995a; D. Bell *et al.*, 1994; Valentine, 1995a), in lesbian/gay environments,

non-heterosexualities do not have to be labelled/named. Instead heterosexuality becomes the 'other':

Marie: I started going, 'this is Zena [friend], she's a heterosexual, she's a breeder' ... oh in nightclubs everything. I just go, 'oh yeah this is my friend Zena she's a breeder'. (Laughter)... She met like a group of gay friends of mine, 'I went this is my friend, she's a breeder', [they said] 'oh love.' (Laughter) 'Someone has to be'... 'Fair play got to keep it going somewhere along the line, haven't we'.

(Marie, Hilary, Susie, focus group)

Here Marie challenges her friend who has previously introduced her as a lesbian (see Chapter 7 section 3 for a further discussion of transgression). When in a group of 'gay friends' Marie marks heterosexuality as different, something to be mentioned, labelled and with derogatory associations. In this way, Marie does not have to label her sexuality, and in this group 'it' is formed as 'normal' in relation to the abnormal heterosexuality, which needs to be labelled and commented upon.

Where women used labels they often seemed forced and uncomfortable. This may be, in some cases, because of the reluctance to succumb to the stigmas of deviancy associated with these labels. 'It' can be distanced but once one *is* lesbian/gay, 'it' becomes personal. 'It' is often seen as a non-person, in terms of the use of the third person pronoun, not you or me but 'it'. Consequently, this 'it' can be depersonalised and separated from the self. Whilst one often has to be either gay or straight, women do not wish to have the negative connotations associated with 'it'. I do not here want to portray notions of a 'false consciousness' (see Chapter 7). Nor do I want to suggest that some women do not come up with unusual and innovative strategies to describe 'it'. Instead, I wish to argue that these women recognise that the subtle processes of othering, which are the focus of this chapter, are associated with 'it' (in this context 'being' gay/lesbian).

There are everyday terms to describe 'being' lesbian/gay. However, often othering processes that do not fit the category 'homophobia' are not contained within everyday discourse. Where vocabulary and common sense norms fail to describe the experience of being outside heterosexual discourses, understandings and experiences are referred to

172

but can remain unnamed. These processes of exclusion can be described as 'heterosexism' but this term was not used by any of the participants in this study. Instead, linguistic gymnastics were sometimes performed to describe women's understandings of their everyday environments:

Mel: You'd go to a nicer restaurant. You'd go to a more upmarket restaurant where people don't sit across a restaurant from you and go 'what the fuck la, de da de da'.

Helen: well I do.

Mel: You go to a restaurant where people keep themselves to themselves because they have enough respect for everybody in that restaurant not to start having a go, start making loud comments at people.

Helen: but how do you know that? There is still going to be some stupid fucking bird looking across at you, giving you that. I mean you shouldn't be bothered about *it*.

Sandra: no you just ignore *it* then. Don't you?

Helen: exactly.

Sandra: cos they're fucking not worth knowing.

Helen: exactly. Ignore *it*, ignore *it* yeah, but somebody like me I can't ignore *it*.

(Mel, Helen, Sandra, focus group)

This passage illustrates the different workings of cultural heterosexist power. Mel argues that in certain restaurants, which she describes as more 'upmarket', individuals would be constrained by societal norms such that they would not shout homophobic abuse. The codes of manners and respect she describes she associates with the 'upper classes'. However, Helen contends that what bothers her is not overt homophobia but subtle looks which (re)place her as other, something to be gazed upon. Here the 'it' she describes is heterosexism, something that can perhaps be ignored. This is because, in contrast to the overt nature of homophobia, heterosexism can take subtle forms. Therefore, those around you may not notice 'it', although as Helen points out, you yourself may be aware.

In this thesis the gaze is conceptualised in Foucauldian terms (Foucault, 1977). That is, the gaze or potential gazes of others are used to police the boundaries of self within

173

'common sense' norms. By observing what is not 'normal', 'normal' is established and, as J. Butler (1990a, 1997a) suggests, each position inverts the other (see Chapter 3). In this context the gaze is used to police the boundaries of heterosexuality as 'normal' and thus (re)place us as deviant or other. Although Mel and Sandra argued that heterosexist behaviours such as staring can be ignored these performances may be designed to be noticed and taken heed of:

Janet: they are just really rude because, first of all *it* starts off quite quietly. (KB: m) And you know *its* they kind of make *it* a bit subtle. And then as the meal goes on and probably after they have had a bit more to drink and stuff you know they get quite loud. And they get you know they are just taking the piss basically. And they're all looking around. And they are all watching you... Constantly there are people watching so it's just, *it* just makes you feel uncomfortable.

(Janet, Lorraine, focus group)

(Individual interview, 2 weeks later)

Janet: but it's just when they take *it* too far and start talking about you and making you notice, you know. You know that they are talking about you and they make *it* obvious you know. They are not polite enough to keep *it* quiet. ... Whatever they think I don't give a shit what people think. It's just when they start making you aware of *it*, then that's out of order.

(Janet, individual interview)

Staring and under-the-breath comments (and even louder comments) are used to police Janet and her partner's behaviours. The gaze from other people is prominent and noticeable and 'it' makes Janet feel uncomfortable. Moreover, the comments made are designed to be heard by Janet and her partner but they are not directly confrontational. Here the term 'it' can again be substituted for the term 'heterosexism' or perhaps more accurately 'their heterosexism'. This heterosexism is enacted through othering processes such as watching, staring at and commenting on Janet and her partner. What is important is that these processes are subtle. No one is shouting at Janet, nor are they physically attacking her. Instead they are making her feel out-of-place by making their opinions of her sexuality as deviant (defined in relation to their normality) known to her. This can be conceptualised as the use of cultural power, in that 'liberal' structures and codes do not

allow for overt discriminations, yet subtle processes of exclusion and othering still occur in relation to common sense codes and norms (c.f. Aitchison, 1999c). These performances are outside of and beyond everyday language but can still be understood within discourses of hegemonic heterosexuality.

There is clearly a lack of an everyday expression to describe othering processes, which are not overtly homophobic acts. Whilst, homophobia is common within discourses, the term heterosexism is not:

Leanne: I don't know I don't think about *it*. I suppose when we are shopping together, just because I got used to always having to deal with *it*.

(Coupled Interview: Leanne and Nat)

Adam (1998) contended that experience is mute without being given sense within discourses. Here, the experiences of heterosexism are not named but again can still be conceptualised within discourses of hegemonic heterosexuality. If we substitute the term 'it' with heterosexism, it becomes clear that heterosexism does exist, unnamed. Moreover, dominant discourses of heterosexism are apparently accepted and pass unnoticed because of their frequent manifestations in everyday spaces. Leanne does not question that she is othered and the subject of surveillant gazes in the supermarket perhaps because 'it' has become commonplace. She apparently accepts that her relationship with another woman is not validated by society and this has become an aspect of her everyday life. Consequently, heterosexism is often 'the problem that has no name' (Probyn, 1996: 25) and this can mean that 'it' is not perceived as a problem.

Even without a name heterosexism is still an aspect of daily life. Consequently discourses which render heterosexuality superior to its other, may not be named but this does not mean they do not exist. This thesis will explore two 'meanings' of 'it.' Firstly, how the term is used in lieu of terms such as lesbian. Secondly, and more importantly, the employment of the word in the absence of everyday terms to describe processes of heterosexism. The thesis, in Chapter 8, will discuss how 'it' can be used to describe a different from of experience, that of genderism. Thus, the term 'it' can represent

unnamed diverse discriminations. This chapter will now explore discourses of heterosexism in relation to the materialities of women's everyday food and eating practices in three sites; restaurant, home and work.

6.4 Restaurant Spaces

In the restaurants people would stare at Stephen, and although the girl would pretend not to notice, Puddle would know that in spite of her calm, Stephen was inwardly feeling resentful, was inwardly feeling embarrassed and awkward.

(Hall, 1928 *The Well of Loneliness* 1997 reprint, pp. 243)

This section will address non-heterosexual women's feelings about othering processes including staring in restaurant spaces. Eating out has been addressed in relation to consuming the 'other' and exotic cuisines (see for example D. Bell and Valentine, 1997; Cook and Crang, 1996; May, 1996). Public eating practices are strictly regimented and can be indications of class and family backgrounds (Visser, 1986; 1992). Zdrodowski (1996: 655) argues that for overweight women eating out is 'fraught with anxiety and problems'. However, the social processes that form the spaces of eating out have yet to be fully addressed, particularly in terms of sexualities. This section will explore 'it' through some of the feelings and experiences of eating out that the participants described. The power relations, which are central to these experiences, are those described by Foucault. These have been detailed in Chapter 3 and here I wish to highlight that power relations may be 'permanent in their effects if discontinuous in their actions' (Foucault, 1977: 201). Consequently, it is irrelevant if the women are being observed, what is important is that they *feel* that they are.

Valentine (1993b) argues that restaurant spaces are related to intimacy and heterosexual romantic dating. The space of the restaurant can be understood as being heterosexualised, with going out for a meal being seen as 'something (heterosexual) couples do':

Emma: The thing is and that because [in the restaurant] it's mostly [heterosexual] couples and that are geared up for the kinda romantic whatever and all you want is your bloody something decent to eat and a drink. *It* creates an atmosphere and *it* creates an atmosphere for straight people. D'you know what I mean? ... At the end of the day it's totally full of heterosexuals.

(Emma and Jean, coupled interview)

KB: how did you feel in the restaurant and stuff?

Ruth: amm felt quite awkward cos you were surrounded by [heterosexual] couples and I think it's obvious that people know that you are not just friends... If I go to a pub I feel fine with it, its like going to pubs it's a social thing like groups of people go. I don't know what it is, but I think when you go for something to eat it just feels different the whole environment feels different.

KB: in what way?

Ruth: All I know is that I can sit in a pub with someone I am going out with, partner or whatever, and I don't feel awkward in the slightest. But if I am sat in a restaurant, perhaps it's the whole thing of eating is like, meals are traditionally associated, you go for meals with a partner, don't you?

(Ruth, individual interview)

Both Emma and Ruth see restaurant spaces as heterosexual coupled spaces. Rather than being a structural constraint or an overt exclusion, the cultural formation of restaurant spaces makes them 'feel' uncomfortable and out-of-place in the atmosphere for 'straight' partners. These uncomfortable feelings, or as another participant described it 'on edge', were not related to the food-as Emma says she simply wants some food. Rather the (hetero)sexualisation of most restaurant spaces creates 'an atmosphere for straight people' and (re)places non-heterosexual women as other. These feelings do influence the enjoyment of a meal, illustrating the social formation of food and eating spaces within particular norms.

Women who are eating with their female partners can be othered spatially within the confines of the restaurant:

Gina: The only place I came a little bit close to feeling uncomfortable was (name of restaurant) cos they always put lesbians in one corner... I don't know if it is deliberate or not but you sort of like walk in there now and its like, 'are we going in the lesbian corner then? Yeah thank you!' (Laughs) ... There's one

corner and it's sort of like at the far [end of the restaurant] and it's by the window. But I've eaten in there with my ex before Susie [girlfriend at the time], and we used to go out quite a bit for food, and every time we went to that (name of restaurant) they put us in that same corner. No matter how busy or quiet it was. And a few times, well quite a few times, we've walked past and you walk past and you are like 'lesbians'. So they really do go 'lesbian corner'...

KB: is it one of the nicer tables or is it?

Gina: no I mean it is just by the window. I mean I quite like it cos it is by the window. I mean it is definitely sort of its right at the back, its right in the corner but it's by the window ... I mean I don't know if it is a deliberate policy or what, but they do seem to put lesbians in that corner.

(Gina, individual interview)

Valentine (1993b: 405) contends that, when eating out with female partners, the women in her study have been given 'out of sight tables'. Here Gina identifies a table in a restaurant where she is constantly placed and identifies other lesbians as being placed there also. However, rather than being 'out of sight', it is in the window. Perhaps the 'lesbian corner' is by the window because it places the women in the gaze of passers-by. By placing lesbians under the surveillant gazes the hope may be that they will 'behave themselves', i.e. not show physical affection towards each other. On the other hand, perhaps placing Gina in the window seat is a compliment indicating that she is a 'desirable' customer, perhaps highlighting the restaurant's 'tolerance of diversity'. In either case, as a result of being continually placed at a particular table Gina felt that she was marked as 'lesbian', and therefore felt uncomfortable. Thus, even where the gesture may have been a compliment, Gina still felt she was marked as different. Moreover, seating arrangements within a restaurant can be problematic:

Janet: going out to eat? (KB: yeah) like I said you're just, just conscious you're just always aware of how you look together. And you know you want to, about you know especially when you are going out to eat *about where they seat you and stuff like that you know.* ...You don't want to be sat *in the middle of the restaurant* where people are instantly made aware of you. ... I'd want to sit where maybe I couldn't be seen or couldn't be heard. You know I don't want people to hear what I am saying, especially if I am sat there with Margrit [girlfriend at the time]. You know like I said I have only been out for dinner with her once. And it was nice that they, that they kind of sat us somewhere where, it wasn't that busy and it was in the window which I didn't really mind. You couldn't really see us inside the restaurant. I mean I don't really care what people walking past are going to say. I think cos its not, its not near me its not anything to

do with [me]. It doesn't affect me at all what people look, walk past the window and think. But within the restaurant when you have to sit in that environment and *you can't get away from it*. And its nice to kind of be somewhere where you can't be seen and can't be heard and people can't see you and they don't notice you therefore they don't notice and make judgements about you.

KB: oh that's really interesting so you would want to sit out of the way?

Janet: definitely I mean, ... I wouldn't like to sit somewhere people instantly walk into the restaurant and notice me (KB: yeah). So I wouldn't want to sit right by the door. And you know I wouldn't want to sit anywhere where I'd draw attention to myself. So I will always you know just conscious about where I sit. If we go to sit at a table you know, I'd always want to sit with my back to the wall so I can see people but so someone's sat in front me so they can't actually see me. ... Just so I don't draw attention to myself I suppose. But also so I'm aware I can see everybody else in the restaurant and I can see whether anybody is kind of noticed us or making any comments about us. Because I'd, you know I'd hate for it to be behind my back. And so I can't see and I'm not aware of it. Whereas I'd much rather be aware of it.

(Janet and Lorraine, focus group)

Different tables can have different connotations in terms of the gaze. Janet expects to be stared at and commented on in the space of restaurants particularly when she takes her partner. Although this can come from many sources, passers-by as well as those within the restaurant, Janet sees those within the space of the restaurant as more important because they have a longer time to stare and make comments. The meal was described by a number of participants as an enclosed space, often associated with notions of feeling 'trapped'. The area of the restaurant, which one occupies for this period, is salient because one will mostly remain at one table for the duration of the meal. Consequently, patrons to restaurants are spatially delimited in terms of movement, often only leaving tables only to go to and from restrooms. Where one is seated can become central then to the experience of a meal. Janet differentiates the spaces of restaurants in relation to how visible she is. Particular places within restaurant spaces are problematic because she will be noticed and thus judged and potentially subject to othering processes within the space of the restaurant. She stresses that she wants to see but not be seen or heard, so she does not want to be seated near the door or in the middle of the restaurant. Discourses of normal are materialised through the demarcation of the 'other' by stares and comments. Janet does not question that she will be the subject of othering gazes if

she is visible. She, however, believes that her difference will be less noticed in different places within a restaurant and feels more comfortable in less visible spaces.

Feeling out-of-place in a restaurant can be materialised through particular processes with normative (hetero)sexualities identifiable in the practices associated with going out for a meal:

Pat: no she's [her girlfriend at the time] more worried what people are going to think. And some like who tastes the wine when people [waiters and waitresses] come over and that just makes me laugh. Cos they're looking at you as if one of you say 'I'll taste the wine' and I just I sit there a look and them. And [be] like '[I] don't know what you are talking about' and just like try and wind them up. (KB: laugh) But she [girlfriend at the time] gets really embarrassed about things like that. Whereas I'm more I just take the piss out of them.

(Pat: individual interview)

It is customary at a meal that the man would taste the wine. Leanne, for example, spoke of how in a heterosexual relationship she expected the man to order the wine and that it was the man's 'job to feed me' (Leanne, individual interview). In the home women are traditionally associated with food provision (Murcott, 1983), however, in the public sphere men can be assumed to be the 'providers' and 'protectors'. In the absence of a man Pat (above) believes that there is confusion on the part of the waiters/waitresses. The traditional associations of man as 'protector' and woman as 'protected', hence he tastes the wine and makes a decision as to its suitability, are challenged by a couple consisting only of women. Traditional assumptions based in specific heterosexual power relations are disrupted. In this way, the space of the meal is constructed and, as Emma above says, is constructed for straight people, making non-heterosexual women feel othered through heterosexual assumptions of normality. Consequently, the materialities of a meal are experienced through and made sense of within heterosexist discourses which render restaurant spaces heterosexual. It is interesting here to note the different reactions to these othering processes addressed more fully in Chapter 7. Whereas Emma and Jean would like to challenge the assumption that they are a couple, Pat wishes to

confront it. Similarly, where Pat 'takes the piss' the othering processes, such as staring and whispered comments, embarrassed her girlfriend.

6.4.1 'Everything has a Time and Place'[2]/Everything is Produced in Time and Space

Janet (above) began to explain some of the temporal aspects of meals when she discussed being trapped within restaurant spaces for a period of time. Spaces of meals are therefore produced temporally and the feelings associated with the space of restaurants are also fluid:

KB: do you feel comfortable eating out?

Jean: no not really.

Emma: I do. I think, *of course* as long as it is during the week ...

Jean: ... Some people are like that aren't they? They just stare and they try to suss you out and Saturday night if you're [with your]

Emma: Partner

Jean: partner or whatever and they just think *that's unusual.* And they stare over and I just think 'oh I can't relax'. I can't be myself. I am just worried about what people are thinking and ... I think 'oh Emma let's go home' (laughs). ... I think I've got worse as I've got older, cos I think when you get older people expect you to have like a family and kids. I think when I was younger, I wouldn't have thought about *it.*

(Emma and Jean, coupled interview my emphasis)

Here, assumptions of compulsory heterosexuality differentiate restaurant spaces temporally. As they have become older, Emma (42) and Jean (36) feel that societal pressure to exist within the framework of heterosexuality has increased. 'It' (being gay) was not considered when Jean and Emma were younger. These pressures are manifest in the space of the restaurant where they feel subject to judgmental heterosexist gazes. The

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[2] Marie, focus groups with Hilary, Susie

181

relevance of their age reflects Heaphy's (2001) assertion that age is an important consideration. The week is also differentiated temporally with Saturday nights inscribed as 'heterosexual' thereby positioning Emma and Jane as 'out-of-place'. This is not as pronounced on weeknights: at these times Emma and Jane can 'pass' as friends because they perceive that restaurants are used not only by (heterosexual) couples but also by friends, work colleagues and so forth (see Chapter 7 section 3). During the week space within the restaurant is occupied by people with diverse relationships and not mainly couples. Consequently, Emma and Jane feel less 'out-of-place' because their identity as a couple is not presumed. These perceptions are not enforced through overt homophobic attacks. They are imposed by common sense understandings of restaurants as particularly heterosexual at specific times.

As I have contended above, the spaces of restaurants can be sites of surveillance, as it is a space where people can sit for extended periods of time enabling individuals to observe and be observed. However, feelings of being observed vary temporally, as well as spatially:

Julie: what eating out in public places?... Well I do get nervous actually.

KB: do you?

Julie: yeah I think, I think its cos of who I am and I am gay. ... I think I look different to everybody else I just feel like everybody's

Andie: especially if you do go to a posh restaurant

Julie: I get really, really like anxious and you know it makes me do silly things.

Andie: do you feel, do you as well feel like slightly paranoid like everyone is watching ya? Especially as you walk in somebody shows you, like the waitress takes you to the table or whatever. And you can see people just like looking at you and muttering. And I know they could be talking about anything and everything but you just assume they are talking about you, you know they're saying, 'well look at her, you're a lesbian' or you know 'she looks a bit out-of-place here or whatever'.

(Andie and Julie, focus group)

Andie and Julie argue that they feel 'paranoid', 'anxious' and 'nervous' in a restaurant where they feel people are watching them and talking about them as they enter the

restaurant. Although Julie and Andie have no 'proof' that they are the subjects of other patrons' conversations, this does not negate their feelings of otherness. I argued above that the seating arrangements in a restaurant could cause anxiety and discomfort. Here getting to your seat is problematic where Andie and Julie unwillingly draw attention to themselves because they are passing through the restaurant. This is a space where patrons sit for the most part of their meal. Where one is already conscious of the heterosexuality of restaurants, this can be an uncomfortable if short-lived experience:

KB: is there anywhere you feel uncomfortable eating?

Leanne: I think there's everywhere you walk into you have got the first, the first five minutes I find.

Nat: I don't really care *it* really doesn't bother me … if people are going to stare then they will but after five minutes they'll find something else to talk about and look at.

(Leanne and Nat, coupled interview)

Nat accepts that as she exists outside the heterosexual norm, and because she chooses to go out for meals with her female partner, she will be the subject of conversations and surveillance. The word 'it' (heterosexism) is used, implying that there is something to be bothered about. She then attributes particular characteristics to this 'it', which include both non-verbal (staring) and verbal (discussion) communications. Moreover, Leanne and Nat identify a temporal frame for 'it'. They argue that the 'uncomfortable' (out-of-place) feelings are limited to the first five minutes and that after this there is something else to look at. Consequently, othering processes are temporal and, returning to Foucault (1977: 201), it is not that women *are* being watched that is important but that they *perceive* themselves to be.

6.4.1.i Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day, 14th of February, is a Western celebration associated with couples. It is (apparently) an opportunity to express, romantically, one's love for another. Through

commercialisation Valentine's Day has become associated with gift and card giving between people in a couple. Other rituals can also be associated with Valentine's Day:

Nina: it probably was quite an odd day (Mary: yeah) cos that's like if you go out on Valentine's Day you are making a

Mary: statement

Nina: statement that you are couple aren't you really so it must have been quite odd.

(Nina, Mary, Michelle and Di, focus group)

By going to a restaurant on this day Mary and Nina are 'making a statement' and publicly being seen as a couple. In the space of restaurants their bodies are produced within a coupled identity due to the association of Valentine's Day with couples. However, they describe this experience as 'odd' implicitly suggesting that Valentine's Day is for heterosexuals and they are 'odd' in relation to the heterosexual norm. More specifically spaces of restaurants are produced for and produce heterosexual couples on Valentine's Day.

KB: cool, what about Valentine's Day?

Lorraine: ... we [Lorraine and her ex-partner] went out for a pizza at our usual sort of pizza place. We were really, really embarrassed cos it you know *it* was so obvious. Cos you don't just go out with your mate really on Valentine's Day to a restaurant. With they were all two tables and they were all candles so we went in. ... We were going 'oh my god'. We sort of sat down and. But then at the end of the night he [the manager] came up and gave us like two Valentine cocktails like 'these are for you'. And we just died so. But it was more funny than uncomfortable, cos people did sort of look and you could totally just see people's minds ticking over. ... *It wasn't anything bad we didn't get any hassle or anything it was just funny. But I did feel more uncomfortable cos it was like more obvious. But once I got over that it was fine.*

(Lorraine, individual interview, my emphasis)

Lorraine's experience of Valentine's Day illustrates the production of restaurant spaces as heterosexual on this day. Candles, which have been mentioned earlier as symbolising a couple, as well as tables for two, produced the restaurant they went to as a space for heterosexual couples to have a romantic and intimate meal. In this space 'it', in this case Lorraine and her ex-partners relationship, was 'obvious'. These women were marked as

a (different/other) couple through public recognition (the Valentine's cocktail) and stares. Lorraine illustrates that processes of heterosexism may not be 'anything bad' but there are continuing feelings of discomfort and embarrassment as a result of feeling different or 'other'. Here, when women transgressed heteronormative space they felt uncomfortable. Lorraine describes this as 'funny', denying and downplaying feelings of discomfort and embarrassment. Perhaps this is partially because the processes which make her feel like that are not named or tangible: there is 'nothing bad' to be upset about. What have to be 'overcome' are her feelings of difference caused by perceptions of inquisitive gazes. Focusing on her feelings, which she can in part control, the othering processes, which can cause them, are not named and can be ignored or negated.

6.5 Work

Having examined restaurant spaces, this chapter will go on to explore spaces associated with work. Work, as paid employment, is often seen as distinct from 'leisure' both temporally and spatially (Haywood *et al.*, 1990; Parker, 1983; Rojek, 1995). This distinction has been problematised within the literature and definitions of work as paid labour contested (Domosh, 1998; Hakim, 1998; Witz, 1993). Drawing on the previous conceptualisation of cultural heterosexist power, this section will contest the public/private divide and the (hetero)sexualisation of the work place in the context of food and eating.

Some studies of work which have focused on men in the work place and have been described as being 'positively biased' (Hakim, 1988: 103). The public/private divide separated public paid employment from private unpaid domestic labour, and often assumed the home as a site of leisure (Bernardes, 1997; Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1990; Harhill, 1997; Witz, 1993). In this conceptualisation of work, the importance of the home was ignored (Domosh, 1998). There is now a recognition that social life depends on invisible unpaid work often carried out in the home (Allen, 1997: 64). Since

the 'feminisation' of the workforce, feminists have explored the 'double bind' that is where women are undertaking the majority of domestic duties as well as paid employment (see for example Finch and Mason, 1990). Consequently, work and leisure, public and private are mutually interdependent and may not be distinguishable.

The dichotomy of work and leisure spaces within early geographical literatures on sexualities has predominantly implied that workspaces are not central in the formation of sexual identities (D. Bell and Valentine, 1995a). The basic tenet underpinning early investigations was that where one's 'true' sexual identity was suppressed in the workplace, it could be expressed in gay social consumption spaces (Levine, 1979; Warren, 1974). The literature on sexuality and organisations has challenged this (Hearn and Shepard, 1989; Oerton, 1996). McDowell (1997) has contended and illustrated that workplaces, principally in the post-industrial service industries, construct and are constructed through performativity and the gendered and sexualised stylisation of bodies. Adkins (2000: 213-214) builds on this argument asserting that the workplace is a site for the writing of lesbian bodies and consequently important sites in regard to politics and sexualities. Consequently, performances at work produce bodies, identities and workplaces. These performances can be consciously enacted maintaining the public/private, leisure/work dichotomy:

Emma: I don't like to socialise with [people I work with]. But if there's something going on at work I will go to it but I don't want to have a social life with people I work with.

KB: why's that?

Emma: because I don't have anything in common with them the only thing I have got in common with people is with my work ...

KB: what about like at work meals and things like that where you have to bring your partner? What do you do?

Emma: I never bring one. I'm the only person that doesn't bring my partner.

KB: are you?

Emma: yeah.

KB: and what do people say?

Emma: Nothing. I mean I have never been like that and say I think as times kinda gotten on. I think when I first kinda, ... moved here it was like everyone kinda, everybody was working and there was a whole group of us that like say were in a similar situation I think. ... It was like I came down here as a single person so therefore I would need time to adjust and whatever. And then I think it kinda gradually clicked that you know yeah, there's something not quite right here. ... We got given training and if anybody said anything ... I would report them because I wouldn't take the risk. ... I have seen things done before you know what I mean? And like kinda say somebody higher up than me and [there was a guy that was gay and he lost his job]. As soon as I got a snitch of it, I would be right in there report it. ...

KB: does that mean you don't really tell them anything about yourself?

Emma: not a bloody thing no.

(Emma and Jean, focus group)

Emma is very guarded about her sexuality at work, fearing that she may lose her job if anyone overtly mentioned her sexuality. To this end she separates what she terms her 'social life' from work. Where potential crossovers between public and private could occur, for example at a work meal or lunch breaks, Emma polices these boundaries by not inviting Jean or discussing anything outside of work. Moreover, although Emma was in a relationship with Jean prior to moving to Town 1 she enacted a single identity at work. Consequently, Emma consciously (re)creates a public/private divide separating her relationship with Jean and her social life from those she works with. In this way, she mirrors the public/private divide identified in gay and lesbian literature, which suggests that one's 'true' identity is suppressed at work (for example Levine, 1979; Warren, 1974).

Break times during the working day are often sites of 'leisure' and as such cross the work/leisure boundaries by bringing leisure to work through informal interactions. However, people experience leisure (and work) differently (Adkins, 2001; Aitchison, 2000b; 2001b; Green et al., 1990; McDowell, 1997). One aspect of some individual's work breaks is their interaction with other colleagues transgressing the work/leisure divide. This can be an opportunity to discuss their lives outside of work. However this is not always the case, as these extracts from Stevi's diary suggests:

Monday lunch in the staff room with workmates: Just keeping up with the conversation –occasionally talking. Keep my private life very much to myself.

Tuesday lunch in the staff room with workmates: Topic of 'lesbians' comes up – just keep quiet and try not to go red.

<div align="right">(Stevi: diary)</div>

Work breaks are not comfortable spaces for Stevi. As with Emma, Stevi looks to avoid mentioning any aspect of her 'private life' making and maintaining it as 'private'. She avoids topics about sexuality and feels othered and embarrassed when they are mentioned. This makes work breaks far from pleasurable and questions their definition of 'leisure', but as she is not working, these times are not 'work'. These times exist between 'leisure' and 'work'.

Schneider (1984) contends that some lesbians did not separate their work and social lives but on occasion integrated their social networks into work. In this study, not all the women kept their private lives to themselves during their work breaks:

Julie: Even at work I am still quite conscious of what I say. I'm sort of gradually building up to being me sort of thing but it's just a case of treading carefully and what you can get away with and what you don't think you can get away with …

KB: what do you mean 'get away with'? …

Julie: how far whether you are crude and vulgar in a heterosexual sense or a lesbian sense or a gay sense or whatever. … Like it annoys me that I can't say 'oh my girlfriend' or 'I met a really nice [girl]' d'you know what I mean? I have done it and this one woman I work with now she's just like 'oh okay. Did you have a good time?' You know? But I really feel that

Andie: they're not that interested, but if it was a bloke

Julie: if it was a bloke, they'd be well interested.

<div align="right">(Julie, Andie: focus group)</div>

Schneider (1984) argues that there are class differences which influence whether women are open about their sexuality at work. Whereas Emma works in the service industry, Stevi does not. Class based assumptions are thus problematic, but they do hold some

<div align="right">188</div>

resonance here. Andie and Julie do work in what can be termed 'working class' jobs and are both open about their sexuality at work. However, contrary to Schneider (1985), who suggests that this improves relations with work mates, this can cause tension. Whilst having a girlfriend is not understood as 'wrong', it is perceived as inferior. Consequently, although their workmates do not indicate a problem overtly, through subtle cultural processes they render Andie and Julie as other. McDowell and Court (1994: 733) argue that power relations in the workplace do not solely operate in terms of 'bureaucratic domination from above' but also through notions of appropriate behaviour, which form acceptable workplace practices. This is clearly drawing on Foucault's conceptualisation of the disciplining of bodies in relation to particular norms (see Chapter 3 section 3). Here heterosexism is working in subtle ways and apparent tolerance of difference may hide the hierarchising sexualities. Where heterosexuality is believed to be 'better', non-heterosexual women are inferior and their 'personal' lives less important and less valued. Consequently, as Adkins (2000: 215; my emphasis) contends, 'where sexual diversity is visible the *terms* of such visibility are crucial'.

There were three women in this study who were or had been teachers and their dilemmas were similar to Emma's (above). They feared that because of Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988), which bans the 'promotion' of homosexuality in schools, their jobs could be in jeopardy if their sexualities were known. The terms of their visibility were clear. This not only affected their work and whom they would bring to work functions, it also influenced how they enacted their sexualities outside of workspaces:

Val: its funny since I have been teaching here, before I started to talk teach here, I used to walk down the street with anybody female, mate or just whatever and used to link arms. Not a problem or put my shoulder or whatever. I wouldn't be so intimate as to sort of kiss or hold hands. But now I work here I'd never do it. And I always used to really criticise my mates who work here and go 'oh you are soft you are.' They'd be 'no because if kids see that' but now I am like that. And my views have changed about that because I know I've been subject to comments to slanderous sort of remarks at school, kid comments. ... Why fuel the fire? ... I also think it would look, I know I'd feel strange watching my teacher walking down the street linked arms with another female or with their arms around each other shoulders. I just think what is appropriate and what isn't appropriate (KB: mm). But then you could say that you go into a bar, and you know I waiting for the day that I walk into a gay bar and one of my kids is just sat there and

goes 'alright miss how are you doing?' And you know somebody has asked me that before. And I think I would just say, just I'd just act quite normal about it cos then you have got to ask them why are they in there.

Val, Jillian and Carol all spoke of being teachers and restricting who they brought to work functions and how open they were about their sexuality at work. Here Val blurs the boundaries between work and her personal life, arguing that she would police her behaviour in the street in case she would be seen by one of her pupils. Her professional life is therefore influencing how she performs her identities beyond the boundaries of school. Although she would never be 'intimate' in the street she now will not even link arms with another woman in case she is the subject of 'kid comments'. Moreover, even the 'safe' space of gay clubs hold dangers of incursions by students. Here, workplace norms are not confined to the workplace. Norms of behaviours also (re)form Val's social identities and embodiments, transgressing the public/private, work/leisure divides.

Appropriate workplace behaviours can (re)form social identities, by influencing what is considered appropriate in other public places such as the street. In this way, processes of power do not make identities and bodies separately and spatial processes are also significant. Additionally the performances described above illustrate the fluidity of boundaries which have to be policed and maintained. Chapters 2 and 3 contended that dualistic constructions are unstable and fluid, here these formations have been contested as women live *between* public/private, work/leisure, professional/social binaries. Consequently, formations of bodies and identities are not only spatialised, interconnections and spaces between apparently distinct constructs form and are formed through performances of bodies and identities (c.f. Rose, 1999).

190

6.6 Home

The home is rich territory indeed for understanding the social and the spatial. It is just that we've barely begun to open the door and look inside.

(Domosh, 1998: 281)

Domosh contends that the home is important for understanding social processes. Here I want to contend that the home is not simply a static place but is instead both formed and formative (Valentine, 1999c). Having contested the work/home dichotomy in terms of work, this section will further explore the public/private divide in terms of the 'home'. Here the 'home' is simplistically and problematically understood as the place one lives (abode). It is recognised that as a concept 'home' has many more connotations and meanings, however these will not be addressed here (see Valentine, 2001).

Historical and sociological literature has shown the home to be a space which is critical to the gender constitution of society (Gregson and Lowe, 1995). Masculinist humanistic geographies separated work and home, and conceptualised the home as a place of safety and belonging (Rose, 1993; Warrington, 2001). However, as domestic violence illustrates, the home may not be a site of safety and can be and is dangerous for many women (and some men) (Pain, 1997; Warrington, 2001). Consequently, rather than a site free of power, the home is constituted between household members through practices of power, such as food preparation (see section 6.2). These practices (re)produce both the home as gendered and sexualised in addition to reproducing gendered and sexualised identities (D. Bell and Valentine, 1997; Johnstone and Valentine 1995). Valentine (1993b: 400) argued that in the parental or matrimonial homes lesbians may be excluded or made to feel out-of-place or abnormal (see also Johnstone and Valentine, 1995). Rather than readdressing sexualities within the family home, this section will explore living arrangements outside the nuclear family in the context of food and eating.

Some participants saw where they lived as 'safe' and they (re)created a public/private divide, literally and metaphorically:

191

Jean: we feel really relaxed, don't we, at home? And we can shut the curtains. We can shut the blinds and we can do whatever we want and we don't have anyone staring at you. You can say what you want do what you like and you won't be. You know you don't have to worry about whether you know waiters or waitresses you know are listening to what you're saying. And you are very conscious of when the come up to the table and their kidding on they are putting out the potatoes and you know they are trying to figure you out.

(Jean and Emma, coupled interview)

Jean argues that by shutting the curtains they gain a sense of privacy where Jean and Emma are not subject to inquisitive gazes or comments. They feel that their home is their space, as one participant put it 'my environment' (Helen, focus group with Mel and Sandra). This privacy, which is created by preventing visual invasions of their home (shutting the curtains), makes Jean feel more relaxed. Other participants spoke of the home as being 'comfortable', 'safe' and even 'erotic' space when privacy can be established and maintained:

Michelle: eating in it can be, I don't know, erotic cos you can [use] food in different ways. It can be romantic cos your home and its safe the environment is different. And it can be fun cos you can end up having a fight with it and stuff like that. There's all different ways of doing it.

KB: what do you mean safe?

Michelle: I don't know when you are out you are vulnerable to people and people's opinions. I mean say if I was to take you out for dinner romantic restaurant yada, yada, someone could walk up to us and say 'look I hate fucking lesbians, get out of this restaurant.' But if I was to sit in this room and lay a table for you with a candle its safe. There's no way the meal could be ruined or the evening could be ruined.

(Michelle, individual interview)

Michelle sees her home as 'safe'. It is a place where she is not threatened by homophobic abuse which could potentially destroy a romantic meal between two women. Her conceptualisation of the public spaces of restaurants contrasts with her understanding of the private spaces of home. In the latter Michelle feels in control but in the former there is a sense of potential invasions and incursions into what can perhaps be understood as 'personal' space between two women. These incursions are threatening,

challenging Michele's sense of 'safety' and making her feel vulnerable when she is with a partner.

Not all of the women spoke of the places where they lived in terms of comfort, safety or privacy:

KB: so what was it like eating in (name of university halls of residence) and stuff when you were together?

Michelle: you two always sit together

Mary: I actually hated it.

Nina: yeah really hated it.

KB: why?

Mary: hmm don't know just all these complete twats like staring and laughing and

Nina: making comments.

(Mary, Michelle, Nina and Di, focus group)

Individual interview, 1 month later:

Mary: oh right yeah, amm we used to get quite a lot of abuse

KB: like verbal abuse?

Mary: amm just looks and little comments just like, because we were sat just the two of us not because we wanted to sit just the two of us just because Pat had her block [people who lived in the same building as her]... we like always had to sit on our own.

(Mary, individual interview)

Here the experience of eating with a partner is very different to those described above. Mary and Nina lived together in the same halls of residence. However, they hated eating together in the canteen. As two women who were known to be in a relationship they were subjected to looks and comments and othered from seating arrangements within the canteen of their halls. The latter meant they felt excluded and that it was not out of choice that they had 'meals for two'. Mary terms this 'abuse'. In relation to the social-

cultural nexus (Aitchison, 2000a; b; c; d; 2001a; b) and Foucauldian (1977) conceptualisations of power, 'looks' and 'little comments' are understood as powerful manifestations of cultural power, especially when performed within or in accordance with significant social structures. Certainly these processes made Mary and Nina feel very uncomfortable, isolated and out-of-place.

Where houses are shared, individuals may have to take account of other people's opinions.

Janet: Eating with Edith [ex-girlfriend] in halls it was, we wouldn't ever, like we had a kitchen with like a just a massive table where we could eat but we never used to eat kind of there. We always used to go to my room and eat. Amm just because you know that people in halls wasn't particularly, you know, weren't particularly happy about *it*. And you know behind my back they would speak to Ursula that was in here. ... They'd kind of say well 'what does she do you know? What do they do when they are sitting there watching telly or you know they are having a meal or you know?' Just you know normal basic stuff. They are just so intrigued about you know that my eating patterns are going to be different and you know and whether I touch my girlfriends leg you know or whatever that you know they are really intrigued by it. So in halls I had to I really watched *it* and had to worry about *it*. Amm just because there was so many more people there and you know a couple of them weren't particularly happy. The boys used to get off on it you know. So that you know *we never used to eat in public.* ... We wouldn't really sit in the communal kitchen and like talk to people just because Edith felt uncomfortable and I felt uncomfortable cos she did. And you know people kind of watching you and like we were on the downstairs floor as well and people had to walk past the window and they'd be looking in and you know 'oh lesbians' and you know it would just be like the big topic of conversation in (name of hall). (KB: yeah) But here [shared rented house] it was completely different like with Margrit [her girlfriend at the time]. You know I am sat here and my housemates are fine with everything I do. ... I asked them I make sure they are okay with *it* and *I make sure I don't over step the mark at any time* and they are all okay, they are fine with it. ... I would much rather kind of be here and eat so I can, so I can be close to her. I can you know give her a cuddle or give her a kiss or whatever. Just cos it just, its just so much nicer and I feel comfortable with it and I know all my housemates are comfortable with it so its not, you know its fine ...

Lorraine: but as in cos I am someone who is quite sort of affectionate and likes to hold someone's hand or likes to sit. Not like over the top. Not like mmm would go up and snogging someone front of them ... but just little things that I do at home without even thinking about. Like just going if you are watching telly with someone or something and just putting your hand on their knee. Stuff like that that I would never do, never do out in (Laughter, KB: aww, Janet: aww) restaurant. I know I just like little things (laughter) but I would always think ... sharing with my housemates. For me its so natural, cos I have been in a three-year

relationship to do whatever I want to do. Just sort of put your arm around someone or just to sit sort of right next to them, but with Helen I always think 'oh shit you know'.

Janet: you have to watch it though cos your housemates.

Lorraine: yeah well I do think that

Janet: might not be

Lorraine: no all of them are fine Eve [housemate],

Janet: yeah

Lorraine: Eve, I might do cos I know she's uncomfortable with *it*. ... I don't think the gender is an issue, which it is a little bit with me. But all my other housemates are fine with *it*. One of my mates isn't particularly, she pretends she is [fine] but I can tell she is feels really uncomfortable.

(Janet, Lorraine, focus group, my emphasis)

Janet lived in self-catering halls, in contrast to Nina and Mary, who were in catered halls. Nevertheless, her feelings of discomfort were similar. Janet divides the halls she was in into 'public' and 'private' areas, preferring to spend time in her room (private) rather than the public domain of the communal kitchen. This was because she felt that she had to consider other people, who would comment on her sexuality and she did not want to be the topic of conversation. Moreover, Janet was conscious of her girlfriend's feelings ('because Edith felt uncomfortable and I felt uncomfortable cos she did') and this, in part, formed her feelings about communal spaces. Even in the 'private' space of her room, however, Janet was the topic of conversation as it was known that she was in there with her girlfriend and the men in her halls were 'intrigued'. Whereas Emma and Jean could shut the curtains and with that action felt they could shut out the world, Janet's activities were never fully 'private'. When Janet moved into a shared house she argued that she was more comfortable eating with her girlfriend in communal areas. However, although Janet describes her housemates as comfortable with 'it', there are still particular codes within the shared house. She felt the need to ask her housemates if they were 'okay with it'. Moreover, she still polices her behaviour so she does not 'overstep the mark'. Similarly, Lorraine is conscious that her housemate is not comfortable with 'it' and is very aware of her physical contacts with Helen. She would 'always think' about how she shows affection when her housemates are around and

monitor how she behaves towards Helen. She is very conscious of this because when she was with her ex-girlfriend the latter lived alone. Consequently they did not have to consider other people's reactions to their displays of affection. Similar to Andie and Julie's (section 2.2) accounts of their workmates' reactions, Janet and Lorraine, whilst apparently being accepted, were still conscious of their difference.

Where women live alone and can 'shut the curtains' they can create their 'home' as a 'safe', 'romantic', 'erotic' place. However, 'home' can be heterosexualised and othered and this is not limited to the spaces of family homes (Valentine, 1993c; Johnstone and Valentine, 1995). For a number of students university can present the opportunity to escape from their family homes in order to 'to express their heart's desire' (Valentine, 1993c: 400). However, processes of othering can still make non-heterosexual women feel uncomfortable even in this 'liberal' environment. Where the site of meals is 'public' the processes described are similar to those discussed in restaurants and work spaces. In the hybrid spaces of halls and shared accommodation, where public and private are fluid, 'home' can be (re)produced as othering. Consequently, although rhetorics of 'inclusion' are supposedly apparent in 'liberal' University settings, subtle processes of cultural power can (re)produce women as 'other'.

6.7 Conclusion

Food consumption shapes spaces, identities and bodies through heteronormative codes which other non-heterosexual women. These othering processes can both literally and metaphorically place non-heterosexual women into the 'lesbian corner'. By rendering non-heterosexual women as different the processes, which I have described, not only produce them as other, but also those who are policing them as 'normal' (c.f. J. Butler, 1990a; 1997b). These processes of othering can be understood within an appreciation of cultural power relations where rules may not allow overt discrimination but subtle processes of power are apparent (c.f. Mills, 1998; Probyn, 1999a; b). Othering processes

are not purely theoretical or discursive; existing and living as the 'other' to heterosexuality is a daily 'reality' for many women and constitutes their experiences and perceptions. Understanding these experiences and perceptions requires us to move between dichotomies and dualisms such as work/leisure, public/private and discourses/materialities.

Throughout this research, it became evident that there is a dearth of everyday vocabulary to explain everyday power relations, particularly in terms of living outside heterosexuality. This chapter explored the term 'it', suggesting two uses: to describe one's sexuality, and in lieu of such words as 'heterosexism'. Moreover, words such as 'obviously' and 'of course' indicate the commonplace assumptions associated with heterosexism which often remain unrecognised. Discourses as more than language can place non-heterosexual women as other. Thus, the material experiences of food and eating places were formed through (unnamed) discourses of heterosexism (re)placing women as other even if they have no specific vocabulary to describe these processes. Discourses can materially other non-heterosexual women and render them as 'out-of-place' and the dualism of discourses/materialities is unhelpful in understanding these processes.

Massey (1992) explores interconnections in terms of global and local processes. Here everyday spaces and sites of bodies were understood as formed through daily interactions and interconnections which other those who do not 'fit' into heterosexuality. Women spoke of looks, comments and other processes that made them feel 'uncomfortable' and (re)produce non-heterosexual bodies and identities as other, often through subtle practices and emotions. Consider for example the 'lesbian corner' and the processes of othering that Julie and Andie experienced at work. Perceptions of being watched along with experiences of othering processes are salient and form identities and bodies. These processes and perceptions are spatially diverse differing between home, work and restaurants thereby illustrating that heterosexual space is produced (Bell *et al.*, 1994; Valentine, 1993a; b; c). Perceptions and processes vary temporally, rendering particular times in restaurants more problematic for non-heterosexual women (c.f.

Valentine, 1993a). This illustrates the fluidity and constructed nature of bodies, identities and spaces that can be understood as interlinked.

Othering processes can at times be ignored, negated or downplayed. However, this suggests that there is something to be ignored and consequently that social processes of power privilege one form of sexuality over another (re)forming consumption spaces:

Helen: people do say, oh they don't give a shit. I do think, 'of course they're going to give a shit for them to say, 'I don't give a shit'.

(Helen, individual interview)

Helen argues that although people may deny that they care about 'it', in this denial is implicit concern. In other words, there is something to 'give a shit' about. Moreover, she suggests that there are different ways of dealing with 'it'. The next chapter will move on to explore how women negotiate the processes that have been described and explored above.

Chapter Seven

Living With 'It': Passing Versus Transgression?

Chapter outline

7.1 Introduction

Having established in the last chapter that there is an 'it' (heterosexism) constituted through the common sense assumptions which privilege heterosexuality, this chapter will explore how women live with 'it'. The chapter is divided into two overlapping and informing sections. The first part of the chapter explores how some of the women negotiated heterosexuality by avoiding confrontations and othering processes (passing). The chapter then goes on to critically investigate overt enactments which contest heterosexuality (transgression). 'Passing' and 'transgression,' and the literature regarding these, will be introduced and addressed in the individual sections, thus this initial introduction is short.

Transgression and passing are understood within relations of power and, as was argued in Chapter 3, there is no outside to power. Moreover, as Chapter 6 has illustrated, our bodies and identities are produced within dominant codes and norms which vary spatially. The literature regarding the negotiation of sexualities is addressed in the individual sections because the literature can be understood as divided into the lamenting of the 'passing' lesbian and the celebration of the 'out and proud' lesbian. It has long been recognised that there are different means of addressing social stigmatisation such as heterosexism (Goffman, 1959; Troiden, 1979). This chapter aims to problematise the assumption of 'out as right' in both sections. The final section of the chapter will discuss the potentials and problems of both passing and transgression, intersecting the parts of the apparent transgression/passing dichotomy and further challenging the underlying good/bad dualism.

7.2 'Why should I?': Negotiating Othering Processes

Goffman (1963) argues that stigma marks discredited and discreditable individuals. The discreditable individual may hide the potentially stigmatising aspects in order to

manipulate the reactions of others. Berger (1992: 85) sees passing, in terms of sexuality, as the process by which gay people 'present themselves as heterosexual'. Passing can be consciously played or can be a passive process whereby hegemonic heterosexuality is assumed until contested. Whilst I agree with Berger's definition, following Ahmed (1999), all identities are conceived as acts of passing. In other words, as was contended following J. Butler (1990a; 1993a; 1997b) in Chapter 3, there is no 'original' identity, such as heterosexuality which is copied. Heterosexuality is not the original but rather an imitation and therefore passing can be understood as an imitation of an imitation (J. Butler, 1990a). The focus here will not be on the reproduction of heterosexuality, rather this section will explore the copying of heterosexual (re)productions.

Within the sociological and geographical literature on sexualities, perhaps because of the use of 'out' groups and individuals in sampling (see Chapter 4 section 2.1), the focus has been on transgressions and the importance of visibility is assumed. Valentine argues that the literature has 'ignored the fact that many lesbians and gay men conceal their sexualities and so 'pass' as heterosexual at different times and places' (Valentine, 1993a: 237). She (1993a: 246) asserts that lesbians use what she terms 'avoidance strategies' and goes on to outline how women negotiate time and space to 'pass' as heterosexual. Although 'the closet' has been examined (Brown, 2001), there is very little discussion of how non-heterosexual women negotiate their everyday identities and bodies within 'the closet'. Clarke (1981: 156, original emphasis) contends that whilst many women 'are only lesbians to a particular community and *pass* as they 'traffic among enemies'… they are sooner or later discovered'. Ainley (1995: 150-151) argues that lesbians who came out in the late 1960's saw those living a closeted existence as both 'ashamed (of their own sexuality) and shaming (to themselves)'.

Within the literature passing is often assumed to be negative. Passing is seen as negative because it does not challenge patriarchy, homophobia or heterosexism (Ahmed, 1999; D. Bell *et al.*, 1994; Munt, 2000; Valentine, 1993; Winchester and White, 1988). Moreover, as Hornsey (2002) contends, geographies of sexualities have lamented the absence of lesbian and gay enactments in everyday spaces. This is seen not only as invisibilising

sexualities but also as detrimental to lesbians' and gay men's quality of life and their mental health: 'Sadly, those acts may impede gay men's social, working, and business relationships and their ability to network with others' (Kirby and Hay, 1997: 304).

Despite Valentine's (1993a) assertions above, psychology literature has been attempting to document and theorise 'passing' since the late 1950's. Following Goffman (1963), Edwards (1996) characterises passing as a result of social stigmatisation. He sees it as a coping mechanism which is related to 'hiding'. This includes a denial of membership of groups or communities and 'a self-fulfilling negativism' (Edwards, 1996: 336). Passing can be seen as a strategy of avoiding stigma and leading a double life which requires constant monitoring (Huweiler and Ramafedi, 1998). Goffman (1963), and the psychologists who follow him, contend that this policing of behaviour demands a high level of anxiety. Geographies of sexualities have assumed passing to be negative in terms of societal acceptance of diverse sexualities. Similarly, passing is often conceived in negative terms in the psychological literature in relation to one's self-identity.

In contrast to the negative assumptions of sociological, geographical and psychological literature, some post-colonial literature has celebrated 'passing' as an act of transgression which disrupts the assumptions of race (Ahmed, 1999; Atkins and Marston, 1999). Similarly queer theory can, in some senses, celebrate passing as an act of resistance particularly when the 'true' identity is eventually revealed (D. Bell et al., 1994; Wilson, 1993; Williams, 1998). Post-colonial and queer understandings can see all forms of identity as acts of passing. Consequently, the disjuncture between 'true' identities and those that one 'passes' is seen to illustrate the fluid and performatively based nature of all forms of identity (Ahmed, 1999). This section will firstly explore different ways in which women negotiate 'it', before discussing 'passing' and 'false consciousness'. The discussion aims to problematise the assumption that hidden sexualities are negative and 'under the surface' waiting to be exposed. This begins from the premise that through performativity we construct ourselves, therefore, there is no self beyond our performativities.

Valentine (1993a) contends that women in the workplace use make up and dress to project a heterosexual identity. Chapter 6 argued, bodies and identities can be negotiated in different environments (restaurants, work and home) in relation to particular codes in order to avoid judgmental gazes. Valentine (1993a: 242) contends that women may project a heterosexual identity through 'deliberately playing a heterosexual role' or fitting in without reflecting on their actions or identities through the way they present themselves physically to others or, in other words, 'passing'. Here individual bodies can thus be stylised in relation to understandings of different (heterosexual) spaces:

KB: do you think like how you look has any influence on people's reactions to you?

Leanne: ... I tend to adopt. I know I shouldn't adopt, I *should be able to wear what the hell I like* and leave it. But I tend to be kind of like *anything for an easy life and just anything to avoid possible looks or confrontations.* So I dress as the occasion may suit (KB: mm okay) so in which case in company amm events I would probably go quite business like and slightly more feminine than I would I wouldn't really care if my hair was that messy and stuff if I went out just to (name of gay club) or somewhere I don't know why I probably just wouldn't care as much.

(Leanne, individual interview)

There is a feeling of frustration in Leanne's account as she would like to 'wear what the hell I like'. However, she wants an 'easy life' and to 'avoid confrontations'. Consequently, she adapts how she dresses to her understandings of the norms of particular occasions. Leanne contrasts spaces of gay clubs and pubs with business occasions and, like Jean, she relates these contrasts to gender. The feminising of bodies can be understood within the heterosexual matrix which dichotomises and polarises men and women and links feminine gender to female bodies (see Chapter 3 section 3.2). Here these women stylised their bodies in relation to the codes of particular spaces and in this way aimed to pass unnoticed (see the next chapter for a discussion of when women are not defined within 'feminine' codes). Therefore, for Emma, Jean and Leanne there was a clear correlation between how they stylised their bodies and the othering processes they would encounter. Valentine (1993a) contends that bodies are stylised to pass as heterosexual and Brown (2000) contends that the closet, as a space, forms performativities. Here Emma, Jean and Leanne illustrate that performativities, in terms

of the stylisation of bodies, are (re)formed in relation to the codes and norms of particular places.

The portrayal of a heterosexual body in particular spaces is often considered in individual terms. However, 'passing' can involve more than the stylisation of the individual body:

Virginia: There is no touching at all in a restaurant. ... It would make me feel uncomfortable the fact that people feel uncomfortable, so it's just a more pleasant way. It's very much a sub-conscious thing. I don't [think] 'oh I can't touch Stevi'. Its just that's what we are doing whereas when I've been out with men in restaurants you know I have touched their hands. ... With a woman, the most that I have ever done is sort of gaze into her into her [eyes]. You know, I've always been, when there has been touch involved so when we get up from the table it's very much a *'she's my friend' touch* rather than *'she's my girlfriend' touch*. Pat on the back touch or touch her shoulder or whatever, not sort of a long lingering touch. So *I try not to be overtly gay* cos *obviously* it's not accepted as much. ... *Obviously* [it] is more restricted for a gay couple cos what people would think about *it*.

(Coupled interview: Virginia and Stevi, my emphasis)

As I argued in Chapter 6, non-heterosexual women can understand themselves as 'out-of-place' in restaurant spaces. In these spaces physical contacts, which would indicate that two women are involved in an intimate relationship, can be limited. Virginia contrasts how she would act and has enacted a coupled identity with a man in a restaurant to how she acts with Stevi in the same space. Whereas physical contact with a man would be acceptable, Virginia feels that with Stevi physical contact would make those around them feel uncomfortable and this would then make Virginia uncomfortable. The enactment of a coupled identity is problematic because of what people would think about 'it' (in this context Virginia and Stevi's relationship). The common sense nature of these 'sub-conscious' performances and understandings is indicated in Virginia's repeated use of the term 'obviously'. Again this can be understood in the context of cultural power (see Chapter 6). Virginia appears to be negotiating the boundaries of sexualities such that through her embodied performances she does not offend or upset anyone. Moreover, her lack of physical contact with Stevi (re)creates Virginia's identity as not 'overtly gay'. Atkins and Marston (1999: 5) assert

that characteristics which are disclosed *or* hidden can become markers of identity. Consequently, as Virginia illustrates, performances between people, such as between individuals in a couple, can (re)make individual identities within particular (heterosexual) codes and norms. Spaces of betweeness, which were discussed in Chapter 4 section 3, thus form individual identities.

Along with individual identities, coupled identities formed between women can be *consciously* (re)formed in restaurant spaces:

Emma: depends where we are cos it is really weird. Usually Jean cos I say like say I think Jean will pay but like there's other occasions, going on holiday kinda you know kinda normal.

Jean: oh it's worse on holiday, worse on holiday.

Emma: then what we tend to do and that is kinda like if we look at the bill and that like say she gives me some money so she might give me a tenner right and that.

Jean: I am paranoid.

Emma: as if to say this is

Jean: and she gives me more money change.

Emma: she's paying towards her thingy that fucking tenner. A few times on a Saturday afternoon we've been to what's that Chinese restaurant?

Jean: (name of restaurant)

Emma: (name of restaurant) and because its sometimes its quite busy on a Saturday *it's a though the two of us have gone shopping spend together.* And what she does when it comes to bill she'll pass me some money and then like say after the bill and I pass her some money and she pays the bill as if to say we're paying half each because we are just we are out shopping together (KB: yeah). And in fact it's kinda, because it is more kinda normal people. And that like say, we're more paranoid than what they are and that say but we feel as though that is what normal people would do so that's what we do.

(Emma and Jean, coupled interview)

Here Emma and Jean negotiate the heterosexual spaces of restaurants by pretending to pay half the bill each rather than showing their relationship by allowing one person to pay. They attempt to replicate what they see as 'normal' (read heterosexual) people's practices, (re)creating the image of friends who shop together on a Saturday. As friends

they avoid the risks of identifying as 'abnormal' in contrast to the 'normal' heterosexual. In this way, their practices associated with eating (re)form their individual identities and their relational identity within particular heterosexual codes and norms.

The negotiation of heterosexual norms is not 'natural' but can be consciously learned:

Leanne: I think we are both kind of like just sort of sit down and talk and don't think we've even played footsie or anything (laughing). I think we have been quite sort of amm, occasionally I think we have sat closer so we've like you know our knees might touch or something. But it has never been a, I have never. A couple of times at the table you know when you have sort of been looking across and I have just thought 'oh she looks really cute I just want to give her a big kiss.' And I have sort of reached out my hand sort of to say 'I just want to tell you that I think you look really cute sort of thing'. And she's like [*demonstrates Nat taking away her hand*] and smiles at me instead. And I think 'bugger (laugh) I can't even do that you know.' And it makes me it is hard sometimes cos you just think 'its not fair' that I can't. Especially when you see the next couple at the next, straight couple in the next booth just like snogging each other's face off. Just not giving a shit. Just think 'bugger' you do. It is a bit of an annoyance but amm you know, I just *I'd rather not upset anyone*

(Leanne, individual interview)

Leanne is conscious of her difference to heterosexual couples and their freedom to express their affection for one another. She understands that enacting an overt non-heterosexual identity may 'upset' other people. However, this consciousness, and the policing of her behaviour, is partly a result of Nat subtly teaching her codes and norms. So, for example as with Virginia, eye contact, subtle touching of knees and smiling is acceptable but when Leanne leans across to touch Nat more overtly, Nat pulls away. In this way, Nat is policing her own body boundaries and the borders of their identity as a couple. Nat is Leanne's first girlfriend, however, and importantly, Nat has had previous relationships with women. Perhaps because of this Nat is more aware of hegemonic heterosexuality and the potential dangers of openly enacting a coupled identity as two women. Previous experiences (in)form Nat's enactments and, in turn, these experiences (re)form her relationship with Leanne. What is clear is that the enactment of their identity as a couple is relational (that is produced between Nat and Leanne) and within particular codes which can be learned. This process of teaching and learning can be seen

to (re)produce these codes. In terms of performativity, relational performances as interactions between individuals (spaces of betweeness) form fluid identities and bodies within learned codes.

Women used diverse strategies to negotiate 'it'. Along with bodies and identities, spaces can also be (re)used to avoid othering experiences:

Helen: I do care what people say about me or think about me. Even they might be complete strangers but I will still feel uncomfortable and that's why I don't feel that I need to put myself in that position. I mean I don't have to feel like that. So why am I going to go out for a meal and feel like that when I can prevent it? You know

KB: how can you prevent it?

Helen: well eating in most times or just like amm. I don't know I need to go find a gay restaurant I suppose (KB: yeah). That would be cool.

KB: why would that be cool?

Helen: you know be yourself that's cool. Just be yourself that's all. D'you know I'd like to do that. There's not many in (town 1).

(Helen, individual interview)

Helen avoids heterosexual restaurant spaces and draws on the security and comfort of the home as an alternative to the potentially alienating experience of eating out in heterosexual restaurants. However, Helen also recognises differences between restaurant spaces on the basis of sexuality. She contends that gay restaurants, similar to the home, can provide comfortable spaces where she can openly enact a non-heterosexual identity. Consequently, by avoiding particular eating spaces Helen also avoids potential othering processes. It could be argued that Helen is 'excluding' herself from everyday spaces and in some senses she is. However, as has been seen in Chapter 6, these spaces can be very uncomfortable for women who exist outside heterosexual norms. As Hornsey (2002) contends, we need to address issues beyond simple inclusion and explore the terms of those inclusions and even the desirability of being included.

In Chapter 6 it was seen that time can be negotiated such that some women did not go to restaurants on Saturday nights or on Valentine's Day in order to avoid being understood as a non-heterosexual couple. Whilst I understood and articulated this in terms of othering *of* non-heterosexual women in Chapter 6, here I wish to reconceptualise these as active strategies employed *by* women. When Christmas is celebrated it is often produced as a time to spend with your 'nearest and dearest'. It is often considered a 'family' occasion and can be used to define who is a 'member' of the family. Deciding where to spend Christmas can be a problematic time. Celebrating Christmas day on the 25th of December can be spatially and temporally problematic when families do not know about women's female partners:

KB: what about like Christmas and stuff like that?

Pat: cos my parents still don't know that I am gay and Pam's [ex-girlfriend] parents still don't ... it was right really weird. I went home to work and she went home to see her family. So it was like we were on the phone all of the time but we had not excuse to be with each other on Christmas. As far as they can see. I know I went up like after New Years Eve to see her but like really difficult. Cos every year Christmas is really difficult because *you can't*. It would be alright if my parents knew but I can't just say to them like, 'oh I really want to go and see like Holly or Beth' or whatever. I can never go and do that because they would be like 'why can't go one day without seeing your friend?' And I was like 'duh!' So we just had like a little Christmas before our own little Christmas or afterwards or something.

(Pat, individual interview)

Pat avoided potential conflict in her family home by not seeing her girlfriend on Christmas day, even though she wanted to. She felt she was constrained ('you can't') by her parent's lack of knowledge about her relationship. Pat's parents assume her girlfriend is a 'friend' and there is no reason that she 'can't go one day without seeing your friend'. As a friend Pat's relationship was not seen as being as important as her family during the Christmas period. Therefore, she was spatially separated from her girlfriend on the 25th of December. Pat saw this as 'difficult' and she, therefore, used temporal strategies to enjoy Christmas celebrations with both her parents and her girlfriend. She moved 'Christmas' from December 25th and celebrated 'Christmas' with her partner on another day. Consequently, understanding normative heterosexual codes within her family and understanding the risks of openly identifying as gay to her parents,

Pat negotiated her identity as girlfriend and daughter (Valentine and Johnstone, 1995). She did this by temporally appropriating the symbolism of Christmas on another day.

Women negotiated potential exclusions by (re)creating their bodies and identities through space and time as well as negotiating space and time. I believe that they wanted to avoid the problems of not being assumed to be in this group. Consequently, they negotiated other people's perceptions through their appropriation of bodies, identities and spaces. One theorisation of the negotiation of heterosexuality is the notion of 'false consciousness', where non-heterosexual women are unknowingly colluding in their own oppression. False consciousness is a psychological phenomenon where individuals hold beliefs that 'are contrary to one's personal/group interest and which thereby contribute to the maintenance of the disadvantaged position of the self or group' (Josh and Banji, 1994: 11). Individuals justify the system by subscribing to stigmatised stereotypes, which produce the oppression and perpetuate existing conditions (Josh and Banji, 1994: 14). Challenges to the existence of false consciousness began in Marxism and false consciousness was used as an explanation for why people do not question or contest class oppression. Such critiques were also used as a justification for the education of women within consciousness raising groups (Jost and Banji, 1994, see also Chapter 2 section 3.2). Within this study some women do not feel 'oppressed' and accept particular forms of othering processes as 'normal' because of their 'obvious' difference:

Mel: but if you like she had to be there [family meal] because she was Marcus's [brother] wife

KB: whereas Helen didn't have to be there?

Mel: no

KB: why?

Mel: because people don't know. And she's not, you know, don't know. People don't know about her and me. Some people that are there and *I am not going to create a weird situation* and if she doesn't want to go. I wouldn't have gone, if I had been placed in that situation. I wouldn't have gone because it is just uncomfortable.

KB: why would it be a weird situation?

Mel: I don't know. I want to go home now!

(Mel, individual interview)

209

Mel does not question that Helen will not be expected to attend family events whilst other partners will. She attributes this to the status of 'wife', which Helen does not have, although at the time of the interview she was Mel's girlfriend for over two years. Mel cannot describe why it would be 'weird' to have Helen at this family event. However, she does understand the consequences of inviting Helen when 'people do not know', and she thinks that the situation would be uncomfortable. Whilst this may be seen as 'false consciousness', in that she is not challenging normative codes and is perhaps colluding in heterosexist codes, I would like to suggest an alternative conceptualisation problematising 'false consciousness' and the negative associations of 'passing'.

The women often recognised the self-policing of their identities and the consequence of this policing:

Lorraine: I have never had *it* in restaurants or anything. But that's because I have never been openly in like restaurants or anything

(Lorraine, focus group)

Lorraine links the enactments of her sexuality and her experiences in restaurant spaces. She recognises that heterosexuality is hegemonic and, similar to all the women who have been quoted above, she negotiates these boundaries. Because of these enactments Lorraine is able to control individuals' reactions to her. She is not oblivious to the existence of 'it' (heterosexism). However, she is (re)creating the terms of this heterosexism and is able to limit the extent to which she is subjected to 'it' (heterosexism). By embodied performances of her identity Lorraine can (re)create restaurant spaces as 'comfortable'.

Lorraine: *It* does, *it* does cross my mind. Like what, not what people are thinking but you do sort of watch what you are doing a little bit. But nothing major *it* wouldn't stop me going out or anything.

KB: yeah but what. Do you watch what you are doing?

Lorraine: amm just like conversations I suppose. If you wanted to talk about stuff or any kind of physical intimacy. I suppose just little things I wouldn't do in a restaurant at all just because I would feel uncomfortable. As in I wouldn't go around town holding hands with some girl *not because its anything like shamed or any of that crap* just wouldn't do it. *Wouldn't see the point of drawing attention to*

210

something that I don't feel comfortable with people looking at I suppose. ... The thing is, I can't be bothered with all the hassle that goes with it. I just don't. *It's not worth it,* if it was worth it I would but its not (KB: yeah) so.

KB: what kind of hassle do you mean?

Lorraine: oh just people staring and making comments. Cos I know when I was working in (name of pub/restaurant) there was two girls that were just holding hands and stuff. And then there was family just staring this family, there was his family about eight of them. Just cos I was cleaning their table. Just going 'they can't do that in public that's disgusting' and they were just staring at them 'that's shocking behaviour'. 'Give it a rest guys' I was getting really fucking, cleaning their table like [demonstrates] (KB: laugh). But its just gives people something to talk about it. And they didn't have a clue and I just wouldn't want to feed their imaginations I suppose. *It's just not worth it.*

(Lorraine, individual interview)

Women spoke of a number of reasons why 'it was not worth it'. These ranged from employment (see Chapter 6 section 4) to older family members taking a 'turn for the worse' if they knew (i.e. having a heart attack because of the shock!). Here Lorraine argues that she knows of othering processes, such as staring and negative comments, because she has witnessed them directed at other people. However, she does not want to be subjected to these processes. Therefore, rather than being ashamed or embarrassed of her sexuality, Lorraine wishes to avoid being othered in everyday spaces. She does not restrict where she will go because of 'it' (read heterosexism) but she does police how she will behave in the spaces of restaurants and the street. Lorraine thus recognises that as a non-heterosexual woman she is 'other', within heterosexist societies. As Ahmed (1999: 93) contends, passing 'guarantees a form of social assimilation where the gaze of others only hesitates upon those that are marked as different'. In other words, Lorraine understands that she would be visible if she enacted a non-heterosexual identity. Lorraine does not want to be subject to the gaze and would feel uncomfortable 'drawing attention' to herself, but this does not mean she does not understand the terms of heterosexist society. Moreover, as she asserts, it does not mean she is embarrassed or ashamed of herself. Rather, she understands these normative codes and chooses to negotiate them. In this way, she is consciously policing her identity and embodiments within particular codes and norms, arguing that one form of 'it' (being 'out' about her

sexuality) is not worth another 'it' (heterosexism). In terms of performativities, the subject is not neutrally accepting codes and norms which (in)form her identities. Instead, subjectivities and norms are engaged in a dialectic relationship.

As I argued above, and in relation to the literature on sexualities, being 'out' is often celebrated and encouraged, and the processes I have just described are perceived as problematic as they do not challenge dominant hegemonic heterosexuality. Moreover, to 'pass' is perceived as potentially being eliminated, containing the depth of relationships, risking eventual disclosure and risking isolation (Atkins and Marston, 1999: 4). In the above examples the women did not overtly challenge heterosexuality, instead they negotiated the boundaries of sexualities. However, women's understanding of the boundaries and borders of acceptability enabled them to avoid heterosexist gazes and confrontations. Understanding women's performances, bodies and identities as 'false consciousness' is problematic. It denies that some women consciously order and organise their lives in relation to their perceptions of heterosexuality and in this way contest the terms of their oppression by negotiating codes and norms. Moreover, the concept of false consciousness does not recognise that passing 'may reduce more anxiety than it creates' (Edwards, 1996: 350). As Atkins and Marston (1999: 5) contend, passing enables individuals to have the potential to control information about the 'stigma'. In terms of performativity and power, rules are not understood as simply imposed. Instead, norms, identities and bodies are conceived in dialectic terms.

The women in this section aim to 'pass' as friends and often intend to be assumed to be straight (although I recognise there may be enactments that are not consciously reflected upon). However, where the aim is to be invisible within heterosexualised space it is often assumed that there are no political implications to passing. Here, I wish to contend that 'inclusion', in terms of passing, has the potential to be disruptive. There are those who contend that our very existence outside the heterosexual norm is contesting that norm (see for example, Ahmed, 1999; Chouinard and Grant, 1995; Clarke, 1981; Creed, 1995). Queer theorists however have suggested that there are potentially disruptive possibilities where passing is revealed as a performance, thus rendering all forms of

identity as contingent (see for example D. Bell *et al.*, 1994; J. Butler, 1990a; 1993; Honeychruch, 1996). The lack of visibility and the dependence upon being 'revealed' is politically problematic for some feminists who contend that individual acts of transgression are not sufficient in addressing the materialities of women's lives (Walters, 1996; Wilton, 1995). Queer theory and the politics of transgression will be further addressed in the next section. However, perhaps by passing we are blurring the boundaries between straight and gay and this is politically important. As Johnstone (2001: 193) contends, when the borders between gay and straight bodies are visible they are less threatening. When the gay and straight bodies cannot be distinguished boundaries are most threatening (Johnstone, 2001: 193). The other cannot be defined and separated from the self, and therefore the self becomes unstable. Moreover, remaining within the closet may be personally empowering:

Helen: cos yeah, you know some lesbians don't care. They don't care. I do envy that way of saying I don't care. I you know I'll, but I do so. But I haven't got a problem *it* doesn't say that I have a problem. It just says that I am a wee bit you know, not so open like everyone else. *I am really happy with the way I am just when it comes to that kind of area...*

[Later in the focus group]

Helen: Okay that is all I am saying for a straight couple to go out and I don't know it's different. I'm sorry it is.

Mel/Sandra: I am not disputing that fact.

KB: how is it different?

Sandra: cos its more socially acceptable I suppose.

Helen: yes

Sandra: but

Helen: there's always one. I am sorry there is always one. There who isn't going to accept you know, if they are not snog them but if they are going out. You know there is always going to be someone who goes 'look at that, look at that oh my god.' ... D'you know its just little whispers, little nudges that makes people uncomfortable (KB: mm). *So I am not going to put myself through that, why should I?*

(Helen, Mel and Sandra; focus group)

213

During the focus group Helen, Mel and Sandra had a heated debate regarding how open one should be about sexuality. Helen was very defensive about how she chooses to enact her identity, partially because of Sandra and Mel's negation of these performances. She argues that lesbians who 'don't care' are enviable but she does not want to be that open about her sexuality. She respects that there are other ways of 'doing' her sexuality and recognises that there are benefits to being out. However, Helen and some of the other women who have been quoted above do not wish to enact their identities in this way. They consciously and deliberately choose in different ways to have what they understand as 'easy lives'.

D. Bell *et al.* (1994: 43) scathingly remark that the (sic) lipstick lesbian is contributing to the 'disintegration of the lesbian feminist project' and 'merely' enabling some women a stake in 'the heterosexual privilege'. However, the descriptions in this section not only illustrate how women negotiate heterosexual norms, they offer insights into the relations that form heterosexual space. The conscious strategies which they employ illustrate that they recognise the hegemony of heterosexuality and the common sense norms which need to be adhered to in order to remain invisible. These strategies require the constant negotiation of identities, bodies and spaces and I would agree to an extent with Goffman (1963) and the socio-psychological literature, that these lives are often far from 'easy'. The 'heterosexual privilege' comes at a cost. However, this is not to say these enactments are wrong or necessarily negative to their self-image and passing may involve less anxiety than subjecting oneself to negative stereotypes (c.f. Edwards, 1996). Whilst Huweiler and Remafedi (1998: 113) argue that passing involves internalised homophobia or the incorporatation of 'negative attitudes towards homosexuality into their self-image', Edwards (1996: 350) contends that individuals may be comfortable with their sexual orientation without claiming a label. As Helen argues, she does not have a problem with 'it' (her sexuality), but she does have a problem with 'it' (heterosexism). She argues that whilst she is comfortable with her sexuality she understands heterosexuality as different and believes that there are risks associated with openly identifying as non-heterosexual. What queer theory and poststructural feminism offer in my understanding is not a prescriptive way in which one must 'do' one's

sexuality. Instead, as J. Butler (1990a, 1993) contends (see Chapter 3 section 4), subversions and resistances do not have to be proscribed and consequently queer theory enables a space for these women to perform their identities as they wish. Helen, and the other women above, do not want to subject themselves to othering processes such as 'little whispers, little nudges', and why should they?

7.3 Everyday Transgressions: Challenging Heterosexual Norms, (Re)Forming Identities, Bodies and Spaces

Geographies of sexualities have explored the appropriation of place particularly by gay men (Lauria and Knopp, 1985; Lyod and Rowntree, 1978; Knopp, 1990; 1992). These strategies are seen as politically important in making gains in terms of visibility and gaining political/state power. This chapter will not explore gentrification, gay ghettos or the pink pound as areas of resistance. Chapter 9 on towns and cities will further explore definitions and discussions of urban and rural in geographies of sexualities. This section will, instead, explore the mutual formation of identities, bodies and spaces through the overt contestations of othering processes which, in turn, (re)form normative sexualities in diverse ways.

Queer theory and activism attempt to destabilise and transcend heteronormative categories and assumptions in order to see these as,

... dynamic and intersubjective social relations and practices which involve very particular (but at the same time very unstable) understandings of embodied experiences as human beings.

(Knopp, 1999: 116)

The notions behind 'queer' are that there is no 'normality' and through transgression and resistance 'the norm' is exposed as a construction. Queer theory and activism critiques heterosexist power but resists classification and labels thereby attempting to encompass those who are 'left out' (Queen and Schmeil, 1997: 21), through the communal

transgression of the hegemonic arrangement of sex, gender and sexuality (Whittle, 1994b: 27). It is within this conceptualisation that 'passing' can be considered a form of transgression when identities are 'revealed' as performed. The transgression then illustrates that all identities are performed and therefore a form of passing (Ahmed, 1999). This relies on the performance but also on how performances are read, which is not uniform (Walker, 1995). (The disjuncture between readings and individual's self-perceptions will be explored in Chapter 8).

Queer theory and feminist poststructuralism share the rejection of dualisms and categories yet they have what has been described as an 'ambivalent relationship' with each other (Binnie, 1997: 226). Queer, dominated by men, is sometimes seen as subsuming and ignoring gendered power relations which privilege men (Alcoff, 1997; Auchmuty, 1997). This can be seen in the contestations of power as 'playful' and seeing transgressions as 'fun' (Queen and Schmeil, 1997: 23) without recognising the 'materialities' of these discursive formations. This section employs both queer theory and feminist poststructuralism to explore women's transgressions of heterosexual norms.

The necessity of constant reiteration of norms (Chapter 3 section 3) means that these are insecure and unstable and there is always the possibility of not performing or (re)performing outside dominant codes. Transgressions are potentially subversive and may illustrate the performative, rather than essential, 'natural', existence of norms (see Chapter 3.4.3). Moreover, it is argued that overtly enacting forms of sexual identities outside the heterosexual matrix challenges regulatory norms and, it is contended, exposes the lie of normative heterosexuality in everyday spaces (D. Bell et al., 1994; Callard, 1998; Melia, 1995). Bodies, identities and spaces are implicated in the transgression of normative heterosexuality (Callard, 1998; Kirby, 1995; Melia, 1995).

Clarke (1981: 156) contends that, along with women who pass and 'traffic among the enemies', there are women who are lesbians 'anywhere and everywhere'. These lesbians, according to Clarke (1981: 156), are in 'constant confrontation with heterosexual presumption, privilege and oppression'. However, most of the investigations of transgressions focus on and celebrate the site of the carnival and extra-

ordinary performances, which contest the invisibility of lesbian and gay sexualities and the 'natural' associations of heterosexual spaces (for example Lewis and Pile, 1996). 'Pride', for example, has meant claiming a place in society, 'coming out to be entered in' (Munt, 2000: 533). This is contrasted with not claiming a gay identity and with remaining in the closet which 'carries connotations of shame' (Munt, 2000: 533). Other forms of transgression include the tactics employed by 'Queer Nation', a group which has invaded straight bars and shopping malls as well as staging 'kiss-ins' (Samuels, 1999: 98). These acts have sought to demonstrate that the naturalisation of any site as heterosexual is dependant upon 'the invisibility of gays' (Samuels, 1999: 98). This section will not explore collective forms of resistance or transgression. It will, instead, investigate the realities of transgressions in mundane everyday lives outside the carnival and other instances of overt playful resistances.

Negotiating heterosexuality is not the only way women live with 'it'. Some non-heterosexual women use overt strategies in response to othering processes. These resistances occur in everyday spaces:

Hilary: Or if you want to get any one who is [staring] back. I mean, the famous one, walking out of the table [restaurant] going [to] stop my girlfriend and give her a big hug and a kiss and I'll grab her ass right in front of their face or whatever and then just casually walk out the door. I have done that a couple of times. It's just like 'woo' now they really don't know where to look! (Laughter) … They don't know what to say, you know you have just gob smacked them in one move.

(Hilary: focus group)

Hilary contests heterosexist discourses by physically demonstrating affection for another woman in the (heterosexual) spaces of restaurants. She attempts to use other people's marginalizing performances, in this case staring, and to push these processes to their limits ('now they really don't know where to look') in order to challenge the heterosexism she is encountering. Other strategies include attempting to reverse the feelings that these women are experiencing. In this way restaurant spaces can be (re)appropriated during the course of a meal:

Pat: If there's like a snobby like waiter or waitress and they all are like talking and laughing and like pointing, then I would normally get up and give them a kiss or something just like really, like play on it. (Later in the interview) eating out is like real fun because you can wind people up. And play on stuff … (You) always have a laugh when you go out and have a meal and never sober when we go out and have a meal its just, never, ever.

KB: And is that part of winding people up do you think?

Pat: What being pissed?

KB: mm

Pat: It's easier. You do feel a bit like self-conscious and you can but I, I don't get upset I just it's the way I kind of like to deal with stuff. *I'd like to just piss them off like [they] piss me off, and make them look stupid like they are trying to [make] me look stupid..*

(Pat: individual interview, my emphasis)

By challenging heterosexism in everyday spaces these women contest the norms that mark them as inferior or other. Whilst Pat, above, negotiates family celebrations such as Christmas, she contests norms where she lives, as this is not near her family. Pat describes this as 'fun'. She speaks in terms of 'play' which can be understood in the sense of enjoyment but also engaging with and challenging the theatrical othering processes she is experiencing. This notion of playful resistances and challenges, which openly transgress heterosexual norms, still has some element of cost for the women involved. Pat indicates above that she uses alcohol to give her more confidence. She argues that this is her way of dealing 'with stuff', which illustrates that not only is there something to be dealt with but also that this is not always easy. This contests notions that queer transgressions are simply 'fun'. Moreover, whilst these transgressions aim to reverse the embarrassment, this reversal does not absolve the women completely:

Marie: (We) walk out the door arm in arm with each other and go … 'no we're not lesbians we're sisters' and then give her a really big French kiss at the door and just walk out. Its like, 'what? That's disgraceful' (laughter). That's when the (/his) wife kicks in 'don't look so much' (laughter) … They get towed away, 'that's it no sex for you for another three years', *so you always win, either way…*

KB: Would that not make you feel uncomfortable or out-of-place?

Marie: No.

Hilary: We just do it to get, do you not find you take the piss out of people more? I mean basically that's what you do.

Marie: The more uptight they are going to get, the more you're gonna go for it.

Hilary: Yeah, you do and you end up pissing on their battery *more* than they can piss on you. But that doesn't mean, you've just really got to take the mick, you know.

Marie: You have got to be a bit spunky about the whole thing.

Hilary: Yeah, if you can't take the mick then don't bother pushing it.

(Marie, Fiona and Hilary: Focus group, my emphasis)

Wilson (1993: 110) argues that part of transgression is the 'desire to shock'. Marie plays with shocking aspects of non-heteronormative behaviours. She uses incest and lesbianism both discursively and materially to get a reaction from the man who was staring at her. Interestingly, she draws on heteronormative and matriarchal assumptions to contend that it will be the gazer's (assumed to be a man) wife who polices his behaviour and exacts punishment. There is a sinister element in the man's gaze and he is punished not so much for looking but, implicitly, for enjoying the event. His wife chastises him for looking 'so much'. Here there may be an element of pornography and men enjoying looking at two women. Although Marie obviously feels empowered and contends 'you win either way', Hilary argues that it is a case of making them (men) feel *more* uncomfortable than you feel. Therefore, Hilary still feels uncomfortable. While they use humour, both Hilary and Marie indicate that it is imperative to be able to 'take' the consequences prior to transgressing heterosexual boundaries. Consequently Marie and Hilary recognise that there are consequences. Pat elaborates on some of these costs:

Pat: Eating out is like it can be more fun but then there are times when you just think 'ah just eat in so you don't, you know. Just be like *normal*'. Do you know what I mean? You think sometimes it would be nice just to go out like a man and a woman and everyone just leave you alone and just go and have a nice meal without I don't know.

(Pat: individual interview, my emphasis)

Pat believes that each time she goes out for a meal with a partner she transgresses the boundaries of heterosexuality and whilst this can be 'fun', it can also become tiresome.

With a female partner, Pat is continually marked as other. Although she actively contests these processes in the spaces of restaurants, her wish to be treated like heterosexual couples illustrates that there are costs to resistances. Moreover, the invisible privileging of heterosexuality is acknowledged. This privilege is (re)created by other people 'leaving you alone', illustrating the formation of heterosexual norms through the demarcation of difference and the invisibility of 'normal'. These processes can be understood by intersecting understandings of queer transgressions with feminism which understands oppression. Whilst queer enables a conceptualisation of some of the thrill of transgression and the fluidity of these enactments, feminist thinking has long documented the personal costs of power. Thus transgression can be simultaneously fun and costly.

As has been seen, processes of transgression are not always described in hedonistic terms. Overt transgressions can be reactions to processes of othering:

Helen: We did entertain them one time in the window. I've given Sandra [girlfriend] a kiss in McDonalds before and stuff. Cos I couldn't give a shit. I was having a bad day and it was just like and you know, you know when people are just staring at you as well. (KB: yeah) It just pisses me off, it just does and so I just deliberately right in front of them went and kissed her.

(Helen: focus group)

(Individual interview, 2 weeks later)

KB: what about, you said there was a time in McDonalds?

Helen: oh that's right yes. I forgot about that there was a time in McDonalds where I was having a really, really bad time in there and I just felt people staring and that wound me up so much and I thought 'fuck it'. I did. ... I just went up to Sandra [girlfriend] and went 'here you go have that to stare about and snigger about.' Cos it was so obvious ... I was just like you are making it so obvious you dumb asses. So I went over to Sandra and looked at her and went 'love you' and gave her a kiss on the lips. ... It just winds me up, why can't I just be me? ... I sat down and started eating, and I looked over at people. They had stopped staring which is kind of good but will I get that reaction elsewhere?

(Helen: individual interview)

In section 7.3 Helen contended that she would not show physical displays of affection in public. However, in this instance 'it' became too much. Helen reacts to othering processes by transgressing codes she would otherwise adhere to. She illustrates that both passing and transgression need to be continually (re)performed. Passing is never complete and coming out is not a one time event (Atkins and Marston, 1999; Brown, 2001). However, although she found this instance personally empowering Helen, in contrast to Pat who enacts a non-heterosexual identity on a daily basis and 'passes' in front of her family, has not repeated her resistance. On the contrary, she actively tries not to get frustrated: 'will I get that reaction elsewhere?' Helen's fear of unknown exclusions and potential hostilities is clear. She and Pat contest the psychological literature which suggests that people simply adopt one strategy (e.g. Huweiler and Remafedi, 1998; Troiden, 1979). Rather, different strategies can be (re)appropriated. Consequently, embodied enactments can vary temporally and spatially, as well as according to feelings, rendering identities, bodies and spaces as fluid and malleable.

The differences between Helen's accounts in the focus group and the interview are interesting. In the focus group, as we saw in the previous section, she was involved in a heated debate with other members of the group (her girlfriend and her friend). In the interview the atmosphere was more relaxed perhaps because in all the interviews and focus groups I used a supportive interview technique. This clearly influenced the accounts produced. Her anger in the focus group contrasts with her affection ('love you') in the interview although her feelings of frustration are clear in both. (See Chapter 4 section 3 and Chapter 5 for a further discussion of the intersections between interviews and focus groups).

Helen introduces the notion of 'entertaining' other people and sets them up as an audience to her transgressive performances. When transgression is perceived to be 'fun', it may not only be the women who may enjoy the 'show'.

KB: Like if you were in a restaurant and people were looking at you, would it affect how you act?

Hilary: I play on it

KB: Do you?

Hilary: Yeah, I really do. I mean, you may as well give them something to really talk about, you know their lives must be so boring and *you are being somebody else's TV for the hour or two hours while you are in the restaurant* you know. (Laughter) And eventually people, I mean, they are sort of looking cos, I mean, they realise and who is embarrassing who at the end of the day. Or they are trying to achieve something and they are not achieving it, they become bored.

<div align="right">(Hilary: individual interview, my emphasis)</div>

This idea of becoming 'someone else's TV' rests on an understanding of non-heterosexual women as 'different' and 'unusual': something that anyone has a right to gaze upon until they become bored. Whereas Lorraine, in the section above, speaks of avoiding this form of attention Hilary 'plays on it' (heterosexism?). Hilary does not problematise the heteronormative assumptions which (re)place her as other. Instead she uses them and sees her life as more interesting than those who are looking at her. Moreover, she is actively contesting 'their' attempts to embarrass her. However, as Cresswell (1994: 55-56) notes, those watching the spectacle whilst 'intrigued by the inversion of normality', will not consider 'power and ideology'. Consequently, whilst she may feel personally empowered, becoming the entertainment may (re)define and (re)affirm the marginal position of women who exist outside heterosexual norms. In this way transgressions can highlight the boundaries of normality by making difference visible and other. Williams (1998: 60) asserts that issues of 'bodily order and corporeal transgression are inextricably bound and intimately related' (see also Wilkinson, 1996; Wilson, 1993). Consequently, these transgressions in some sense can be understood as replicating 'passing', discussed in the first section of this chapter, in that these performances may only be personally empowering whilst reinforcing hegemonic heterosexuality. As Wilson (1993: 113) contends 'an act of defiance may be personally liberating and may indeed make an ideological statement but whether it can do any more seems uncertain'.

Transgressions can be played out in order to establish 'sameness' where women are defined as different. Andie uses the mundaneness of food to eradicate perceived differences:

<div align="right">222</div>

Andie: I relish on the fact like some people ... really can't do [with you when] you're with your partner and you're shopping ... and being really stupid. And you have obviously got a really prude mother looking in the freezers next to you looking at you with this disgusted look and you are like 'yeah alright you know and, shopping for peas is that alright? Just because I am a lesbian doesn't mean I don't eat anymore you know. I have to eat something, I have to shop somewhere you know'. It's just like 'alright?'

(Andie: focus group)

Andie enjoys contesting other people's attempts to render her as other. Similar to Helen, however, Andie's transgressions contain a note of frustration at being marked as different in a space she sees as necessary for her existence. Through a universal human need for food Andie sees herself 'just like everyone else'. Consequently, Andie's enactments are used to negate differences based on sexuality where they are perceived as irrelevant.

As has been contended in the previous chapter, in restaurant spaces consumers are sat for periods of time. During this time initially 'abnormal', non-heterosexual behaviours can become 'normal', contesting the formation of restaurant spaces as exclusively heterosexual:

KB: Would there be anywhere you wouldn't go to eat?

Marie: No not really. I went out on Valentines Day with Gina. ... We were the only same sex couple in the whole restaurant

Fiona: wow

Marie: With balloons from the table and streamers from the balloons in a heart shaped everything on Valentines Day it was like. ... But we sort of went 'oh' for the first ten minutes. *But after half a jug of tequila, Margarita,* we just went, 'this is really quite nice really'. [A] couple at the table next to us 'are you two alright?' 'Yeah fine, having a lovely time'. ... *So the atmosphere mellowed as time went on but that was weird to start with being the only same sex couple in a restaurant* especially as it was like one we had been to several times before. [It is] normally just groups of tables with people but [on] Valentines Day it got a bit snug; snug and cuddly

(Marie, Hilary, Fiona: focus group, my emphasis)

(One week later: individual interview)

KB: what have you normally done [on Valentines Day]?

Marie: I've done both, either cooked or been cooked for or got a takeaway or been to a restaurant as I say Gina and I went to this restaurant we always used to go. ... We were the only same sex couple in the whole restaurant (K: oh yeah). *Fantastic got on really well, it was a bit sort of like 'oh fuck' to start with this is a bit strange but it all fitted in quite nicely*

KB: that's really cool

Marie: *yeah a jug of Margarita later, everything's jolly*

(Marie: individual interview, my emphasis)

Gina is Marie's ex-partner and was involved in an individual interview after Marie's interviews and focus group. The issue of Valentine's Day arose but I did not mention Marie or her account of this occasion. I suggest the prominence of this occasion in both women's minds is significant because it illustrates the importance of Valentine's Day as a coupled event designed to celebrate heterosexuality (see Chapter 6 section 3.1). Marie and Gina both remember their challenge to these assumptions.

Gina: when I was in (name of city) with Marie we did go out to a straight restaurant on Valentines Day. Cos it was a really nice restaurant. It was one where we used to eat quite a bit sort of like special and we booked a table and we walked in and it was all sort of like candlelit dinners, all straight couples (+ KB laughs). But I mean we did like, when we first walked in we did get sort of like 'hmm lesbians' but then after that I mean the staff were really good. They did treat us exactly the same and they did come over and sort of 'would you like your candle lit?' and all that sort of stuff. So they did completely treat us the same *as if we were a straight couple* in there and they were obviously aware that we were out on Valentines Day as well (K: mm yeah) and yeah I mean it was fine. I mean we got the initial looks when we walked in and that was it, and that was very comfortable. But I mean it was a very comfortable restaurant anyway and it did have quite a mixed group. It was right by the theatre so it used to get a lot theatre goers and the actors in there so it was quite gay friendly, so we used to go there quite a lot.

(Gina: individual interview)

Gina and Marie transgressed heterosexual norms which define restaurant spaces as heterosexual on Valentine's Day, 'but [on] Valentines Day it got a bit snug; snug and cuddly' (Marie). In Chapter 6 I argued that restaurant spaces on Valentine's Day were (re)made for heterosexual couples. Here Gina and Marie's identity as a couple was clear. Gina describes this restaurant as 'mixed' and 'gay friendly' and this was an aspect in

224

their choice of restaurant for that particular evening. Despite these connotations Gina and Marie still experienced marginalizing processes and Gina both expected and dismissed these. Marie reflects Pat's assertion that alcohol plays a part: 'a jug of Margarita later, everything's jolly'. After initial othering processes Gina and Marie were treated 'as if we were a straight couple' (Gina), which indicates that heterosexual couples are often (re)made as the 'ideal' when catered for in restaurant spaces on Valentine's Day. This can be established in discursive interpretations of the material settings of the restaurant which change for Valentines Day (candles, balloons, tables laid out for two). Being 'the only same sex couple in the whole restaurant' (Marie), Gina and Marie challenge the pre-existence of the restaurant as solely heterosexual. During the course of their meal both the space of the restaurant and Gina and Marie were (re)constituted. However, it was noteworthy that they felt they had to be accepted into this space, in contrast to heterosexual couples who can assume their acceptance. These spaces, bodies and identities were performatively (re)formed by Gina and Marie, the waiters and other patrons in the restaurant. Clearly, the formation of restaurant spaces as heterosexual is fluid and, in this case, altered temporally.

Transgressions do not have to be continually embodied to become central to 'who we are' and how we understand ourselves.

Marie: So you either take me as I am or don't bother you know. At that time of my, I was quite a strong person, you know. I was all for coming out, I fought for a lot of gay rights in this country. I was up there and shouting my head off and everything when I decided that's what I was. It took me a long time to decide, but I decided and I thought 'fuck it, you know, you have got to go for this'. And I am very proud. I am a very proud homosexual and I always will be. I haven't come out to my workmates yet at work and I don't think that is any of their business at the moment.

(Marie: focus group)

As with Pat and Helen, Marie recognises that passing and coming out have to be continually embodied and are therefore fluid. They also challenge the conceptualisation of sexualities on a continuum from total concealment to total disclosure (see Edwards, 1996). Marie occupies multiple selves simultaneously and these are apparently

contradictory. Similar to Helen (above) she uses both avoidance and confrontational strategies yet, unlike Helen, Marie identifies as a 'homosexual'. Although she does not enact an 'out' identity at work, she does understand herself as a 'proud' homosexual. Marie's identity and perhaps Andie's, and Gina's, 'exceed the conventional' and become a 'state of being' (Munt, 2000: 538). In some sense they become 'normal' reforming how 'normal' is conceived. However, Marie's transgressive identity, although central to how she understands herself, is spatially delimited. Marie then chooses when and how she will embody this identity. Whilst at work it is 'none of their business' although she will still contest any homophobic instances. Conversely, in the spaces of restaurants she will overtly perform her 'out' homosexual identity by physically displaying affection for another woman. Consequently, Marie illustrates that not only the realities of everyday life, but also the imaginings of 'who we are', form our identities and inform our embodiments (see Chapter 9 for a further discussion of imaginings). Moreover, she illustrates that transgressions and queer performances are problematic and can be spatially confined and defined.

Those who celebrate overt sexualities can leave unexplored the consequences of the transgressions for the women involved (for example Butler, 1990a; Clarke, 1981; Queen and Schmeil, 1997). The women I have focused on in this section both 'play on' and actively resist the processes that marginalize them. Resistances can be 'playful' and 'fun' but they can also act as a vent for the frustrations of being constantly judged in relation to heterosexual norms. Moreover, even when these performances are seen to be 'fun' they still demand emotional costs which are invested continually and (re)constitute these women's identities and bodies. This is contrary to assumptions of queer transgressions and the associations of carnival (Queen and Schmeil, 1997). Transgressions and resistances can be both an enjoyable and difficult experience for the women involved. Queer theory, arguably, overemphasises the one-off transgressions such as 'kiss-in's and does not explore everyday transgressions (c.f. Wilson, 1993). Using the everyday experiences of non-heterosexual women the consequences of daily transgressions have been examined. This has been possible using feminist

poststructuralism which shares queer theory's conceptions of fluid identities and bodies yet still acknowledges the salience of power in everyday lives.

Throughout this discussion it is clear that sites of transgressions are relationally constituted. Women, because of their performances with another woman, transgress the boundaries of normative heterosexuality which place woman with man (Chouinard and Grant, 1996). Six of the women quoted in this section were very proud and actively sought to perform 'out' lesbian identities. Here this has been read as transgression because these women challenge heterosexual norms through these performances. However, transgressions require limits just as limits require transgressions (Williams, 1998). Walker (1995: 72) believes we can be 'compelled and constrained by the very regulatory norms that are the condition of our resistances'. Wilkinson (1996) contends that this relationality enforces the rules and boundaries through an acknowledgement of their existence:

By creating a fantasy world of ambiguity, indeterminacy and charade, queer theory aims to deconstruct - and transcend - the categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality. However, paradoxically, these very categories are reinforced by 'transgressive' sexual acts and identities. It is not possible deliberately to 'transgress', to break a rule or overstep a boundary, without clear knowledge of those rules and boundaries, the existence of which is thereby reinforced.

(Wilkinson, 1996:297)

Wilkinson contends that the structures, which are opposed, may be reinforced through the act of opposition. This understanding relies on a binary dichotomy, where there are two opposing parts, power and resistance, and does not recognise the fluidity and the productive and liberatory potential of desire and performativities (Lewis and Pile, 1996; Williams, 1998). This chapter has argued that these women's identities are constituted through their resistances to othering or marginalizing processes. Moreover, codes and norms are momentarily displaced and disrupted through these processes and these are moments of possibility (Butler, 1990a; 1993; 1997a). These moments are formative and the heterosexual norm is simultaneously constituted through these formations. The complexes which produce spaces, bodies and identities are formed relationally and

227

interact with *and* (re)constitute dominant codes and norms. In other words norms and transgressions are mutually dependant on, (re)forming and are (re)formed by, identities, bodies and spaces.

7.4 Passing versus Transgression

Having separated passing and transgression in a manner consistent with previous literature, these discussions will now be integrated in a review of their commonalities. Whilst within both feminism and lesbian and gay studies the need for collectivity to respond to patriarchy and homophobia/heterosexism is often asserted, this chapter has explored individual processes of dealing with 'it'. I now seek to consider political problems and potentials of passing and transgression beyond the individual.

Within the discourse of 'passing' is the assumption of heterosexuality. When heterosexuality is the 'norm', it is often assumed except where it is contested (D. Bell *et al.*, 1994; Berger, 1992). Consequently, as women 'pass unnoticed' they may also reinforce the assumed heterosexuality of space (Ahmed, 1999; D. Bell *et al.*, 1994; Munt, 2000; Valentine, 1993; Winchester and White, 1988). In this way diverse sexualities may remain invisible. It is argued that 'when people realise how many people are ... queer... there is a possibility for greater acceptance' (Atkins and Marston, 1999: 6). However, becoming visible does not necessarily equate to a societal acceptance of the fluidity of sexualities. In fact, as has been contended, (Wilson, 1993; Williams, 1998) it may reinforce the deviancy of non-heterosexual behaviours in relation to the 'norm'. Consequently, the norm may be (re)formed and the status quo maintained (see Cresswell, 1994). Moreover, this line of discussion assumes that inclusion and acceptance are desirable. This, however, needs to be problematised (Aitchison, 1999c; Hornsey, 2002). Consequently, both passing and transgression may not contest dominant heterosexualities and both, in some senses, may reinforce the taken-for-granted assumptions of heterosexuality.

Throughout the narratives, there were articulations of elements of personal cost. These can be conceptualised in terms of cultural power. Those who 'passed' spoke of avoiding othering comments and stares. For the women who negotiated heterosexuality the cost of constantly avoiding spaces at particular times and restraining emotions and enactments entailed a personal cost. Often, there was an element of envy in their accounts of women who 'could be' out. Those who are 'out', it is argued, risk discrimination, social rejection and possible violence (Atkins and Marston, 1999; Butler, 1993). However, in the accounts above the women spoke more of being the subject of othering processes and being made to feel different. The women who transgressed heterosexual norms spoke of wishing to go out without having to constantly confront heterosexist attitudes.

This appears to be closed, final and negative but these enactments should not be seen in terms of the dualistic dichotomy of passing/transgression, bad/good. Instead I wish to contest this dualistic conception of practices of living with 'it' by considering the potentials of feminist poststructuralism discussed in Chapter 3 section 4.3. Moreover, similarities between passing and transgression challenge the opposition upon which the dichotomy is built.

Perhaps paradoxically, it can be seen that despite the personal costs involved in both passing and transgression, there are also elements of personal empowerment in the participants' accounts. For the women who negotiated heterosexuality their empowerment lay in negotiating their bodies, identities, time and space such that they were not subject to othering processes. In this way, they prevented 'it' (heterosexism) being directed towards themselves by not enacting non-heterosexual identities. On the other hand, women who confronted othering processes felt empowered that they had challenged these processes. Recognising that women can feel empowered in different ways is important as this illustrates the necessity of a multiplicity of enactments and strategies which can be employed differently both temporally and spatially. Moreover, it does not assume that there are *necessarily* negative associations related to specific enactments.

The enactments and reactions described above (re)produce bodies, spaces and identities. Brown (2001) argued that 'closeted' performativities are formed in relation to space. Here I have argued that power, in the form of common sense codes and norms, is central to performativities, although power is differentially appropriated. Power and performativities can be conceptualised as having a dialectic relationship which (in)forms norms and subjectivities. When heterosexuality is contested norms and codes are challenged and these moments of transgression can reform norms and codes even if this is simply by making them visible. Moreover, by empowering non-heterosexual women, transgressions can alter their experiences of 'it' (heterosexism). Consequently, women (re)form heterosexual codes and norms and thus have the potential to (re)produce 'it' and their experiences of 'it' (heterosexism).

What are more problematic are the visible and tangible political potentials of concealing and invisibilising sexualities beyond the individual. Looking beyond simplistic right/wrong enactments of sexualised identities recognises the strength of the plurality of possible sexual performances. Where there are political consequences to performing overt non-heterosexual identities, hidden sexualities can enable some women to have better lives than if they were 'out' 'anywhere and everywhere' as Clarke (1991: 156) suggests we should be. Yet persons who pass can risk tremendous psychological strain and always risk being revealed (Atkins and Marston, 1999: 5). 'Passing' should not simply be rejected and assumed to be negative. Moreover, as Johnstone (2001) suggested, the potency in passing may lie in the invisibility of boundaries between straight and gay, contesting the rigid dichotomy of heterosexual/homosexual. Where borders cannot be clearly identified sexualities can be threatening, as the other cannot be distanced from the self. This crossing of boundaries, or existing between dualisms and dichotomies, will be further explored in Chapters 8 and 9. Moreover, the inclusion/exclusion dualism and dichotomy will be explored in the conclusion.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored transgressions and passing in 'queer' terms or, in other words, as potentially subversive practices which may highlight the fluidity of common sense norms. These transgressions and passings were investigated using accounts of women's everyday lives which required conceptualisations of power that can be located within feminist poststructuralism. The chapter explored the complexity of assumptions regarding 'passing' and 'transgression'. In Chapter 2 I argued that there is no 'right' way to do feminism (Wilton, 1995; 1996). Here by contesting the passing/transgression dualism it can be contended that there is no 'correct' way of living as a non-heterosexual woman (c.f. Wilton, 1996). As with the strength of diversity in feminism (see Chapter 2) I believe the plethora of responses to heterosexism and enactments of non-heterosexual identities is a strength (c.f. Gibson-Graham, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1993). Wilson (1993) argues that transgression is not 'the' solution and I believe there is no 'one' solution. This chapter contests prescriptive, singular models of feminism and lesbian theory (c.f. Stanley and Wise, 1993; Wilton, 1995). Instead, the diversity within these enactments is seen as an asset.

This chapter has moved between feminist theories which have been critical of passing and potentially apolitical queer theory. It has argued that passing and transgression cannot be understood in terms of right versus wrong. Instead, by deconstructing these dualistic concepts, this chapter has moved between the dichotomy and contended that, just as there is no 'correct' feminism neither can it be assumed that one form of enacting one's sexuality is best (c.f. Wilton, 1995; 1996). The diverse performances are complex and appropriated differently in space and time. Consequently, theorisations of how women (re)perform their identities and bodies in relation to particular norms, and in turn (re)form these norms, need to explore the complexity of these enactments across space and time. This chapter has only addressed two forms of 'living with it' and I imposed particular categories in order to discuss these enactments. This has excluded and concealed other forms of 'living with it' and I recognise that the plethora of potential enactments has yet to be addressed.

This chapter and Chapter 6 explored performativity and power in the spaces of food and eating. Powerful dualisms and dichotomies have been deconstructed from the perspective of the 'other' in terms of heterosexuality. The following two discussion chapters will move on to explore 'genderism' and towns and cities. The next chapter will investigate cultural processes of othering in terms of gender rather than sexuality. However, salient issues which have been introduced in the first two discussion chapters will be considered. Particularly relevant are: the importance of cultural power, the lack of language to describe othering experiences, the variety of enactments in relation to othering processes, the questioning of dualisms, dichotomies and binaries and the performative formation of bodies, identities, spaces and codes and norms.

Chapter Eight

Genderism:

Moving Between Woman And Man, Female And Male

Chapter outline

8.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3 I contended, following J. Butler (1990a, 1993) that in Western society gender is intelligible in terms of male and female and those who do not fit one of these distinct and opposite categories are rendered unintelligible. Whilst race and class have been deconstructed and their complexities revealed, gender often remains as an assumed binary, that is the pairing of sexes with only two possibilities (Lorber, 1996: 145). In the *Psychic Life of Power* (1997a), J. Butler contends, following Foucault (1977), that power, as formative, produces individuals as it subordinates them. Moreover, power produces the conditions of our existence: in order to 'be' one must exist within liveable society, which only understands individuals in terms of man or woman (J. Butler, 1997a). This chapter explores the margins of liveable society when female identified individuals are read as male thereby deconstructing the binary of male and female. Moreover, the chapter draws on understandings of performativity as producing bodies, identities and spaces as well as norms and codes. Finally, the chapter will continue the development of theories of transgression by examining when one does not exist as other or same in terms of gender. This chapter will begin by exploring the literature regarding those who contest the rigid gender categories of male or female. This research, initially designed to explore women's food and eating practices, will then explore the emotive stories told by nine women (see table 8.1) which extend beyond foodscapes and eating and include their experiences of genderism.

Table 8. 1 Participants who described experiences of genderism

Name	Age	Occupation (at time of research)	Methods
Andie	21-25	Factory (unskilled manual)	AP, D, FG, I (August)
Julie	21-25	Carer (unskilled manual)	D, FG, I (August, November individual)
Stevi	26-30	Volunteer Work	D, CI, I (August)
Nat	21-25	Retail (unskilled manual)	AP, CI, I (September,

			individual February)
Pat	18-20	University Student	AP, I (October)
Janet	21-25	University Student	D, FG, I (November)
Nina	18-20	University Student	AP, D, FG (December)
Angela	21-25	PT University student/ PT employment agency (manual)	AP, FG, I (January)
Jenny	26-30	Education (Second Level, teaching assistant)	AP, FG, I (January)

Key:

AP   Auto photography

D   Diary

FG   Focus Group

CI   Coupled Interview

I   Interview

8.2 Contesting the Male/Female Binary: Intersexuality, Transgender/Transsexual, Drag and Gender 'Blending'

Gender, when understood as performative, is unstable and requires constant reiteration (J. Butler, 1990a). This section explores how the assumptions of the anatomical existence of only two sexes, and the naturalised links between gender (masculine/feminine) and sex, (man/woman) have been contested within the literature. It will examine intersexuality, transsexuality, transgender, drag and 'gender blending', to argue that individuals exist between categories, both materially and discursively. Devor (1996: 5) contends that intersexed, transgendered and transsexual people have existed since human beings have existed. The regulation of their bodies and identities can reveal the systems of duress which, at present, (re)produce gender and sex both materially and discursively (J. Butler, 1990a; Devor, 1996).

Intersexed individuals contest the assumption of two discrete anatomical sexes by having sexual organs which have the aspects of 'both biological sexes to a greater or lesser degree' (Mackie, 2001: 186). In one in a hundred births there is some form of morphological 'anomaly' with approximately one in a thousand individuals being born intersexed (Hird, 2000: 350). It was only during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that the idea of genders as fixed to particular bodies became firmly established (Hird, 2000). As a result of medicine's pronunciation of intersexed individuals as defective, intersexed individuals have become increasingly hidden (Devor, 1996: 7). Hird (2000: 350-351) outlines how the sexologist John Money developed a vocabulary which combined biology and social influences, allowing the medical community to sustain the belief of two exclusive 'sexes' in spite of the medical community's own evidence to the contrary. This vocabulary is powerful and, along with 'visual cues', results in medical intervention because the newborn is believed to possess 'abnormal' genitalia (Hird, 2000: 351). In Western society intersexed individuals are thus often assigned a gender through surgical procedures determined by medicalisalised definitions of quality of life based on 'adequate heterosexual penetration' (Nataf, 2000: 2). Similarly, Foucault's Herculine was forced to be male or female as her intersex was deemed a 'mistake' (Butler, 1990a). The concept of 'mistake' is interesting and will be further explored in section 8.8. What is clear is that 'technologies of the self operate to reinforce cultural fantasies (e.g. those regarding sex) through intervening at the level of the 'natural' body to bring it into line with these norms' (Barnard, 2000: 683). In this way the illusion of binary sexes as opposites is reproduced at the site of the body. Gender (and sex) can thus be seen as produced within a dichotomous binary (oppositional pairs) as male/female are made as opposite and this opposition is reiterated. These sexes can be unsatisfactory and within the medical profession it is accepted that the sex assigned immediately post birth may not be maintained throughout the individual's lifetime (Hird, 2000; Nataf, 2000).

The criteria used to judge an individual's 'true sex' are often based on 'gender'/social characteristics, such as 'caring' (Hird, 2000). This involves the determination of 'femaleness' or 'maleness' and reveals the two sex model as no less discursively imagined than 'gender' (Hird, 2000: 355). In addition, it maintains that particular bodies

236

should 'fit' specific gendered identities. The modern psycho-medical model compels individuals to identify themselves as only one of two sexes and corresponding genders (Hird, 2000: 356). However, these compulsions are discursively produced and naturalised through 'corrective' surgery. These measures illustrate the profound threat intersexed individuals present as biologically, and thus by association 'naturally', they are neither male nor female.

Transgender and transsexual individuals choose to live as members of the opposite sex to which they were born. These individuals can also choose existences *between* male and female. Transsexual individuals are usually those who have altered their genitals through surgical intervention (Mackie, 2001: 186-187). Similar to the medicalised discourses of intersexuals, Wilton (2000: 250-251) argues, in relation to male to female transsexuals, that surgical procedures construct 'simplistic' accounts of the body by presenting a medicalised solution to the transsex 'problem'. However, Turner (2001) contests Wilton's unquestioning acceptance of the medicalised body-only model of transsexuality. Instead Turner (2001) argues that the pre/post operation transition is only one aspect of a multifaceted process. Transgender and transsexuality is more than a one-dimensional model. Diversity within transgender should not be reduced to pre/post operation transition nor simply understood in terms of the body as this excludes other important subjectivities (Turner, 2001).

The act of dressing as the opposite gender to that which one lives, transvesticism or drag, can be considered within transgender and transsexuality. These performances do not rely on surgical intervention and can be subversive. J. Butler (1990a) sees drag as subverting and playing with gender norms and identities and, in this way, has the potential to expose them as performative contingencies. Drag, J. Butler (1990a) contends, has the capacity to imitate as gender imitates but with a difference, and herein lies its subversive potential. Drag is an example of the (re)appropriation of power discussed above. Namely, that power (in this case gender discourses) is reused, but reused differently to contest understandings of gender/sex as fixed. J. Butler (1993), however, problematises drag in *Bodies that Matter*. She argues that she used drag as an

example in *Gender Trouble* and that it can potentially reinstate the normativity of heterosexuality and normative genders by acting as the 'other', 'abnormal' and thus different to those observing the performance. Bunzel (2000) uses J. Butler's theories of drag to argue that some gay men in Austria, similar to gay men in other Western countries, appropriate language in order to subvert it. They use feminine names and pronouns amongst other things and this 'potentially destabilises and pluralizes the parameters of grammatically articulated (and socially realised) gender in the moment of its socio-discursive enactment' (Bunzel, 2000: 221). In the end these gay men do work within 'the rules of hegemonic Austrian grammar', however, they deconstruct the 'very technology of gender through subversive rearticulation' (Bunzel, 2000: 229). In this way Bunzel (2000) argues that, similar to J. Butler's (1990a) theory of drag, these men are imitating with a difference and thus exposing the naturalisation of gender categories.

Transsexualism, transgenderism and drag have the potential to reveal gender as performative and therefore undermine the binary and dichotomous system of man/woman upon which some forms of feminism rest (see Chapter 3). In terms of queer theory, see Chapter 3 section 4.2 and Chapter 7, transgendered and transsexual individuals pose a profound challenge to understandings of male and female dichotomies, revealing the messiness of sex/gender binaries (Hird, 2000: 356). Moreover, whereas intersexed individuals contest anatomy, it could be argued that transgender/transsexual individuals contest the assumptions of proscribed bodies for gender roles. Gender is thus 'revealed to adhere to particular bodies haphazardly' (Hird, 2000: 357). Transsexuals render visible the invisible signs on which society produces gender through their ability to 'pass' as 'real' men or women. As Ahmed (1999) argues, all genders are continuous acts of passing. Perhaps, then, because transsexual creations of 'sex' and 'gender' are clearer than those who remain within gender norms, they are more honest representations of gender as performative (J. Butler, 1990a; Hird, 2000). Moreover, as was contended in Chapter 7, because the other is not easily defined the self becomes unstable.

Where feminists are committed to a singular understanding of 'woman', which is opposite to man and understand woman as subject to patriarchy, transsexual narratives are problematic (Hird, 2000). This is because these narratives rest on the instability of the category 'woman' which is problematic when feminism wishes to establish equality between men and women. Equality in this sense relies on two distinct gender/sex categories which are, in this thesis, conceptualised as fictive. Moreover, as was contended in Chapter 2, deconstructing the sign 'woman' can be viewed as premature and counterproductive (see Hartstock, 1996). Lorber (2000: 83), however, contends that to rationalise women's inferior status, the differences between men and women must be maintained. Contrary to Wilton's (2000) assertions, and as Chapter 7 argued in terms of sexualities, there is not one way of doing transgender/transsexuality nor is there a 'right' way:

Intersexuals and transsexuals who attempt to 'fit' into a sexually divided world reveal the regulatory mechanisms through which sexual difference is enforced; whereas intersexuals and transsexuals who refuse an either/or 'sexed' identity disturb the infallibility of the binary.

(Hird, 2000: 359)

Drag, transsexualism and transgenderism all have subversive potential as they have the capacity to expose the naturalisation of the gender-sex-sexuality linkages as well as the naturalisation of gender norms through a proliferation of genders. However, J. Butler (1993a) acknowledged that drag (as well as transgender and transsexualism, see Wilton, 2000) can be recuperated within dominant norms. Similarly, intersexed individuals can be and are physically (re)placed within the hegemonic gender and sexuality binaries. In this way, heterosexual imperatives may not be subverted or the norm exposed as a naturalised construction (see Chapter 2).

Clearly, nature offers 'many shades of difference' and the 'template of sexual difference' is imposed through ideologies rather than pre-existing (Hird, 2000: 348). The discussions above have focused on Western society where 'gender divisions still deeply bifurcate society' (Lorber, 2000: 80). However, the two gender system is not universal. For example, among Native American Navajo people a third sex was recognised. Those

assigned to this sex were termed 'Nadles' and had special status often being consulted for their wisdom and skills. Similarly, in India the Hirjra, a third sex, have a 2,500-year-old history (Nataf, 2000). These individuals claim that whilst they were born men they are 'not men' (Nanda, 1986: 37). They can undergo castration or be biologically intersexual (Nanda, 1986). Similar to transsexuals, it is often social gender cues which are used to argue for an identity beyond men, for example a caring personality. Moreover, within the Nnobi, an African tribal society, biological sex did not always map onto gender and male roles could be played by women (Amadirme, 1987).

Transgendered images of a romanticised third gender acceptance can offer hope, challenging assumptions of a binary sex system as inevitable. However, Roen (2001) cautions against the assumption of a third sex utopia outside of Western countries. For example, because of Westernisation and colonisation a gender liminal people can seek sex reassignment surgery. This can happen despite them living where their gender liminality may have been regarded 'in terms of a gender role for which bodily change was not considered an issue' (Roen, 2001: 254-255). Moreover,

Replacing a two-sex model with a ten sex (or twenty or thirty) model does not in itself secure the abolition of gender discrimination, only perhaps the mental gymnastics to justify it.

(Hird, 2000:358)

In most parts of the world, sexually ambiguous bodies are deemed threatening (Nataf, 2000). J. Butler (1993a) contended that there are costs to subverting normative gender identities. Namaste (1996) uses the term 'genderbashing' to name violence against transgendered people. Namaste (1996: 233, original emphasis) argues that genderbashing occurs because *'of the perception of potential victims, and that compulsory sex-gender relations figure centrally in these acts of interpretation.'* In other words, because of the strict separation of male and female and the rigid associations of these with particular bodies, transgendered individuals are subject to violence. Consequently, threatening gender norms and codes can have serious implications. Moreover, Wilton (2000: 240) argues that male to female transsexuals

experience pain because of their 'inability to ensure that their bodies are not always read in ways dissonant with 'his' self'.

This chapter will investigate how ambiguously gendered bodies are experienced. Specifically, it explores the transgression of normative femininities through women's experiences of being mistaken for men. Devor (1987) describes this as 'gender blending':

Gender blending females are those people of the female sex who project gender cues that can be socially interpreted as sufficiently masculine to earn them the social status and some of the privileges of men. ... The intriguing aspect of their gender status is that they have clear female identities and know themselves to be women concurrently with gender presentations that often do not successfully communicate these facts to others.

(Devor, 1987: 1-2)

Devor's (1987) study explored the life stories of 15 women who are mistaken for men. She explained their 'masculine' appearance and characteristics as arising from a childhood where there was a strong male figure and a weak female figure. Similarly Lee (2001), who compared 'butch' lesbians to female to male transsexuals, argued that the lesbians, in their childhood, experienced a disjuncture between their sex as female and masculine genders. Although they were females, the women in both of these studies became masculine and that masculinity was 'sufficiently developed' that strangers read them as men (Lee, 2001; Devor, 1987: 19). Devor's (1987) social constructionist narrative argues that because the dominant societal schema only allows for the possibility of 'men and women and no other gender status, these women found themselves becoming men by default' (Devor, 1987: 22). Within this framework, unfeminine women can only be seen as men.

Munt (1995: 121) discussed the 'lesbian flaneur' who she sees as collapsing 'the inviolate distinction between masculinity and femininity'. The answer to the question 'Is it a man or a woman?', is 'neither and both: as a Not-woman she slips between, beyond and around the linear landscape' (Munt, 1995: 121). Munt's (1995) account also

241

recognises the possibilities and dangers of different spatial locations, differentiating Brighton from Nottingham, in terms of possibilities for the lesbian flaneur. In contrast then to Devor's (1987; 1989) fixed assumptions of either man or woman, Munt's lesbian flaneur exemplifies the movements possible in, and between, both spatial and symbolic locations. Similarly, Halberstam (1998: 21) understands women who are often challenged in female spaces 'as not-man, not-women' but also 'not androgynous or in-between; this person is a gender deviant' (Halberstam, 1998: 21). Consequently, these women are not a mixture of male and female. However, I would argue that the concept of betweeness, in terms of intersubjective formations of space, identities and bodies, is still useful (see Chapter 4). Moreover, whilst Halberstam (1998) appears to put these women 'outside' male/female or 'third sex', she recognises the powerful discourses which materially reinscribe bodies and genders. This reinscription and the othering processes inherent to defining male and female are the focus of this chapter.

Devor (1987) sees gender as being in the eye of the beholder and one's gender is as much in the reading as in the telling. She terms the process whereby we decide what people's genders are as 'the gender attribution process' (Devor, 1996: 12). Devor (1987; 1993; 1996) and Lee (2001) recognise that there are both positive and negative aspects of being mistaken for a man. Devor (1987) found that for twelve of the women research participants who were being mistaken for a man daily, this experience was embarrassing and frustrating. They were often angered by the continual mistakes. In Devor's (1987) study positive aspects were mentioned by two out of the 15 participants. They allowed strangers to believe they were men in order to avoid embarrassment and ridicule. These participants were then able to show affection for their female lovers in public without drawing unwelcome and undesirable attention (Devor, 1987: 15). Despite giving these women a particular amount of agency in (re)appropriating other people's mistakes, Devor (1987) did not enable them to define themselves. Instead she fits the women into her categories and into a complex taxonomy which classifies relationship, sex, sexuality and sex (one category) and gender, in order to categorise one's gendered sexuality. But, presumably the use of her taxonomy would rest on 'experts' classifying individuals. Instead, I wish to draw on Halberstam (1998) who, in a poststructural sense, renders

bodies and identities as fluid and multiple. She contends that identities, in terms of ambiguous gender presentations and performances are best described in terms of 'processes with multiple sites for becoming and being' (Halberstam, 1998: 21).

Whilst I find the disjuncture between readings and lived gender intriguing, Devor's (particularly 1993) explanations rest on categories and a taxonomy that has boxes into which people can be fitted. Although the complexity of this taxonomy, and the delinking of sex and gender is important, Devor (1993) does not explore grey areas between categories. Rather, she reinscribes binary and dichotomous distinctions such as man/woman, male/female, and heterosexual/homosexual. Devor does explore different combinations of these categories but I find her insistence on maintaining particular characteristics problematic. Moreover, both Lee (2000) and Devor (1987) outline linear lifestories which do not recognise the performativity of gender and the fluidity of gender, sex and sexuality across space and time.

Although Lee (2001) and Devor (1987; 1989) mention negative aspects, they leave under-explored the consequences of transgressing conventional gender norms. Although Munt (1998) understands being mistaken for a man in terms of homophobia, Ainley (1996: 145) argues that a woman who has an appearance which is 'in anyway less than conventionally female runs the risk of attracting abuse, over and above the use of lesbian as a term of abuse'. Similarly, Skeggs (2001: 299), in her studies of young working class women and women in Manchester's gay village, found that those who 'did' femininity in the wrong place or at the wrong time were disciplined. This rests upon an understanding of femininity as a form of cultural capital (Skeggs, 2001: 299 see also Bordieu, 1986). In particular the body was seen as the site for judging the 'truth' of the person (Skeggs, 2001: 300-301).

The remainder of this chapter will explore what I have termed 'genderism'. I understand genderism as instances of discrimination based on the discontinuities between the gender the individual identifies with and the gender that they are read as (see also Browne, 2002). It may appear that I am agreeing with the sex/gender distinction where gender is the social construction of a biological sex. However, instead, and following the

arguments made in Chapter 3, I wish to proceed from the premise that regulatory norms and performativities in fact materialise sex such that there is no possibility of a pre-discursive sex. The body is brought into being and made intelligible through discourses. These discourses are (re)formed within and (re)form systems of power. J. Butler uses the term 'sex' to illustrate this, but I could not employ the term sexism, as this is already associated with discrimination between men and women. However, I do wish to employ the rhetoric of the 'isms'. This is partially to validate the claim to prejudice and also to use the implicit assumptions commonly associated with racism, sexism, and classism: specifically, that these are denotations of hierarchies of power, which are prejudiced, negative and draw on stereotypes. Where there is violence associated with these discriminations it would be appropriate to use Namaste's (1996) term, 'genderbashing'. The processes of othering and hostilities, which have been addressed above, are not always violent and consequently I wish to use the term 'genderism', rather than 'gender bashing'. In Chapter 6 section 2 I substituted the word 'it' for heterosexism, but here I wish to extend this euphemism of one aspect of othering to that of another: genderism. This chapter will explore genderism ('it') and how women live in different ways with genderism. The final section of this chapter will explore the discourse of 'mistake' in terms of subverting the sexed dichotomy.

8.3 Sir?: Mistaken Identities

J. Butler (1990) contends that in order to be intelligible we must understand ourselves as male or female. In spite of the fluidity of gender and sex the dichotomy of male and female presumes the necessity of existing in one category to the exclusion of the other. This is problematic where women do not fit stereotypical conventions of 'female':

Pat: people do take notice when you are walking into a restaurant. I don't know if it's whether they are trying to work out if you are a man or a woman.

(Pat, individual interview)

244

Similar to women's experiences of othering in relation to their sexuality discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, Pat perceives herself to be the subject of surveillant and judgemental gazes as she enters the restaurant. These gazes look to place Pat within the binary of man and woman, because only then is she intelligible as human. The questioning of Pat's gender marks her as 'other' and something to be noticed and worked out.

KB: yeah, mm have you ever had any negative experiences or anything like that in relation to food?

Andie: not really apart from the amount of times that I have heard 'and you sir?' I am going (looks over her shoulder) looking behind me going, 'is there a bloke here? Are you a bloke? I don't think so.' Its like 'alright M [friend] are you a bloke?' 'NO. I don't think I am. No, I'm not' (laughter)

(Andie and Julie, focus group)

When asked about her negative experiences in a restaurant Andie immediately refers to when she is called 'sir' and discursively constituted as male. Clearly Andie finds problematic the reading of her as male, perhaps because it challenges her self-identity as female. To the question 'are you a bloke?' she answers 'NO. I don't think I am. No, I'm not'. Her reaction illustrates the necessity of denying the other, in this case male, in order to make sense within the dichotomous terms of gender. By discursively (re)placing herself as female she becomes intelligible within liveable society. Moreover, as has been seen in regard to sexuality, this is not simply a theoretical debate and being mistaken for a man is an emotionally charged experience.

On occasion the ambiguity of gender is reflected in language particularly where convention suggests the use of the terms sir or madam:

Angela: the funniest was in Tescos

Jenny: yeah

Angela: I went in and they had amm they were giving out these little bits of baileys (K mm) and glasses and I was going in and this girl comes up to me and goes 'would you like to try a baileys sir, Madame?' (laughs) It was like okay 'yes I will' (giggling)

(Angela and Jenny, individual interview)

Here language is clearly gendered. The woman could not place Angela as either male or female so she used both terms. The inability to place these women within one gender category or another can dehumanise the individuals involved:

Stevi: me and Susan [ex-girlfriend] just went away for a week and just went into this little tiny just a little café. And there was a big table that like that could have sat four and there was a table like right all the way in like cramped in you know for two. And we went to sit on the big one and she went 'oh sorry, sorry could you go on the, could you go on the other one?' And old straight couple came in and they let them sit there d'you know what I mean? And there was another twoer and they let them sit on the comfortable seats and … at the end she [the waitress] came over with the bill. Actually she waited until we gave her the money and she went 'thank you very much ladies, sir, oh whatever you are'. 'Thank you very much, good night.' Now I that's just disgusting, I think. That, you know that upsets me, you know 'whatever you are'. And she knew what we were cos earlier on she said 'ladies.' And then at the end of the meal it was like 'ladies, whatever you are'.

(Stevi and Virginia, coupled interview)

Here, instances of heterosexism and genderism overlap. Whilst acknowledging that multiple discriminations co-exist and reform each other, here the focus will be on genderism. Stevi is clearly maddened and upset with the representation of her identity beyond gender categories. Ward (1765: 459) asserts that 'he must represent a male; she a female; and it, an object of no sex' (quoted in Bodine, 1975: 129). Stevi and her partner did not fit into 'ladies' or 'sir' and became dehumanised as 'whatever'. This 'what' rather than 'who' indicates an object instead of a person. Without a sex individuals can no longer be human. Consequently Stevi and her ex-partner are not intelligible as human outside of identifiable gender categories.

These experiences illustrate the instability of gender/sex, which requires constant policing in order to reinforce dominant conceptualisations of female bodies and identities. Where gender identity is constantly queried, women are made constantly aware of their 'out-of-place' status:

Janet: They [straight people] just they just don't know *it*. They just don't know anything that is going on around them. But you are just made so aware of *it*. And aware of how you look you know and how you

dressing and what you are ordering and how you're eating. And *it* makes you more aware because people are looking at you. You know, you draw attention to yourself just you know, so *it* makes you more aware.

<div align="right">(Janet, individual interview)</div>

Janet argues that 'it' makes her more aware. There is no common phrase to describe 'it' but she knows that other people, including friends and girlfriends, do not understand what 'it' is like. They (we?) have no conceptualisation of the discriminations Janet experiences daily which makes her mindful of her body, how she is dressed and how she behaves. Janet sees herself as subject to the gaze and this makes 'it' all the more conscious and places 'it' at the forefront of Janet's mind. At this juncture the word genderism can be substituted where Janet uses 'it'. It is possible to argue, similar to the argument regarding heterosexism (Chapter 6 section 2), that genderism exists but unnamed and often unrecognised as a distressing and embarrassing experience. Without a name the prejudice is often not legitimated as a 'real' experience. People do not know 'it' and cannot relate to these women's experiences because their material discrimination is not discursively recognised. Moreover, from these women's perspectives they do not have the vocabulary to articulate their experiences and contextualise 'it' as a legitimate prejudice.

8.4 Mistaken Genders, Mistaken Sexualities: Mutually Constituting Gender and Sexuality

In Lee's (2001) study lesbian identification was seen as a space between womanhood and manhood. Estenberg (1996: 270) contended that where women are perceived to be more 'masculine', they were more likely to be read as lesbians. Radcliffe Hall's, *Well of Loneliness* (1928) saw the mannish lesbian as the 'true' lesbian attracted to, and attracting, feminine (heterosexual) women. Vicinus (1992) asserts that in the 1950's the mannish lesbian was privileged. However, in the 1960's some forms of feminism began to set criteria for the 'right' sort of lesbian and saw butch/femme couples as reproducing

<div align="right">247</div>

heterosexuality (c.f. Chapter 2 section 3.5). The butch lesbian in the 1970s was sometimes considered 'self-hating' and 'unreconstructed' (Ainley, 1995: 146, 148). This is not a linear history and the different opinions regarding butch/femme remain. For example, there are still those who see butch/femme as attempting to replicate heterosexuality (for example Jefferys, 1990; 1996). Munt (1995), however, asserts:

Whilst I am sympathetic to the claims that butch/ femme constitute new gender configurations which must be understood within their own terms, they are not intrinsically radical forms springing from the perfect homosexual body. Nor are they naïve forms in that they express a naturally good, pure and primitive desire.

(Munt, 1995: 120)

Similar to the arguments surrounding passing and transgression (see Chapter 6), this way of doing gender and sexuality is not simply 'right' or 'wrong'. Particularly important for this chapter is the recognition that 'butch' is not 'wrong' or necessarily attempting to be 'male'. Moreover, gender and sexuality are interlinked and non-traditional femininities have existed within lesbian 'herstories'.

Binary gender terms, which construct liveable society, are set within a particular sexuality framework. In Chapter 3 the heterosexual matrix was outlined. This follows J. Butler (1990a, 1993) who contends that gender and sexuality are mutually constituted. In this study women found that, on occasion, they were presumed to be men because of the assumption of heterosexuality. Stevi, for example, believed that she was more likely to be perceived as a man because of her relationship with Virginia:

KB: do you think it's, since you have been with Virginia has it been worse or has it been [pause]

Stevi: amm [pause] just different really. Cos I think when I was with Susan [ex-girlfriend] she is far more butch looking. I think people knew it was two dykes. Whereas now I think people sometimes genuinely think I am a bloke because Virginia looks so feminine, she could not possibly be gay. So its like or they you know I think that's how it happens. So in a way it does happen more but maybe it is because of how she looks as well.

(Stevi, individual interview)

Stevi had mentioned to me prior to the interview that her relationship with Virginia influenced how people understood her gender. Because Virginia 'could not be gay', Stevi was more likely to be mistaken for a man. Whereas, when Stevi was with someone who is more 'butch' their joint sexuality was known, but their gender remained unquestioned. Here the mutual construction of Virginia's sexuality and Stevi's gender illustrate the assumptions that define bodies problematically as opposites within the heterosexual matrix.

Andie experienced similar mistakes with a previous partner:

Andie: I mean sometimes we [an ex-girlfriend and Andie] went somewhere and everyone would think I am a bloke. So it just looked like she was with a bloke *so it wasn't a problem.* No can't see there was.

(Andie, individual interview)

Andie here believes that 'it' is not a problem. Similar to Chapter 6, 'it' here refers to heterosexism. As Andie could 'pass' as a man her partner and herself did not encounter any negative reactions to their sexuality. Here passing is about performing both a male and a heterosexual identity. This is similar to Devor's (1987) finding that some women choose to pass as men to avoid negative experiences. However, challenging the heterosexual matrix by being read as a man can have particular implications in terms of sexualities when women's 'true' identities are established:

Janet: I am sure people instantly think, cos ... why would a straight woman, not that I want to look like a man, but why would a straight woman cut her hair off and dress masculine (KB: yeah) if she wanted to attract men? ... Whereas not that I am saying I am butch or I am masculine. I don't think I am. But people mistake me for a man and I think some people think that I do it, that I dress like it purposely to attract straight women. ... I do think that they kind of think that I am lesbian, that I do it to attract straight women. And you know it does. I do attract a lot of straight women. And I have had so much trouble in college with straight women just having a go at me, you know. They have a go at me for fancying me because they have never fancied a woman before. And they have a go and its all my fault because they fancy me.

(Janet, individual interview)

In the traditional dichotomy of woman and man where bodies have particular and opposite haircuts and styles of dress Janet does not fit. However, she does not see herself as 'masculine' or 'butch'. Janet contests the categories of genders and thus she challenges dichotomous sexualities. Reading Janet's body as male but then understanding her as female makes her threatening as a sexually attractive individual. She is seen as intentionally 'attracting' 'straight' women. Janet is portrayed as the predatory lesbian who preys on 'straight' women by assuming a male appearance through dress. The fluidity of genders and sexuality is clear where Janet transgresses the conventional male/female divide and other women cross the straight/gay boundary. However, these movements are not comprehensible where the identities as women and men, straight and gay are perceived as fixed. Moreover, gender is believed to exist in terms of binary oppositions within heterosexuality which is opposite to, and separate from, lesbianism. The straight women found the crossing of these boundaries threatening and, as a result, were hostile towards Janet. The other, once again, could not be distinguished from and thus create the self, and this is threatening.

In this section Janet and Stevi illustrate the intersections between gender and sexuality. When gender is transgressed sexual identities can also be questioned:

Janet: I got they tried to throw me out of the woman's tent at pride. ... These big fat butch lesbians went 'ahh you're in the wrong tent you know, can you please get out?' And it was pissing down with rain outside... Its just you know at the woman's tent at pride. How bad? ... They literally tried to escort me out of the fucking tent. And I was just like. In the end, fortunately, I had my NUS card with me which had my picture and my name on it. And I had to keep it in my top pocket cos it happened about 3 times

Lorraine: yeah it did, didn't it?

KB: at pride?

Janet: yeah like in the woman's tent, three times. ... The thing that made me laugh was there was these two gay men standing next to us and they didn't ask them to leave. I don't know whether it was, it was a woman's tent and you know you are not supposed to have men in there and stuff. But you know whether they thought I was like a straight man or something

Lorraine: perving

Janet: yeah, I just, it just made me laugh even around my own people, as such, I still get kind of ... I still get trying to get chucked out by the security. And there was just, there was this one big fat woman that just tried to get me out and she wasn't having any of it. And I was just saying 'look I am not being funny but you know I am a lesbian. I am woman, you know. Just let me stay here' and she was just not having any of it

(Janet and Lorraine, focus group)

Hird (2000: 359) argues lesbianism is defined by gender. Janet exists between the binary and dichotomous categories of gender *and* sexuality as her 'lesbian' status rests on her female status. When her female status is contested her lesbian identity can also be challenged. Both Stevi and Janet illustrate the constituted linkages between sexuality and gender. These connections are not restricted to heterosexuality as assumptions of gender are also made in gay spaces. During a gay pride festival Janet was assumed to be a man who was 'perving' at lesbians in women only space and asked to leave. She had to resort to formal methods of identification (her student identification card) in order to establish or 'prove' her status as female and therefore her entitlement to stay in a woman only space. What is interesting is that assumptions of sexuality are linked to gender. In straight space, as outlined above, Stevi was more likely to be understood as male due to her conventionally feminine partner. In gay space, Janet was assumed to be male, was seen as 'out-of-place' and deviant. In an interesting reversal of hegemonic sexuality norms, heterosexuality is negative when associated with bodies read as male in female only spaces. In contrast, the gay men who were present were not perceived as threatening in female only spaces, perhaps because their sexuality and gender were clearly definable within the male/female, straight/gay binaries.

The self/other dichotomy can be used to understand the common sense assumptions of gender and sexuality (see Chapter 3). Where heterosexuality is seen as the 'norm' Stevi is defined as opposite to Virginia, and thus within the heterosexual matrix she is perceived as male. On the other hand, in women only lesbian space the reading of Janet's body as male makes her 'different' rather than 'same' in terms of woman versus man. She is perceived as a heterosexual male and therefore out-of-place in lesbian space. This is, however, premised on the opposition of male and female and heterosexual and

lesbian. But, the women here exist between these categories and, similar to intersexuals, transgendered individuals and transsexuals contest the links between sex, gender and sexualities. Thus, their bodies and identities are threatening because the self and other are blurred and cannot be easily defined.

8.5 Policing Place and Bodies: Making Toilets Female

The discursive questionings of gender can have material effects and daily consequences. In queer literature 'the bathroom problem' is commonly referred to (Halberstam, 1998; Munt, 1998). Halberstam (1998) argues that there are differences between the policing strategies used in male and female toilets, consequently she refers to a 'women's room problem'. Certain bodies are made out-of-place in female only spaces:

KB: can you amm talk me through the story of you and Virginia in a restaurant cos I don't think its...?

Stevi: the one when the waiter

KB: yeah it started with the waiter didn't it?

Stevi: yeah and then it got from bad to worse! When we got in and already there was people like looking. Amm I. Virginia says I am being paranoid but I, I don't think it is. I can tell, you know, when I am getting comments and looks and amm. ... So amm yeah we went in and like a couple of the waitresses were like looking and then we were seated and the bloke came over and he said 'what can I get you sir?' And we both just died and I just didn't want to speak. I let Virginia speak for me cos I just did not want to let him hear my voice even though it was quite low (puts on a low voice). You know, I just didn't want to speak. ... And then at the end of the meal I went down to go to the loo and this lady said, as I actually I was helping her out of the toilet door because she got locked in, and instead of saying 'thank you' she sort of just looked at me horrified and said amm 'are you in the right toilets?' You know and I was just astonished (pause). And afterwards you always think of the things you could say. I just didn't. I was just like 'yeah' really pathetic and I just died d'you know what I mean? So amm all in one night!

(Stevi individual interview)

As a result of the ways in which Stevi's body was read throughout the evening, she was made to feel out-of-place. She feels subjected to exclusionary processes such as gazes and comments. Stevi felt that this was because she did not fit particular norms and was

therefore read as male particularly when she was with Virginia (see above). Moreover, she was discursively constituted as male by the waiter and this was a source of embarrassment and upset for both her and her partner. Following this, Stevi was asked if she was in the 'right' toilets. Munt (1998) argues that toilets can be uncomfortable liminal zones where gender is tested and proved. Stevi failed the female gender test. The term 'right' implies that Stevi is in the 'wrong'. She is seen as transgressing the male/female divide by being within a female space yet perceived as male. In attempting to make the toilets female only space, the woman challenges Stevi, who does not fit into her conception of what a woman looks like. The woman, in this way, polices the spaces of female toilets according to particular norms of femininity. Skeggs (2001: 302) argues that within toilet spaces those 'who appear feminine are authorized and granted the power (in this small space) to evaluate others'. In this situation the woman, confident of her taken for granted reading of female, (con)tests Stevi's gender.

Geographies of gender have contended that gender and the landscape are connected and landscape reflects power and meaning (Monk, 1999). Toilets can physically distinguish and order bodies into female and male. This segregation apparently maps seamlessly onto 'man' and 'woman' and reproduces the illusion of a natural, biological binary separation of sex. This ordering can be heavily policed:

KB: have you ever been mistaken for a bloke?

Nina: yeah … it has happened to me twice.

KB: what happened?

Nina: the first time it was my friends 19 birthday and we went to amm () wine bary type place. And I was wearing black trousers and a shirt cos you had to be quite smart to get in there. … It was [the] bouncers in this wine bar, in this really posh wine bar and amm I went to the toilet and he followed me up the stairs and I went to the women's toilet. And he kicked the door down and said, 'get out, get out, get out, you're a bloke, you shouldn't be in here'.

KB: oh my god

Nina: I went to complain to the management and got like four free drinks so that was but that was the first time.

(Nina, Di, Michelle, and Mary: focus group)

253

Nina describes how she was harassed by a bouncer who read her body and how she dressed as male. Nina depicts being followed up the stairs and physically removed from toilets by a male bouncer, who is also out-of-place in women's toilets. However, the irony goes unrecognised. Similarly:

KB: do you get mistaken for a bloke often?

Janet: like I said to you, every single day. Every single day I get, I can't use public toilets I have been thrown out of (name of straight club), which is now (name of straight club). (KB: okay) It was in my first year it was toga night so I was wearing my bed sheet and a sports bra. And one of my mates was being sick and so I was in the toilets with her and someone screamed there was a man in the toilets. And three bouncers came in a chucked me out of the club and I was wearing a sports bra. Yeah I haven't got much up top, but you know I was wearing a sports bra. And by that time I was just like wearing a sheet around my waist and that was it and they still chucked me out

KB: oh my god

Janet: I can't use, I can't use service station toilets. I have had old women batter me out of toilets before

KB: really?

Janet: yeah not being serious, I mean I am being serious. I am usually in there with my mum and they used to have a go at me and my mum just used to walk up to them and go 'you lot are so just, you are so fucking rude.' D'you know? 'That's a girl'. And you know they don't look at my face or anything they just look at my build and look at my height and look at my haircut and they just instantly assume that I am some dirty man in the women's toilets so

KB: oh my god

Janet: I know I can't use the women's toilets

(Janet, Lorraine: focus group)

Janet, in the toilets of the night-club and service stations, transgresses feminine boundaries. These spaces are similar to airports in that people are travelling through space and therefore want to 'stabilise some boundaries (gender) as they traverse others' (in this case regional) (Halberstam, 1998: 20). However, boundaries are also stabilised in spaces where there are heightened (hetero)sexual tensions. In a night-club, although Janet is visibly wearing a signifier of femaleness, a sports bra, it is not believed that she is a woman and she is removed from female toilets. The possibility of two sexes is built

into the environment in societies that separate male and female toilets. With only two possibilities, where Janet is not understood as a woman, it is assumed she must be a man. Because of her presence in what is defined as female only spaces, she is seen as 'dirty', a perverted man in women's toilets. On the basis of breast size, height, build and haircut, Janet is confronted and the space of toilets (re)formed for women who fit particular norms. The spaces of toilets are policed and gendered bodies, which use these toilets, must 'fit' the common sense assumptions of what a female body is. In this way, women's toilets are made female and they are maintained as such through policing processes. Consequently places are gendered and do not pre-exist their performance (c.f. Chapter 9).

8.6 Breasts: Recuperating Bodies as Female

The nine participants, whose accounts form this chapter, challenged normative assumptions of 'woman' and were read as men. However, participants looked to reaffirm their identities as female. These women often looked to their bodies in order to (re)place themselves within the category 'woman':

KB: do you get mistaken for a lad?

Julie: amm I haven't recently. When I used to wear my cap I did. But I don't know

KB: oh that's cool.

Julie: do I look like a bloke?

KB: no.

Julie: that's alright.

KB: but no you said in the focus group that you do sometimes get mistaken for

Julie: I have, I have in the past been mistaken for

KB: how does it make you feel?

Julie: (makes noise) don't know mate. There's a couple of breasts there. Just trying to make a big point I've got breasts and I'll stick them out and shove em in their throat, damn it, shove it down their throats so then they'll know.

<div align="right">(Julie, individual interview)</div>

Julie illustrates the sensitivity of this study. When I ask if she has been mistaken for a 'lad' (a term used in the focus group with Andie), she asks if she looks like a 'bloke'. Not believing that she does, and not willing to upset her I immediately say no (see Chapter 4). My reaction illustrates that it is an insult to be categorised outside your lived gender. This contests Devor's (1987) assertion that within a patriarchal society 'there would be less offence in erring in the direction of affording someone higher status [male] rather than the lower [female]' (Devor, 1987: 20). The interactions between Julie and myself, along with the previous discussion, illustrates that the offence lies in the disjuncture between self-perceptions and gender ascriptions by others (c.f. Halberstam, 1997). Julie's sensitivity to being read as male results in her arguing emotively that her breasts mark her as female. When she is mistaken for a man she will use her body to prove that she is a woman thereby demonstrating the salience of the body.

Women who are mistaken for men do not only perpetuate the recourse to bodies in order to define sexed identities. Their bodies are implicated in the (mis)reading:

Jenny: you said about the one up in (name of town) the last time you went home, that you were going out that night and they were giving out tickets.

Angela: oh god yeah (laughs).

Jenny: cos it was a free night.

Angela: it was in, going into the club and it was ladies drink free. And at the door they were handing out these tickets, (KB: mm) raffle tickets to go the bar with (KB: mm) and he handed them to my three friends and I said 'well don't I get one?' And he said 'if you had a skirt, if you had tits and a skirt I'd give you one.' And I just went 'okay what are these [breasts] then?' It was like (laughs), 'oh my god' (laughter), and he was so embarrassed and I just laughed and he gave me one.

Jenny: I've only once I think that was in Burger King he just went 'oh thanks very much sir' ... [I had a] big top on and if I have loads of layers on you can't see my tits anyway so (KB: mm).

Angela: I think I got called, I think I got mistaken for a bloke today on delivery. Cos we went to the door and this woman, it was a new one that John had never been to before and she'd found out the name of the driver and amm. She came to the door and said 'hi John which one of you is John?' (Laughs) I was like (Jenny laughs) 'hello' I have this big grey thing this great green luminous thing on so it did cover em [her breasts] up.

(Jenny and Angela, focus group)

Angela was materially excluded from female entitlements of drinks on a ladies' night on the assumption that she was male. In order to 'prove' she was a 'lady' Angela had to have particular requirements: 'tits and a skirt'. In this way a man handing out tickets imposed traditional markers of femininity. Additionally, Angela and Jenny were discursively constituted as male. To (re)make themselves female, they also looked to the signifiers of dress and breasts. Both Angela and Jenny attributed the mistaken readings of their bodies to their clothes and the invisibility of their breasts. Rather than explore the problematic definitions of male and female, they reinscribed themselves within the female category by recourse to their bodies and the existence of breasts. Consequently, Angela and Jenny made themselves intelligible within normative genders/sexes.

Janet used her body to actively challenge people's readings of her as male:

Janet: you know I have got bored of showing people my tits now just for the sake of being able to go to the toilet or you know.

KB: that's bad, isn't it?

Janet: you know why should I have to show my tits off to someone?

(Janet, Lorraine, focus group)

Where breasts are understood as something only possessed by the female sex, Janet can use hers to illustrate her embodiment as a female and gain access to female only toilets. Recourse to bodies, does not simply reassure the women of their identity as women, it also informs society of these individuals' status as female. Janet is resisting particular readings of her body, however, there is a cost involved (see Chapter 7 section 3). Whereas Julie and Angela merely pointed to their breasts under their clothing, Janet

removed her clothing to illustrate her embodiment as female. Janet does not feel her breasts are visible under her clothes and understands this as part of the reason her body is (mis)read. The cost of being allowed entrance to female only space is the visual invasion of Janet's bodily space in order to 'prove' she is a woman. Similar to Chapter 7 section 3, where women contested heterosexism and homophobia, there are both costs and benefits in transgressing the male/female divide. Here Janet (re)gains the use of female space, however entry to this space is premised on the invasion of her bodily space. This diversifies spatial concepts, such that space can be seen as multifaceted, diverse and potentially contradictory. Moreover, different spatial formations can interact. Here the physical place of the toilet is (re)produced as female through Janet 'proving' herself to be female at the site of her body.

Being mistaken for men challenged these women's identities and made them unintelligible within gender binaries. These participants looked to be (re)placed as female, which they see as distinct from male. Discontinuities between readings of their bodies and these women's self-identities were addressed by recourse to their bodies. Following J. Butler (1990), these enactments can be seen as (re)making these women intelligible as human by reaffirming a female gender distinct from its opposite male gender. Interestingly although the presence of a vagina was not mentioned, the breasts, as only female organs, were seen as important in classifying their bodies as female. The emphasis they placed on breasts points to bodies and identities as mutually constituted. It also points to the 'chronotopic tripartite dynamism - of the social, of the body and of the self' (Wilton, 2000: 251). Thus the 'self-as-gendered is not purely socially produced, but a product of the meniscus between the body and the social' (Wilton, 2000: 249). Conversely, however, the social and the body are also produced and reform the binary and dichotomous categories of male and female as these participants enact and reaffirm their identities and bodies as female. When participants' gendered identities are not clearly placed within one category or another they can be subject to confrontations and hostilities. Moreover, (re)placing oneself as female can be costly.

8.7 Confronting (Mis)readings or Passing as Male

Experiences of genderism can be distressing and embarrassing for the women involved. Stevi spoke to me in a social setting (see Chapters 4 and 5) about driving on the motorway for over three hours without stopping to go to the toilet. She desperately wanted to use the toilet, but she did not stop because she did not want to deal with potential confrontations in service station toilets. Similarly:

Lorraine: I can't believe how rude people are though, cos I have been in the toilets with you.

Janet: I mean you've been every single. I dread going to the toilets at (name of nightclub) on a Wednesday night I absolutely dread it I just think 'fuck I have to go to the toilet'. And I hold it off as long as I can and I just think 'no I have to go'. And I have to get someone to come with me because I just, I just get so many people shouting at me.

(Later in the focus group)

Janet: know if she wanted to go out for dinner on a Saturday night or something I probably say 'I don't think so' just because it would just be it would just make me too uncomfortable. I would much rather just get something from Tesco's and eat it here and just feel comfortable and actually enjoy it. Rather than always, its not just about with me anyway its not about who I am with. It's a lot about me as well just because of the amount of shit I get. So you know going out for a meal and stuff if I need to use the toilets and you know stuff like that I worry about which is I know I get shit I have had a fight in (name of restaurant) toilets once after having a meal there.

(Janet and Lorraine, focus group)

Here, Janet differentiates heterosexism from genderism. 'It' in this context is not about who she is with but how she is read. As a result of potentially being confronted, these women can avoid spaces which are designed as exclusively female, such as the space of female toilets. Janet also asks a female friend, who fits normative categories, to accompany her to the toilet as a form of signification and protection from people shouting at her. This form of self-policing redefines spaces within dualistic hegemonic gender norms. Moreover, Janet would avoid spaces where she may have to use the toilet and would not feel comfortable going to a restaurant on Saturday night when it is busy.

Avoiding the female only spaces of toilets influences Janet's choice as to *when* she will go to a restaurant.

Some women, as has been argued above, confront the (mis)readings of their bodies by using their breasts to prove their identity. Pat verbally confronts the questioning of her gendered identity:

Pat: If people are like 'are you a man?' and I'm like 'I don't know are you?' and just like take the piss out of them.

KB: (laugh) I don't know, are you?

(Laughter)

Pat: that's the best way to get over, if you are embarrassed yourself is just to embarrass other people.

KB: yeah but how does it make you feel when you are mistaken for a bloke?

Pat: well obviously not very nice, yeah it is very embarrassing.

(Pat, individual interview)

Although Pat makes a joke about her 'mistaken' identity and attempts to reverse the embarrassing processes, she is still subject to negative feelings. It is 'not nice' having your gender identity questioned. As indicated in chapter 7, transgressions come at a price but the process of contesting these readings can be personally empowering.

Devor (1987) found that women identified both positive and negative aspects of being mistaken for men (see section 8.1.2). In this study, women varied in how they felt about their experiences of genderism and gendered spaces. Jenny and Angela found positive aspects of being understood as men:

KB: how do you feel about that?

Angela: I just think its funny now. It was great at one time though, cos when I was little we went to a theme park with my mum and dad there was a massive queue for the ladies, like out of the door and god knows how long. [Mum/ dad said] 'Angela just go in the men's' and I did I went straight in and into the toilet no questions asked I'm like 'hey.' It was quite funny.

(Jenny and Angela, focus groups)

Angela, recognising that there is always a longer queue for the women's toilets than for the men's, employed the perceptions of her body to use the men's toilets. Similar to Devor's (1987) study, the positive aspects of being mistaken for men relied upon the individuals not contesting the male assumptions and 'passing' as men. This can be seen as similar to 'passing' as heterosexual in that the assumptions of heteronormative genders remain uncontested yet the women are able to avoid negative experiences (Chapter 7).

Angela contends that she finds it 'funny' when she is mistaken for a man. Janet also used humour to deal with genderism.

Janet: in (name of gay club) I mean, in (name of gay club) I have been told by other woman to get out of the toilets. And you know they were kind of new people in (name of gay club) and they both looked really straight so I instantly went 'aa you fucking straight girls get out of this fucking club. This is my club' you know (KB: yeah). And then one of them said 'I'm gay' and I was like 'fuck off look at ya' cos she was wearing a skirt you know and even.

Lorraine: I wear skirts! (Laughter)

Janet: no, no right she had a real long skirt on and had long curly hair and just looked really feminine. ... She was like, 'get out of the toilets' and I was like, 'oh you fucking straight girl'. She was like, 'I'm not straight.' I went, 'yeah you're fucking straight look at you'. Just because I was winding her up because you know she kind of took the piss out of me. I don't know *quite funny really* (laughter). She was getting really pissed off cos I wasn't accepting that she was a lesbian. And I was like 'ahh you fucking straight girl'. I think I might just start using the men's toilets in places I think.

Lorraine: yeah.

Janet: but then I'd have to see willies and that might disturb me quite a lot.

Lorraine: yeah (laughter)

Janet: stand around the urinals like that (makes a gagging noise).

(Later in the focus group)

KB: oh my god.

Janet: it's just fucked up in it? Nothing, its nothing to do with like, this but (KB: yeah, no), but it's just quite funny, it's really funny. You don't really understand and I am not going to say 'oh I have had such a hard time' but you don't really understand what I go through and people just take the piss

KB: no, no I mean I wouldn't pretend to understand.

Janet: people take the piss but its not, it's not a particularly funny matter.

<div align="right">(Janet and Lorraine, focus group, my emphasis)</div>

In the space of gay clubs Janet feels she can challenge the readings of her body and make the woman feel out-of-place because of her 'feminine' body. However, the fact that she did react illustrates that she is clearly bothered and annoyed about being asked to leave the women's toilets, particularly in what she considers 'her' space of gay clubs. Janet speaks of 'it' (read genderism) being quite funny and jokes about having to see 'men's willies'. Later in the focus group, she contends that although she may laugh 'it' off, there is nothing 'funny' about other people making jokes about 'it' (her experiences of genderism). Janet feels that other people do not understand the deeply hurtful feelings of having your gender core constantly questioned.

Interestingly, in the individual interview, Janet spoke a lot less about her experiences of genderism as being funny. This is perhaps because in front of her friends, including Lorraine, she does not want to be seen to be upset about her experiences of genderism. In this way she illustrates how she acts and perhaps is expected to react, in the face of genderism. It may also be that reading and reflecting on the transcript of the focus group resulted in Janet thinking about how much these othering processes affect her. In any case, Janet's frustration and upset in the individual interview contrasted with her 'take the piss' attitude in the focus group:

Janet: I thought to myself, why do I, why do I let it bother me so much? And then you know and then I know that I'm out tomorrow night and I am in the toilets and I am getting verbal abuse off of some ugly girl that has come in and said I pinched her bum or something. ...Then I forget about, I forget about trying to be strong and not pretending that it bothers me. And I know having drunk too much get pissy and arsy with it and get annoyed with it like I always do.

KB: what do you mean pissy and arsy with it?

Janet: just pissy and arsy about people's attitudes. Just about all these horrible little straight girls that go to the toilets and they just think it's disgusting. And not even take a look, [take] the time to look at me. And you know people say you know 'we don't understand how you can get mixed up and stuff.' And that's just

because, as I said before, people just look at my size and look at my haircut and look at my build and look at my lack of tits and instantly jump to assumptions about me. So like I said it won't change, as much as I think about it. When I was reading the transcript and as much as I you know I think to myself you know 'don't let it bother you' and people say 'oh don't let it bother you' and you know you flash your tits at them and, but you know. But when it comes to it in the situation where you're getting, where they are not letting you use switch cards ... to pay for something, or your in the toilets and someone is shouting abuse at you and you see the bouncers coming in to have a look to see what's going on, you know, it bothers me then. And there's not much I can do about it. Unless I have a 'I am a woman' tattooed on my forehead, even then, even then they just think I am a weirdo a man with 'I am a woman' tattooed on my head.

(Janet, individual interview)

Janet, while performing an 'it doesn't bother me' attitude in front of her friends, is profoundly affected by the constant challenges to her gendered identity as female. She is confronted daily with the rigid separation of male and female and how this is enacted in everyday society. Janet's body is not always read as female because people do not take the time to look at her. They assume from her size, build and haircut that she must be male. The disjuncture between her self-perception and the reading of her body results in her being out-of-place in women-only spaces. She also faces opposition when using a Switch debit card with her (female) name on it. Janet is subject to genderism because of the separation of gender into strict categories and the policing of these boundaries. She addresses genderism by employing humour and attempting to 'be strong', but her feelings of frustration and upset are clear. Janet and the other women in this chapter illustrate the often emotive experience of being mistaken for a man. In addition women often try to change themselves or see genderism as their fault:

I refuse to grow my hair as I find it very uncomfortable and look like a man in drag! The clothes I wear may be part of the problem but mini skirts were never gonna look good on someone with a shaved head fat legs and being 4 stone over weight!! Tight tops are fine as long as you don't have a beer belly like me! and stilettos look a bit silly with combats! So what is a girl to do??????

(Email communication in response to article in Diva, Browne, 2002. Used with permission)

This woman sees how she styles her body as 'part of the problem'. However, she argues her body would not 'fit' into clothes ascribed to feminine bodies. She reinforces her

263

identity as female yet chooses not to fit into feminine stylisations of the body. However, she argues that attempting to do so would not halt her experiences of genderism because her body would 'betray' her and she would look like a 'man in drag'. This woman thus illustrates the complex matrices which form bodies and identities through spaces of betweeness. She argues, I believe rightly, that putting on a 'tight top' and stilettos will not stop her experiencing genderism. Instead the dichotomies of male/man and female/woman, which make her, often simultaneously, intelligible (in her mind) and unintelligible (in the readings of others), is not based solely on individual performances. Rather, this dichotomy is constituted within the 'chronotopic tripartite dynamism - of the social, of the body and of the self' (Wilton, 2000: 251).

8.8 'A Right Geezer-Bird': Disrupting Gender Categories Through 'Mistakes'

The women in Devor's (1987) study felt their appearances were neither masculine nor feminine but 'neutral'. However, Devor (1987) argues that:

In order for their gender choices to effectively challenge the limitations of the female role, they must be visible as females. In order to challenge the idea that there are only two categories, they must appear to be neither men nor women.

(Devor, 1987: 22)

Devor's argument has often been made in relation to sexuality and passing (see Chapter 7). However, as has been contended above, how one does gender or sexuality should not be proscribed. This section will explore the discourse of mistake and the possibilities of gender subversions beyond Devor's assertions.

Moments of transgression, where women's bodies are read as male, may challenge the illusion of fixity. Being mistaken for a man differs from intersexuality, transsexualism, transgenderism and drag. The discourse is in terms of other people's 'mistakes' rather

than attempting to move or exist between genders and sexes. A 'mistake' is commonly understood as something incorrectly thought or done (Oxford Dictionary, 1995). In this case, there is an element of both thought (from the observer) and doing (how the participants 'did' their identities and bodies). Understanding the readings of their bodies as male, these women use the discourses of 'mistake' to (re)inscribe themselves as female and thus intelligible within lived society.

I used the word 'mistake' during interviews although I was not comfortable with the term. However, this was a phrase that the participants understood and related to. They saw their bodies and identities as incorrectly read. As has been illustrated above, this was often a traumatic experience which was exasperated by the denial of particular forms of consumption, for example using a credit card (c.f. Chapter 5). In order to 'make sense' of themselves and the readings of their bodies women drew on discourses of 'mistake'. This is interesting because the dichotomy of male or female is not simply internalised but it is incorporated (c.f. J. Butler, 1990a; 1997a). The heterosexual law is not simply written on the body, it writes the body. The policing of bodies, spaces and identities illustrated the fragility of this law which requires continually embodied performances. Whereas these participants transgressed sexuality boundaries, they could not comprehend themselves outside of the discourses of gender and sex which place particular bodies with specific identities. It is important to recognise that the dissonances were attributed to the observers/readers of these bodies. How these 'women' understood themselves as female was not challenged.

The term 'mistake' implies that there is a 'correct', in contrast to the 'incorrect', thought or deed. However, there is another way of conceptualising these relations: namely, that it is not a 'mistake' but, instead, the transgression of sex/gender boundaries illustrates their fluidity and performative constitution. J. Butler contends that:

... when we are standing in two different places at once; or we don't know exactly where we are standing; or when we have produced an aesthetic practice that shakes the ground. That's where resistance to recuperation happens.

(J. Butler, 1994: 10)

265

These women are standing in 'two places at once' when their bodies are read as male but they perceive themselves as female. As a result they do not know where they are standing and their aesthetic and bodily practices have shaken the grounds of gender. This can be understood as unintentional resistance. However, importantly, this resistance is recuperated, in the form of recourse to breasts by the women or in terms of apologies by those who (mis)read these 'women's' identities. In this way the 'mistake' is 'corrected' but, through the process of disjuncture, the assumptions of a binary gender system, where opposites 'naturally' occur, is contested. Although these women may be transgressing gender norms and contesting the binary categorisation of gender, this process has serious consequences as people look to police these boundaries and restrict material genders and sexes within particular discursive categories.

8.9 Conclusion

Using J. Butler's (1990a; 1997a) conceptualisation of the performativity of gender we can understand the possibilities of women existing outside gender norms yet within particular bodies. Gender, sex and sexuality are not intrinsically linked, instead these links are made, performed and naturalised. In addition, sex or gender are not fixed and individuals who move between sexes, genders and sexualities contest the illusion of binary dichotomous genders. However, these movements are not without their costs. This chapter focused on individuals' experiences of genderism which are the processes of othering and discrimination that render women as out-of-place because their bodies are read as male. Bodies and identities mutually inform these women's understandings of themselves as women and places are implicated in the performative formation of male and female. Social and cultural landscapes make female bodies and identities and, conversely, performativities form gendered spaces.

Although the processes of genderism have been described in gender theory, 'it' (genderism) remains unnamed both in academia and everyday life. The overt hostility to

women who are mistaken for men illustrates the dangers associated with transgressing 'natural' gender boundaries and then entering female-defined spaces. Moreover, due to the naturalisation of human as either male or female, challenging one's gender makes one unintelligible as human and is often harrowing as it contests the identities that constitute us. Consequently, some women looked to (re)place themselves as female using their breasts, which are seen as only being an aspect of women's bodies, and understanding these readings as a 'mistake'. However, 'mistakes' can also be understood as moments of resistance where the binary and dichotomy of man/woman is problematised.

Exploring spaces between male and female has required a recognition of power as constitutive and the impossibility of existing outside power. Power is not simply inscribed but incorporated into who we are. However, there is coherency in the dichotomous separation of gender (see Chapter 3 section 3) and the norms and codes which make male and female (as well as straight and gay): 'gain their power and currency from their impossibility. In other words, the very flexibility and elasticity of the terms 'man' and 'woman' ensures their longevity' (Halberstam, 1998: 27). Nevertheless, (re)appropriation is disruptive because the 'constitutive relations' which form space (Massey, 1999: 284) are impure. Transgressions, whether intentional or unconsciously enacted, are messy, incorporating bodies, identities and spaces. The final discussion chapter will draw together issues of power, performativity and place by examining non-heterosexual women's perceptions of towns and experiences of cities. The chapter moves to explicitly examine sites and the formation of sites through processes of othering.

Chapter Nine

Imagining The City, Living The Other:

Non-Heterosexual Women's Perceptions Of Cities And Experiences Of Towns

Chapter outline

9.1. Introduction: Cities, Bodies, Identities and Fantasies

As in art appreciation, there is an irreducible sense in which an iconography of urban symbols, signs or signifiers ultimately lies in the eye of the beholder.

(Badock, 1996: 94)

Having investigated the mutual constitution of bodies, spaces and identities, this final discussion chapter will explore 'the spatial' at the regional level of towns and cities. Throughout this thesis 'reality' has been conceptualised as continually reproduced. Daily life, it has been argued, is (re)formed through enactments which mutually constitute bodies, spaces and identities. In this chapter I wish to explore imaginings as important in (in)forming daily lives. The imaginings, which will be the focus of this chapter, are non-heterosexual women's imaginings of cities and their daily enactments in towns. In this way I wish to explore Rose's (1999) assertion that:

The body is entangled with fantasy and discourse; fantasy mobilizes bodies and is expressed through discourse; and discourse, well, discourse is disrupted by fantasy and interrupted by the bodily. And all of these relations are articulated spatially; their performance produces space.

(Rose, 1999: 258)

Consistent with Rose's reading of space, this chapter conceptualises places of cities and towns as continually and imaginatively (re)constructed. King (1996: 17) understands writing the city as 'linked to any number of different (often competing) narratives'. Simonsen (forthcoming: 13), furthermore, contends that the city becomes a 'collection of stories'. However, these stories do not simply have to be told by those who live in cities. In this chapter the narratives of non-heterosexual women who live in towns will write the 'city'. Their accounts are understood as interpretations, which are (re)constituted through their experiences but which are also formative, not simply of cities but also of towns.

Cities and towns can be conceptualised as more than physical phenomena (Mazzoleni, 1993). They can be sites of identification that are 'represented by people, just as people represent cities' (King, 1996: 7). Similar to Rose (1999) above, Grosz (1998) argues that cities and bodies are mutually formative. These formations are (re)produced by movement through space in which 'we imprint utopian and dystopian movements upon urban [and, I would argue, rural] life' (Munt, 1995: 125). Moreover, 'our bodies are vital signs of this intersubjective and temporal location' (Munt, 1995: 125). Consequently, the urban and rural, as well as bodies and identities, are formed through enactments but also through fantasies. Philips (2000: 102) contends that imaginings and realities are not the same but neither is one privileged over the other. Rather they 'co-exist and interact' (Phillips, 2000:102). This chapter will investigate the place of fantasises of cities in the (re)formation of bodies and identities for women who live in towns.

Cities, whilst they can be understood as fluid, often have very real associations and material affects (Knopp, 1998; Shields, 1996). Consequently, cities here are conceptualised as socially produced yet 'imbued with ideologies' (Miles, 1997: 19). Geographies of gender have illustrated how gender and sexuality are 'embedded in the built environment' (Bondi, 1992: 100). In this chapter women's formations of meaning are 'linked to the realm of ideas and discourse but also (and importantly) to the material, physical and spatial world' (King, 1996: 16). Understanding the importance of power in the (re)formation of cities and towns, it is important to reiterate that non-heterosexual women feel othered in everyday spaces. Therefore, the imaginings of cities are (re)theorised as intimately interconnected with relations of power which render non-heterosexual women as 'out-of-place' at an everyday/local level. Moreover, the chapter transgresses the urban/rural divide and explores towns as the 'middle ground' between the city and countryside.

Whilst the 'city' and urbanities have been explored in many different contexts, including urban geographies and cultural studies, this chapter will begin by exploring geographies of sexualities. Geographies of sexualities have investigated the intersections between material places and sexual politics. Additionally, they have recognised the interactions

between urbanities/ruralities and sexualities. Consequently, these discussions are an important starting point for a discussion of imagined places and the formation of non-heterosexual identities and embodiments.

This chapter, having reviewed the literature regarding geographies of sexualities, will move on to examine women's accounts of their perceptions of cities and their lived experiences in towns. The chapter will examine the relational formation of towns and cities and alternative understandings of cities and towns. The final section will further investigate imaginings using word of mouth stories and experiences of 'gay' tourism. The women involved in this study were living in two towns and two cities (see table 9.3). The majority of the participants were from town 1 (see also table 5.4b, chapter 5). This town has one gay club and two gay pubs. Town 2 has no gay pubs or clubs, but one pub was described as 'gay friendly'. Both cities 1 and 2 had identifiable gay areas with pubs and clubs. None of the participants spoke of living in 'lesbian' neighbourhoods, nor did they identify any specifically lesbian residential clusters in the towns and cities in which they lived. This is not to say that these do not exist, simply that none of the participants spoke of them. This chapter will focus on the experiences of living in a town, although it will include certain aspects discussed by the three participants who live in cities. The towns and cities are not identified to protect participants' identities.

Table 9.3: Summary of where participants lived

Where participants live	Number of women
Town 1 (1 gay club, 2 gay pubs)	22
Town 2 (no specifically gay venues)	3
City 1 (three gay clubs, seven gay pubs)	2
City 2 (three gay clubs and five gay pubs)	1
Total	**28**

9.2 Geographies of Sexualities: The Urban/Rural Dichotomy

Having conceptualised cities, bodies and identities as interlinked, I will now explore geographies of sexualities' investigations of the urban and the rural. The section begins by exploring the urban which has been perceived as connected to gay and lesbian identities. The section will go on to address rural sexualities. Finally the section will problematise the urban/rural dichotomy evident within geographies of sexualities.

9.2.1 Urban Sexualities

Geographies of sexualities' beginnings, it can be argued, are in urban spaces. Moreover, these beginnings were singular, addressing the geography of a particular group; white, middle class, gay men (Bell and Valentine, 1995a). Bech (1998: 215) contends that modern sexuality is 'essentially urban' and early studies of gay geography supported this thesis. Gay men were seen as claiming territories in American cities and, through this territoralisation, challenging homophobia (Castells, 1983; Lauria and Knopp, 1985; Knopp, 1990). Lauria and Knopp (1985) argue that cities are places where gays could escape to some extent from the pressures of heterosexist society. Most of these early studies sought to map gay male current and historical appropriation of territory, which originally served as a defensive base where gay men could feel safe (Castells, 1983; Knopp, 1987; 1990b; Warren, 1974). Gay territories began to be seen as bases of economic and political power which were attributed to the appropriation of physical space in urbanities (Knopp and Lauria, 1985; Knopp, 1987; 1990a; b).

In the same vein as the early focus on gay places, Manchester has recently been explored in-depth with a number of authors documenting the development of Manchester's gay village (Hindle, 1994; Quilley, 1996; Whittle, 1994a; b). Quilley (1996) identifies two phases of development in Manchester's gay community with the first based on a 'political-institutional dynamic' (1984-1988) and the second on a 'market dynamic'

(from 1987) (1996: 47). The latter, Quilley argues, has a double edge. On one hand Manchester's Gay Village is seen as an essential part of Manchester's vision of itself. On the other hand, however, 'gay sexuality is being exploited as an urban spectacle' (Quilley, 1996: 48). Whittle (1994b: 38) goes as far as to contend that at present 'politics no longer have a place in Manchester's Gay Village'. Consequently, gay territories may not be politically empowering and the literature on Manchester gives a complex picture of gay urban spaces. Moreover, Knopp (1998: 163) contends that in London there is a more 'cultural politics of resistance' than in American cities. He (1998: 163) defines these cultural politics as 'social practices that involve the contesting of dominant values outside formal and economic institutions'. This has clear resonances with Chapter 7, and in this context it is important to note that urban spaces do not have to be territorialized to be used to challenge hegemonic heterosexuality.

The early gay male geography valorises gay spaces and places as 'safe' and 'a place to be oneself'. Warren (1974) argues that individuals differentiate gay spaces and times where they can 'be their real selves' from other heterosexual spaces and times, such as work (see Chapter 6 section 5). However, Hindle (1994) asserts that Manchester's gay village may become an area where gays could become isolated and segregated despite gay people feeling more at home or safe. Skeggs (1999: 228) contends that 'safe gay spaces' are not possible, as visibility brings an identifiable target, although gay spaces may offer a temporary respite. Myslik (1995) illustrates this using Washington DC's Dupont circle, an identifiable gay area. He argues that a number of violent incidents have occurred because of the area's notoriety and visibility. Moreover, studies of Manchester contend that the 'gay' village is becoming increasingly (re)appropriated by straight, 'beautiful', young people (Whittle, 1994b). This has the effect of (re)making Manchester's gay scene as exclusionary for older gay men and based solely on consumption for pleasure and increasingly often for straight people (Whittle, 1994b; Quilley, 1996). Whittle (1994b: 40) argues that when straight people adopt characteristics of gay life that are attractive the 'essence' of difference is eliminated and these are '[d]ifferences that have a history of providing safe places'. Certainly the 'pink pound' or gay male spending power has been an important area of study as gay male

commercial presence becomes more significant (see for example; Whittle, 1994b; Pritchard *et al.*, 1998). However, the 'degaying' of gay/lesbian events, such as gay pride, 'signals a challenge to the hard won power and control of gay streets' (Pritchard *et al.*, 1998: 280). Although it is contended that Manchester's gay village is being (re)claimed as 'gay', the notion of metropolitan centres as Meccas for the gay community is problematic (Skeggs, 1999; Spurlin, 2000; Quilley, 1996). 'Urban Meccas' may only exist for particular young, white, gay (or even straight) men.

The geography of sexualities which focus on urban white, middle class, male, gay appropriation of space has been contested. Geographies of sexualities, as multiple and plural, also explore lesbian appropriations of urban space and rural sexualities. The former will be investigated in this section and the latter in the following section. It is recognised that other social differences, including ethnicity and disability, also render this form of geography plural. Whilst these 'categories' are mentioned below they are beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the thesis aims to further diversify geographies of sexualities by moving between the boundaries of urban/rural and real/imaginary.

The approach to non-heterosexual women within gay male geography can, for the most part be summarised by Quilley (1996: 49) who states '[b]y gay community I refer mainly to men'. Certain authors have argued that women and lesbians tended not to concentrate in a given territory, and because of this, lesbians are less likely to achieve local political power (Castells, 1983; Knopp, 1990b). Castells (1983) believed that the power relations between women and men visible in society are reproduced within gay spaces. He believed that these were due to men's essential need to claim space, an innate need which women did not possess. Similarly, Lauria and Knopp (1985) argue it is easier to live as 'gay' if you are white, male and middle class. They contend that lesbians did not appropriate urban space because gay men were more oppressed as men in relation to and by other men and they therefore have more of a need for 'safe' space.

There are, however, a limited number of explorations of lesbian appropriations of urban space which contest these assumptions. As early as 1978, Ettore's work challenged the assumption that lesbians were not involved in urban politics. She examined how lesbians

appropriated urban space as a form of community action. Assumptions that lesbians cannot or do not wish to appropriate urban spaces at a neighbourhood level have also been challenged (White and Winchester, 1988). Peake (1993), for example, argues that lesbian sexuality has a part to play in defining the social characteristics of space at a neighbourhood level. Valentine (1993a; b; c; 1995) identifies a lesbian ghetto 'Hightown' in her study of 'Melchester', a town in England. She shows how women who lived in Hightown created lesbian spaces ranging from materially grounded spaces of neighbourhoods to heterosexual spaces appropriated temporally such as bars and clubs. Consequently, 'lesbian landscapes' incorporate neighbourhood appropriations of space, including spaces of entertainment and these contest assumptions that lesbians cannot or do not wish to appropriate urban space or be involved in urban politics.

Whilst lesbians may appropriate urban space and be involved in gay politics, Adler and Brenner (1992) identify differences between the ways in which lesbians and gay men relate to urban space and urban politics. Rothenburg (1995) argues that lesbian concentration in a neighbourhood is due to social networking. This is a factor which Castells (1983) and Knopp (1990) argue dissuades lesbians from concentrating in urban spaces. As late as 1994, Hindle argued that lesbians tend to meet and operate via interpersonal networks rather than creating or using territories. However, as Rothenburg (1995) illustrates, social networking and the appropriation of territory need not be mutually exclusive. This chapter will not focus on the appropriation of territory, instead the emphasis will be on imaginings of urban spaces by non-heterosexual women. In this way, place as well as space will be considered and the relations which (re)form place will be examined (c.f. Massey, 1999, see chapter 3 section 4.3).

The absence of lesbians in accounts of non-heterosexual appropriations of urban space could be attributed to different researchers 'seeing' differently. Indeed, male researchers, who form the majority of those working within geographies of sexualities, may not 'see' lesbians at all and thus invisiblise them in their research (c.f. chapters 2 and 3 in relation to the omission of women from discussions of poststructuralism and postmodernism). However, more important for this thesis is the contention that generalisations cannot be

made about how 'lesbians', as a coherent group, appropriate and use space. Similar, to the critiques which argue that the category 'gay men' is not homogenous (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000; Knopp, 1998), 'lesbians' are also understood as a complex and heterogeneous group. Valentine (1995: 109) argues that what she terms 'lesbian landscapes' are diverse and are produced temporally as well as spatially. Peake (1993) used race and sexuality to argue that there are complex interrelationships between class, race and sexualities. Meono-Picado (1997) describes how Latin American lesbians in New York create an oppositional public sphere, illustrating that, even within American cities, lesbians are not homogenous. Moreover, studies of countries outside America, the United Kingdom and Australia have contested 'Western' assumptions of sexual identity (Wenyu, 2002; Willman, 2000). In addition, R. Butler (1999) argues that disabled lesbian, gay and bisexual geographies have yet to be fully developed and that ableism permeates the boundaries of sexualities. Bondi (1997b) contends that feminist urban studies predominantly use a limited understanding of sex/gender. Similarly, the assumptions of a coherent 'lesbian' appropriation of urban space does not address the diversity between non-heterosexual women.

Here sexual identities and bodies have been set within urban contexts. Problematising the coherence and unity of experiences of urban spaces enables an understanding of space (as well as identities and bodies) as complex, unstable and subject to constant (re)formation (Grosz, 1998). However, the instability of space, bodies and identities is not confined to urban spaces. Explorations of rural spaces have complicated simplistic assumptions which unproblematically assume cities are the only spaces where non-heterosexualities are enacted.

9.2.2 Rural Sexualities

Early studies within geographies of sexualities ignored non-metropolitan sexualities entirely (D. Bell, 1991; D. Bell and Valentine, 1995b; Phillips *et al.*, 2000). This can

perhaps be attributed to the obsession with mapping identifiable gay territories. Moreover, the assumption that non-heterosexual identities can only be expressed when one migrates to a city, also negated the study of rural sexualities. Studies of rural sexualities have focused on identities and representations rather than mapable areas of gay activities (Phillips *et al.*, 2000). This has been informed by the cultural turn in geographies, which re-emphasised the importance of spatiality in the constitution of identities (see Chapter 2 section 2.3).

The 'rural' has recently become prominent within social and cultural geographies and these insights have, to a large extent, informed geographies of sexualities' exploration of the 'rural'. 'The rural' as a coherent, homogenous entity has been contested and problematised (Philo, 1992). Explorations of the 'rural' have sought to include 'others' into rural studies and explore the relations of power which have invisibilised those who are not white, middle/upper class and heterosexual (see Cloke and Little, 1997; Milbourne, 1997). Cloke and Little (1997: 4) contend that the rural is increasingly being understood as a socially and culturally constructed 'phenomenon' and that power is 'bound up' in those very constructs which form 'rurality'. Milbourne's (1997) edited collection attempts to challenge dominant conceptions of the 'rural' and particularly the privileging and legitimising of some groups' claims to the countryside over others. The 'rural idyll' can be conceptualised as a heterosexual, white and middle class imagining of the countryside (Cloke and Little, 1997; Milbourne, 1997). However, these are not the only discourses of rurality which co-exist. Interestingly, similar to Whittle's (1994b) assertions regarding Manchester's gay village (see above), Crouch (1997) argues that diversity is acceptable but only within the limits of profitability. Although commercialism/economics is not the focus here, the conceptualisation of rural diversity as produced through and within relations of power is important. Thus the rural is conceptualised as a construction rather than a pregiven entity.

Explorations of the rural, in terms of sexualities, have illustrated that sexualities do exist beyond the urban. The notion of a *Contested Countryside* (Cloke and Little, 1997), which understands the 'rural' as produced through relations of power, has informed this

work. D. Bell and Valentine (1995b) contend that there are two images of the 'rural'. The first is the 'rural idyll', where the 'rural' is valorised and celebrated as 'green utopianism' (D. Bell and Valentine, 1995b: 119). Valentine (1997a; b) shows how some lesbian separatists saw the rural as an escape from 'man-made' cities and an opportunity to develop communities away from patriarchy and exist closer to 'mother nature'. In these discourses women appropriated the 'rural' as an ideal separation from men (see Hawthorne, 1991, for further discussions of 'lesbian separatism'). However, the second vision of the rural is one of exclusion and particularly heterosexism (Bell and Valentine, 1995b). Valentine (1997a, b) illustrates that even within lesbian separatist communes there were and are issues of exclusion. For example, some communes had environments and workloads which were solely formulated for able-bodied women. Therefore, explorations of 'other' sexualities in rural areas have illustrated the existence of non-heterosexualities beyond urbanities and within rural areas which are popularly associated with heterosexual ideals.

Examinations of rural sexualities, similar to studies which differentiated between Western and non-Western sexual identities, have problematised the identities 'lesbian' and 'gay' (see for example Wenyu, 2002; Willman, 2000). Sexual behaviours do not have to equate to sexual identities and it is contended that rural sexual identities are 'less rooted' than urban sexual identities (Wilson, 2000: 214). Bech (1998: 216) contended that cities produce 'life spaces' and it could also be argued that cities have produced particular sexual identities which are accepted as homogenous across urbanities and ruralities. Krammer (1995: 210), in his study of gay men in Minot, argued that sexual identities such as 'gay' may not be appropriated by men in rural areas. These men have sex with other men but see the meanings of being gay as 'deviant', urban and effeminate in contrast to their 'normality'. Thus sexual identities such as 'lesbian' and 'gay' may be seen as urban oddities and not appropriated within rural areas (Krammer, 1995). This challenges assumptions of 'lesbian' and 'gay' as pre-existing their performativity. Studies of ruralities within geographies of sexualities move beyond simply adding 'the rural' into dominant understandings of lesbian and gay urban communities. This research can diversify urban assumptions of sexual identities.

9.2.3 Challenging the Urban/Rural Dichotomy

In dualisms like urban-rural ... each term is dependent on the other for its distinctness and definition. The city is conventionally defined as the opposite of the country... [T]he urban is what the rural is not and vice versa.

(Shields, 1996: 232-233)

Bondi (1997b: 187) argues that feminist urban studies employ a 'narrow interpretation' of gender and here I wish to contend that geographies of sexualities have a 'narrow interpretation' of urban and rural. Within geographies of sexualities the rural and the urban have been addressed in a dichotomous framework which has assumed that the urban and the rural exist as opposites. Studies have either examined the *urban* or the *rural* (exceptions will be addressed below). However, some distinctions between urbanities have been recognised. For example, Mort (1996) differentiated smaller cities in Britain from London and Knopp (1998) contrasted cities in the USA, Great Britain and Australia. Nevertheless, the intersections between the rural and the urban and, more importantly, their mutual interdependence has yet to be addressed. This chapter will explore between the rural and urban binary by investigating towns and their imaginative constitution as distinct from cities.

Although geographies of sexualities spoke of the 'urban', this was assumed to mean 'cities'. However, there are differentiations between urbanities. It has long been acknowledged that although they exist, distinctions between towns and cities are difficult to identify (Jones, 1966). Many of these differences are imaginatively and performatively (re)produced (above, section 9.1). Here, towns can be seen as not quite urban, yet not entirely rural. This chapter will use the 'town', as an urban site, which is understood as different from the 'city', another urban site. The towns, as not entirely rural, occupy a middle ground between the urban and the rural. Consequently, the boundaries between 'rural' and 'urban', within geographies of sexualities, are blurred.

The interrelationality and unclear boundaries between the urban and the rural are not only visible in the 'middle' ground of towns. Communications between towns, cities,

villages and countryside also blur these boundaries. Migrations between 'urban' and 'rural' regions interlink and intersect these apparently distinct entities (Valentine, 1997a; b; Weston, 1995). Moreover, gay tourism to cities complicates distinctions between countryside, towns and cities (c.f. Mort, 1996; Pritchard *et al.*, 1998, section 9.7).

Interconnections between towns and cities extend beyond the simple movement of people. Memories and stories of 'urban Meccas' or 'rural idylls' can inform imaginings and form identities. Places are imagined as well as lived, and are therefore relationally constituted (c.f. Massey, 1994). Weston (1995) argues that urban/rural contrasts constitute lesbian and gay identities. She contends that since the industrial revolution there has been a symbolic contrast between the city and countryside. Weston (1995) explores the 'travelogues' of men and women who live in the Bay area of San Francisco. She (1995: 274) argues that the 'gay imaginary' which encouraged the 'great gay migration' to San Francisco is created through an opposition between rural and urban. This chapter will explore this opposition from the 'place' of towns and argue that cities are not only created by those living in them but also through those 'gazing' on them. This 'gaze' is often premised on our everyday experiences and understandings, as well as being formed through relations of (hetero)sexualised power.

Women in this study identified their own distinctions between towns and cities:

KB: do you think there is a difference then between like being gay in a town and being gay in a city?

Angela: yeah I mean (name of 'city') there was absolutely nothing really.

Jenny: (name of 'city') is a city.

Angela: its only called a city cos its got a cathedral (Jenny laughs) ... There's not a specific gay night club and I think there's only one or two gay pubs.

(Jenny and Angela, focus group)

The complexities that Angela alludes to are important. She argues that the 'city' that she is from lacks amenities which cater specifically for gay individuals and because of this she does not understand this place as a city. When Jenny challenges her arguing that she is in fact from a 'city', Angela points to the existence of a cathedral as unimportant

because, to her (and other women in this study), cities are more than those which may hold the title of 'city'. In the introduction to this chapter cities were conceptualised as (re)produced through relations of power and ideologies (see Miles, 1997; Shields, 1996). The definitions of cities and differentiations between cities and towns, which will be discussed here, are imaginatively produced rendering official definitions of cities and towns unimportant. Participants labelled where they lived as towns or cities and their classifications are used and explored here.

9.3 Towns and Cities

Cities are often seen as different from towns because of their size. One aspect of this is a larger number of places which are specifically aimed at a non-heterosexual clientele. It is argued that social spaces are important for creating gay networks and cultures (Castells, 1983; Levine, 1978). Cities can be seen as being able to support a large variety of gay pubs, clubs and restaurants because of the number of non-heterosexual people who live there:

Virginia: Obviously [there are a] higher proportion of gays in the city ...

KB: so you think there is a difference between cities and towns?

Virginia: oh definitely. Its like I said earlier (town 1) has only one club and one pub. For example in (name of city) [there are] loads of gay restaurants to choose [from]. Like when we get to a Saturday night its quite exciting when (name of bi-monthly event) is on (laughter). Cos its something different, you know and that is pathetic that you know you get excited about (name of bi-monthly event) because there's choice suddenly in where you can dance. So yeah there's a huge difference and the same with restaurants just higher population more they've got enough of a base to amm you know get a custom and keep afloat. Whereas I am sure that (name of restaurant, gay, in town 1) [is] going to go down. I don't know that but in a little small town there to support it and aren't that many are there sometimes enough gay people to keep (name of gay club) open you know. The only nights there are Friday and Saturday when it's busy you might get 20 people in the rest of the week. But I am surprised that can stay open so (name of restaurant, as above) going out for dinner is something most people only do maybe once every three weeks you know at our age. And if you are only going out once every three weeks and you know is hard enough to keep a

gay club open god knows what its going to be you know what you are going to have to do to keep a gay restaurant open. So I think it's a case of population.

(Virginia and Stevi, coupled interview)

Virginia argues that this size of the 'gay' population in cities enables a vibrant and diverse social scene which contrasts with town 1 that struggles to support one club and a gay restaurant (which has, as she predicted, now closed). She emphasises the commercial aspect of gay spaces and the resulting need for a financial gain (c.f. Pritchard *et al.*, 1998; Whittle, 1994b). Town 1 is contrasted with cities which have a bigger population of gay people and are, therefore, able to support a variety of leisure activities such as a choice of gay restaurants. Consequently, the population (in)forms the variety of gay spaces in both towns and cities, illustrating the argument made in the introduction that cities are not pre-existing but are (re)made. A large gay population has numerous connotations and the presence/absence of a variety of gay leisure venues is important beyond a good night out.

KB: amm what about in terms of sexuality?

Andie: what about?

KB: well is it different? Is there a difference?

Andie: you mean are there far more gay people in a city than in a town?

KB: or

Andie: obviously cos there are far more people in a city than a town.

KB: is it easier in a city or a town or is it?

Andie: City, cos in a town its very rare there's anywhere you can feel comfortable. You always have to go to straight places where you don't feel comfortable or you have one dive of a pub that is supposed to pass off as a gay pub that is just like wouldn't you just wouldn't go there. Its always full of big butch dyke lesbians that are like men that are quite scary so yeah it's a lot easier. The thing is in I found living in (city 1) *its like having your own little community a safe community* where you know you can go to that part of the city and there's, there's quite a few gay pubs or clubs or whatever. There's always going to be people there you know predominantly the people are there are gay so although you have fights about women like getting off with your girlfriend or whatever all that sort of crap *on the whole people look out for each other.* So you feel safe going there whereas when you can go into a straight club with your girlfriend or

282

whatever and people just might think 'oh you're a lesbian we don't want you in here' and kick the shit out of you, you just don't know these things.

(Andie, individual interview)

In the literature cited above, gay pubs and clubs have been understood as important for providing 'safe' spaces in which to enact non-heterosexual identities (for example, Warren, 1974; Levine, 1978). Here, Andie, who lives in city 1, purports that due to the population size of city 1 there is a specific gay area. She perceives living in city 1 as easier than in towns that she has lived in previously because there are 'safe' gay areas in which mostly people 'look out for' each other and there is not a threat of homophobic abuse. She sees towns as uncomfortable, where even the gay pubs are 'scary' and straight pubs can be dangerous. Here, Andie defines the city as safe in relation to unsafe towns. This contrasts with the 'rural idyll', which understands towns and the countryside as 'safer' than cities. Andie, consequently, reinforces Cloke and Little's (1997) assertion that the rural is produced through relations of power. The differences in population size, in terms of gay people, are important as this can result in the presence/absence of 'safe' spaces or, more importantly, 'safe' areas. Andie believes that 'safe' areas enable the presence of 'safe' communities which can protect non-heterosexual individuals from homophobic violence and abuse. Interestingly, Andie contrasts the 'community' of the city with the hostility of rural areas and in this way sets up a town/city dualism. This dualism challenges assumptions of a 'rural idyll' which embodies notions of 'community' contrasted with faceless urbanities often characterised by anonymity. In addition, her assertions illustrate the mutual constitution of rural and urban.

KB: but that would be the same in a town than in a city?

Leanne: I think it would be at first yeah. But I think if, the only difference I can see in the city people have got a lot more choice of places you can go. And you are *probably more likely to find somewhere you feel comfortable with*, (KB: mm) amm than if, than in a town.

(Leanne, individual interview, my emphasis)

Chapters 6 and 8 argued that women can feel othered in everyday spaces. Leanne purports that because of the increased options available to her in cities, she would be

more likely to find somewhere where she felt comfortable eating and being with her partner. Her perceptions of the othering processes she may experience in towns contrasts with her perception of cities which, daily, would offer her more possibilities not simply to avoid homophobia but also to feel at ease. These feelings of comfort and discomfort in everyday spaces also relate to perceptions of other people:

Marie: It's (town 2) on the whole.

KB: what do you mean that's (town 2)?

Marie: its (town 2) because it is a small town community.

Hilary: small-minded.

Marie: small hick, small town community.

<div align="right">(Marie, Hilary and Susie, focus group)</div>

Earlier, Virginia understood cities as (re)made through population size. Here the population is produced through their residence in towns. In an interesting word association Marie and Hilary relate the size of the town to the attitudes and opinions of people who live there. They equate a small town with small mindedness, mutually constructing the town and the people in it. In this way experiences and perceptions of towns render population size important in (re)forming those who live there. These understandings of other people's attitudes are important because, as has been argued in Chapter 6, women spoke of looks, comments and other processes that made them feel 'uncomfortable'.

KB: Do you think there is difference between a town and a city?

Nat: yeah I think [that] in a city you are going to get a large majority of people. Well let's say for example (name of town) where my, where I actually come from was, probably I don't know [there are] maybe about 20 gay people there.

KB: mm how big is the town?

Nat: its got about four, five, six, six thousand people and there's probably about most are like elderly people sort of like retirement sort of little town (KB: mm). And then in (town 1) there's a bit of bigger proportion [of gay people]. And then in the city [there is a bigger gay population]. So even in though you

are going to get a bigger majority of heterosexual people you are going to get a bigger majority of gay people as well. So I think then attitudes will become more relaxed and does that make sense? (KB: yeah)

<div align="right">(Nat, individual interview)</div>

Here Nat explains the processes through which attitudes become more liberal and this is related to the increased number of people in a city. Specifically, she argues that increases in numbers of gay people, although this may be in line with increases in numbers of heterosexuals, results in more relaxed attitudes. Thus, the people in towns and villages are (re)formed through the size of the cities and towns. Moreover, the cities and towns are also (re)produced through the number of people in them. Consequently, for some participants spaces of cities and towns (re)constitute, and are (re)constituted through, the presence of bodies, not only in terms of size but also in the perceptions of acceptable norms, defined in terms of other people's attitudes. (As an aside, Nat problematises the simplistic town/city dichotomy distinguishing her rural village from town 1 and town 1 from her conceptualisation of cities. This will be addressed below, 9.6.)

9.3.1 Othering gazes

In Chapter 6 one important othering process was that of staring at non-heterosexual women, such that they feel unusual, 'deviant' and 'out-of-place'. This can be a potent way of policing non-heterosexual enactments because some women can attempt to 'fit in' rather than be subject to this process (Foucault, 1977, Chapters 3 and 6). Chapter 7 section 3 argues that women 'pass' in order to avoid these othering processes. Differences in attitudes between people in towns and cities can (in)form perceptions of othering processes:

Leanne: There's a lot more, millions of people that just you know … I think people are used to seeing a lot of stuff every single day you know that happens. I don't think they are going to care that two *people* [who] are obviously you know just together (KB: yeah). They are just going to think they are together that's that

<div align="right">285</div>

and not, probably not even you know not even bother them in the slightest (KB: yeah). Whereas in a town especially amm I don't know I think (town 1) very, very I feel (town 1) is quite judgmental. I don't know why I feel that I just do (KB: yeah) I feel like I am judged here.

(Leanne, individual interview, my emphasis)

Leanne feels subject to judgemental gazes in town 1. However, due to the number of people in cities, they are accustomed to seeing 'a lot of stuff' and the sight of two *people* together is not unusual. She uses the term 'people' to perhaps understand her relationship with another woman as normal in the space of the city. It is simply a relationship and 'that's that', she will not be differentiated and, consequently, will not be 'bothered' by other people. Interestingly, she understands this is a result of cities being diverse and this differs from understandings of towns as homogeneous. Consequently, conceptualisations of towns and cities (in)form perceptions of othering processes:

KB: do you think where you live has an influence or would it be different if you lived in a city?

Ruth: probably yeah because there's going to be more, more of a mixture of people. Amm I mean (town 1) is so I think it's pretty gay tolerant to be honest. I think because there are so many gay people you don't realise until you are wander around town, but there's no ethnic mix at all there's its very middle class isn't it? So if you lived in a city there'd be I think you would feel less paranoid because there are other things for people to look at and talk about you know what I mean?

(Ruth, individual interview)

Although Ruth argues that there are a number of gay people in town 1, and she sees the town as having a relatively tolerant attitude, she does not believe it is as accepting as a city would be. Ruth intersects ethnicity and class to argue that town 1 is a particularly white, middle class town. As outlined above, the homogeneity of gay spaces, particularly in terms of sexuality, were understood as enabling increased feelings of comfort. Here, Ruth contends that the diversity of cities would reduce her feelings of 'paranoia' because she would not be the subject of people's gazes or conversations. There would be other 'things' which would be looked at and discussed. Ruth argues that non-heterosexual women may pass unnoticed in the midst of the variety. The 'gaze',

which is so present and powerful in towns, is perceived to be negated or reduced in cities because of this diversity:

Janet: I come from London ... And I can walk round London holding her [girlfriend's] hand ... There's just so many bizarre people there that it just didn't matter. It wasn't ever an issue especially like places like Soho. And it just there's so many weird and wacky people I could walk around you know say like the middle of the afternoon and no one would even bat an eyelid you know. ... There's so many bizarre people that go into them [restaurants] we could kind of do whatever we wanted to do you know and people wouldn't, people wouldn't look. I mean maybe people wouldn't look because they wouldn't want to start any trouble. I mean London if you stare at someone you know its you don't really do that.

(Janet, individual interview)

Janet contends that London contains a number of 'bizarre' individuals such that the othering processes non-heterosexual women experience in towns are negated. She recognises the differentiation of space within London, highlighting Soho as a particularly non-judgemental place, even 'in the middle of the afternoon' (see Chapter 6. for a discussion of the importance of time in making spaces heterosexual). Janet implies that othering gazes directed at non-heterosexual women are not acceptable in London:

KB: do you think it's easier in London?

Nina: yeah, blatantly nobody or cares what you do in London you can stand naked in the middle of the tube station and nobody would notice they would just walk past because if you look at somebody in London you are seen as an odd bod

(Nina, Mary, Michelle, and Di, focus group)

Nina contends that there are sights in London that would pass unnoticed (such as being naked!) but which would be seen as deviant elsewhere. She argues that this is because it is the observer who risks being othered as it is unusual and 'out-of-place' for people to stare in London. Janet (above) contends that there is a possibility of 'causing trouble' if individuals begin to stare. Consequently, these women did not perceive themselves as subject to exclusionary and othering gazes in cities because they felt that there are more unusual aspects of cities which people would look at and policing gazes may themselves be subject to violent reactions.

One final aspect of towns identified by the women in this study is that of small social networks, in contrast to the anonymity of cities. This draws together the mutual constitution of population sizes, attitudes and othering processes.

KB: so do you think there are big differences between cities and towns?

Janet: oh definitely... like I say because people know you in (town 1) and have seen you about and would always see you about *it* is different because people then take notice really. Whereas in London you see one person one day and you will never see them again so *it's* not so much of an issue with people (KB: yeah). You know they are not so bothered about *it*. Whereas if *it's* in (town 1) and you are doing *it* everyday and *it's* in people's faces that's when they notice *it* you know. If you are regularly going out for dinner with someone, and you know the people in the restaurant made to see *it* and the work there are made to see *it*, and the people that work in the restaurant talk about other people in the restaurant you know. In other restaurants cos we, you know, we know people that work like down the road and everybody talks, everybody knows each other so everybody, everybody talks about *it*. Whereas in London it's not like that its not so its not so personal is it?

(Janet, individual interview)

Janet contends that towns are small and intertwined. Because of this, people are more likely to be seen repeatedly and therefore 'it' will be noticed and associated with particular people. In this context, where Janet says 'it', she is referring to her and other people's sexuality and 'deviant' sexual behaviours. She intimates that these are more likely to be commented on and remembered in relation to particular bodies in a town because 'everybody knows each other and everybody talks about it'. However, due to the size of London, Janet argues it is unlikely that you will see and be seen by the same people. Consequently, Janet sees towns as 'more personal', in contrast to the anonymity of the city. This anonymity is dependent upon large populations who are diverse and therefore 'open-minded'. In contrast, a town's small networks result from, and are a result of, fewer people who are more homogenous and 'small-minded'.

9.4 Creating Identities, Bodies and Spaces/Places

The previous section explored women's favourable perceptions of cities in relation to their unfavourable understandings of towns. Although cities were often seen as 'gay Meccas' most of the women in this study lived in towns. This is important in terms of the (re)formation of identities, bodies and spaces.

Emma: My biggest regret is that I thought (town 1) was in Manchester you know what I mean? (Laughter) So I never had an issue about kinda coming to (town 1) and amm cos it was like I thought I was going to another city. ... I reckon it would have been an easier life being in another situation had we been in Manchester, Birmingham, probably, London. Coming to a city would have been more our kinda thing but ... we came from a city to a town and our kind of lifestyle has changed d'you know what I mean? Because everyone knew everyone else's business in (town 1) and I wasn't willing to take that to be the situation and it's not really anybody's business whatever I do. So, therefore, we used to kinda go out about three nights in a week, Thursday, Friday, Saturday a lot of the time and with kind of coming here we just didn't go on the scene. ... If we lived in Birmingham we'd go out every Saturday night or Friday night whatever, whatever we fancy.

KB: why is that?

Emma: because it's a nicer place it's more kinda, it's not kinda

Jean: small

Emma: everybody doesn't know your business you can choose to kinda like eat at where you want to without anybody knowing amm. ... So aye I mean our lives have changed. If we had moved to a city regardless of whether it was amm a city in Scotland or if it was another city in England our lives would change socially. ... We do more things if we were in a city because if you are in a city then its different atmosphere, different attitudes. And ahh you know you could go up town whether your going into, whether you are gay or your weren't gay and that like say you could go up town and never bump into anybody that you work with. And who wouldn't tell who you were and who you weren't with if you did and that the chances of you never kinda seeing anybody else.

(Emma and Jean, coupled interview)

Whilst some literature within geographies of sexualities addresses movements between urban and rural, for example Weston (1995) and Valentine (1997a; b), many women may not be able to choose where they live. Due to her job Emma was moved to town 1

from a city. She did not choose to move in light of her sexuality. Emma and Jean contend that if they lived in a city their lives would be different and, they imply, better. Both Emma and Jean did not wish to risk being seen in gay social spaces where they may be seen by people from their work contexts. Emma spoke earlier (Chapter 6 section 2.2) of one openly gay man in her company who had been pushed out because of his sexuality. Jean also spoke of rhetorics of social inclusion, in her place of work, being ignored in practice. Emma contends that they would socialise more where there was a minimal risk of meeting people who could negatively impact on their work situation. Thus, the risks identified by Emma and Jean contrast with the anonymity of cities. In Chapter 7 section 2 Emma and Jean detailed their avoidance of particular spaces at specific times. It can be seen that these strategies were also informed by their perceptions of towns and cities. Consequently, differentiations between towns and cities influenced how Emma and Jean socialised and enacted their coupled identity.

Above, towns and cities were perceived as constituting other people who, in turn, made cities or towns comfortable and uncomfortable. These perceptions of towns and cities can (in)form how non-heterosexual women act in everyday spaces:

KB: whereas it is different in (town 1)?

Janet: oh it's a hundred times different in (town 1). Its just people are so small-minded here. It is just ridiculous so

KB: in what way? How does it affect like how you act and stuff?

Janet: amm

Lorraine: just a bit cautious *it*'s always

Janet: *it*'s just always in the back of your mind whereas London I don't worry about *it*, you know. I don't ever worry about what I do when I am walking around and stuff

Lorraine: you haven't got to see people. Like here (town 1) is so small

Janet: yeah there's always people, you know, people you don't want to you know. The lads from college and stuff you know I would hate for them to see me walking around town with Margrit [her girlfriend at the time] you know holding her hands and stuff you know. I just wouldn't want that just because it makes

an issue out of something that isn't really any of their business. Whereas London is so big you are never likely to bump into someone that you know.

Janet and Lorraine argue that the size of town 1, both in terms of population and physical space, means that on a daily basis there is a likelihood of meeting people who know you, but who may not know your sexuality. They see the town as 'small' and 'small minded' reinforcing the link between the size of the town and people's attitudes (see above, 9.4). As a result of these understandings Lorraine is always cautious and Janet worries about 'it' (heterosexism). In town 1 Janet and Lorraine 'have' to see people who they do not wish to reveal their sexual identities to. Consequently, they, in the Foucauldian sense (see J. Butler, 1997a; Foucault, 1977; Chapters 3 and 6), self-police their behaviours in relation to their perception of people's attitudes. In Chapter 7 it was argued that there are different ways of negotiating heterosexism. Here, Janet and Lorraine wish to avoid confrontations. They (re)form their identities and embodiments differently in relation to their understandings of different codes and norms in towns and cities. Consequently, *identities are not only policed, they are policed differently in relation to imaginings of towns and cities*:

KB: how does that affect then how you would act in (town 1)?

Janet: well like I said before you tone *it* down in (town 1), you don't put *it* in people's faces. Not I mean its not, I don't feel upset that I can't put *it* in someone's face but I think it would be wrong for me. Because it's not people's fault that they've been, they've not been brought up around *it* and they've not been used to *it*. Its not, you know it's not their fault. Its so its, its up to us to, I know this might sound really stupid, but to kind of wean them to it slowly, not stick *it* straight in their face. Cos that does doesn't do any good for anyone and will only lead to trouble. So if you kind of slowly kind of get them used to *it* and stuff then you know. I am sure people know that I am with Margrit [her girlfriend at the time]. And I do walk around town holding her hand but I would never kiss her in the street or do anything more than that cos that would just outrage people and that's the last thing you want, cos that would just lead to more trouble. But, you know, in like I said in London its just so different cos no one, no one's bothered about other people's business. Its, you know, you've, everybody is so busy in London. Everybody else has got so many other agendas they haven't got any time to worry about what other people are doing you know.

The small social networks in towns and cities thus affect how Janet would do 'it' (enact her identity with another woman). She also differentiates towns and cities in terms of what people are used to seeing reinforcing the dialectic between population size and attitudes identified above (section 9.4). Moreover, in the discussion above a number of the women contended that there is a diversity of cultures within cities and that this reduces their feelings of otherness. Janet sees her task in town 1 as an educational one, slowly introducing diverse sexualities. Because of this she 'tones down' how she performs her sexuality, holding her girlfriend's hand but not kissing her. In London, where she is originally from, Janet is less concerned. She believes the people in London do not care how she enacts her identity with her girlfriend.

Janet's (and Lorraine's above) differentiation of towns and cities complicates this thesis's earlier conceptualisations of normative heterosexual codes and norms. These are contingent upon, not only localised spatialities such as distinctions between restaurants, home and work, but also regional imaginings. Therefore, imagining regional places is important in the formation of identities. Moreover, these **regional imaginings** (in)form the stylisation of bodies:

KB: do you think there's a difference then between towns and cities in that kind of way?

Jillian: what if I was going out to eat in either place you mean? (KB: yeah) Amm yeah amm I think the smaller the place the more people the more attention people to pay to what everybody else is doing, the bigger the place the more people are paying attention to what they are doing. So if you, for example, you go to a village pub or a little country pub or whatever, you know, you walk through a door and the first thing that everybody does is look and see well whose the new person. Whereas if you are in a big place that is busy amm people don't notice and so therefore I suppose *it* would, *it* might affect me more. Amm I mean *it* doesn't happen very often, but I suppose if you were going out like my parents live in a village maybe we would think about it more than like if we went to visit two of our friend, gay friends who live in London. You are likely to be more conscious about what you wear out. You might wear amm you know a suit or something posher, smarter, than if you went to London where nobody's going to look at what you are wearing anyway.

(Jillian, individual interview)

Jillian argues that she would feel more conscious of 'it' (heterosexism) than in London, where the 'gaze' is perceived to be negated or reduced. She identifies a further attribute of rural areas as being that of 'nosiness', where people are interested in one another's affairs. Jillian believes that 'the gaze' is intense in small villages, where the size of the urbanity relates inversely to the intensity of the 'gaze' and where 'newcomers' (who in this case can be seen as visitors to the village) are scrutinised in particular. As a result, Jillian would be more conscious of what she wore in these places. In London, however, where the gaze is negated or reduced, how she dresses is unimportant. Jillian illustrates that both identities *and* bodies are (re)performed and (re)produced differently in cities and villages. Consequently, bodily presentations and 'passing' unnoticed are not understood as uniform across ruralities and urbanities (c.f. Chapter 6). The understandings of the differences between rural and urban performances are relationally (re)formed.

Gregson and Rose (2000) argue that space is performative. Here it is argued that towns and cities do not pre-exist their performance and are also (re)produced enactments which are (re)formed through and (re)form relations of power. Cities and towns are often conceived as real and can have very real materialities (King, 1996; Knopp, 1998). How these women imagine space and place in relation to normative heterosexual codes has material effects in that these fantasies (re)form how they enact their identities and bodies. It may also be that because of these imaginings and resulting (re)performances, towns and cities are (re)constructed. Women's understandings of towns, and their enactments in relation to these perceptions, may be (re)producing these towns as spaces where diversity is not visible. In contrast, because alternative sexualities are perceived as more acceptable and accepted in London and other big cities, the enactment of non-heterosexual identities and bodies may be more visible thereby creating diverse space:

KB: you said like the country is quite closed. What did you mean by that?

Michelle: well where I live there's no gays that I know of. No that's a lie actually there's more men that I know of. Because, my god, I used to work at a place called (name) and it was on a main road and, this is going to sound really, really crass, but there was toilets there (KB: mm). And it was very well known for

men. And so I got to know quite a few that way but there's no scene around at all if I want to find one I have got to go to (name of city) or (name of another city) really...

KB: do you think like there'd be like there is a difference between like (name of town) and like London and places like the really big places.

Michelle: ... I mean there have got to be more lesbians and gays and shit in (town 1) than there are that go out to be fair (KB: yeah). The same as in the country, *there is bound to be at least like 1 in 10 if not more but no one is ever, because there is no where to go you can't do it.*

(Michelle, individual interview, my emphasis)

Knopp (1998) contends that visible gay territories are politically important. Michelle reports that despite the presence of women who may be non-heterosexual the lack of a specific 'gay' venue, or even meeting points, such as toilets, renders them invisible. She differentiates the possibilities for men and women. Men have the possibilities of anonymous sex in toilets, however women do not (c.f. Krammer, 1995). Consequently, ruralities and urbanities may be experienced differently, not simply in terms of heterosexuality but also in relation to sex/gender. Moreover, the invisibility of non-heterosexual women may in turn (re)produce towns. Cities and towns as constantly (re)produced and, as well as (re)forming bodies and identities, they may be (re)constituted through imaginings. In this way, fantasies of towns as unsafe and unaccepting may, in part, create the spaces of towns as homogenous where women do not feel comfortable enacting non-heterosexual identities. In this case, imaginings of towns invisiblise alternative sexualities by providing 'nowhere you can do it'. Conversely, the perceptions and enactments of non-heterosexual women may, in part, heterosexualise towns:

KB: what about, what about for you?

Mary: amm I wouldn't dream of showing it in public where I live get the shit kicked out of me

KB: where do you live sorry?

Mary: (name of county)

KB: and is it like a town or is a village?

Nina: town.

294

(Mary, Nina, Michelle and Di, focus group)

Obviously non-heterosexual women do not solely form cities and towns, however their enactments do play a part in forming these places. Women police their identities differently in relation to their different understandings of towns and cities. Mary, above, would not 'dream' of enacting a non-heterosexual identity in the town that she is from because of a fear of violence. She, in part, (re)forms this space as solely heterosexual because of her perception of the policing of dominant codes and norms. As has been argued in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, identities and embodiments are relationally constituted through the performances and enactments of others, particularly through othering processes. The subtle and violent policing of place illustrates the instability of the space as heterosexual (c.f. Valentine, 1995). This chapter has (re)conceptualised apparently fixed urbanities and ruralities as unstable and relationally (re)produced. Here I wish to purport that non-heterosexual women do impact on the heterosexualisation of space and that different perceptions of cities and towns in part form towns. These negotiations are complex. It is not sufficient simply to argue that non-heterosexual women should simply enact overtly their identities because, as Mary argued, there are dangers associated with transgressing dominant codes and norms (see D. Bell *et al.*, 1994; D. Bell, 1995: for further discussion of the complexities of transgression and resistances see Chapter 7). Moreover, this chapter has focused on women in towns. I am proposing that imaginings of cities (in)form non-heterosexual women's lives in towns, and perhaps their enactments when these women visit cities. The complexities of cityscapes are beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead the next section will contest the simple town/city dichotomy that has been constructed.

9.5 Problematising the City/Town Dichotomy

Whilst the women above argued that they would perform their identities and bodies differently in towns and cities, this was not always the case:

KB: do you think there is a difference between towns and cities and how you like if you lived in a city to you think you would have to?

Jenny: me personally, I don't think it would have much difference. I have lived in both so I didn't. I know I haven't changed much from one to another. So amm I'm open and I'm, I like to be open so I haven't [changed] in coming to (town 1). I never I didn't sort of say 'oh my god I have got to be less, I have got to be, you know. I have got to be more concerned about it'. Me and Vicky [ex-girlfriend] were never concerned about it so we just ran out and did what we wanted.

(Jenny, individual interview)

Jenny did not see that she would be different in different places. She believes that she is 'open' and would not be more concerned about her sexuality in different places. She does not feel that moving to town 1 has restricted what she can and cannot do, unlike Emma and Jean above. Jenny, in this way, did not imaginatively differentiate towns and cities as some of the other women in the study did.

Where towns and cities were seen as distinct, towns were not only understood as bad and cities as good:

KB: Do you think there are there's a difference between amm towns and cities?

Di: Amm I suppose in cities it is probably more widely. I don't know, [you] might, you could say that it is more widely accepted because there is like a lot of people and normally gay scenes in the cities are a lot bigger. So its kind of seen more and accepted more than in towns ... I suppose yeah it probably is more widely accepted. But then you would think, I'd think that maybe I would probably feel more comfortable in like a smaller town. Not a small town but kind of (town where she is from) size or (town 1) size town like being gay than I would if I was in a big city. Because there's a lot of people you don't kind of know the reactions you are going to get. There is a lot more people. That's probably being really stereotypical and prejudice now but I mean in a kind of city probably got a higher percentage of people who react badly or violently or more aggressively towards you than in a place like (town 1).

(Di individual interview)

Whereas the women above believed that the number of people in cities made them more accepting of diverse cultures and sexualities, Di has a different view. She believes that in cities populated with a large number of people there is a higher probability of violent reactions to her sexuality. Thus, for Di cities are seen as unpredictable in contrast to the familiarity of towns:

KB: and would you act differently like in a gay café than perhaps in a straight restaurant?

Di: probably I don't know if its kind of a place you don't know I still kind of even in gay places if I don't know them I still kind of act more reserved. Whereas like I will go somewhere like the (name of pub) which is like a straight pub (KB: mm) but I am still a lot more open than if I went to like a gay pub, a gay pub I have never been to. (KB: yeah, yeah) Its all to with kind of where you feel comfortable (KB: yeah, definitely) rather than whether its straight or gay

KB: and is that why you think maybe you feel more comfortable in a town?

Di: probably because you'd know the places (KB: yeah) know the people more. (KB: mm) … I know I go to the pub, like my local pub at home, every time I go there I know there is going to be the same people in there. Whereas if you went to the city there would never be kind of the same people in there really (KB: yeah) so I suppose it is all to do with feeling comfortable. … The pub that I go to I worked there for a few years so I kind of do know them (KB: yeah) like to chat to. … It's all to with if I don't kind of feel comfortable. I went out with Karen [girlfriend at the time] on Friday to like her rugby whatever it was. They all get, someone's birthday or something. I went out with her went to a pub it was in (town where she lives). But I'd never kind of been in there before and I didn't really kind of know the people so I did feel a lot more awkward. Whereas I can go to the pub like three pubs down [the road] and feel like comfortable … I don't think it is to do with just to do with being gay or straight or kind of where, it's how comfortable you feel.

(Di, individual interview)

Other women in this study understood the small social networks of towns as oppressive. However, Di draws on discourses and images of 'rural idylls' to see them as familiar and comfortable. She knows the people in the pub because of the small, familiar networks of her home town and this makes her feel safer. In contrast, the anonymity associated with the city is disconcerting. Moreover the associations of pubs with sexualities, such as 'gay' and 'straight' do not concern Di, it is more about how she feels where. Consequently, the large choice and variety of gay pubs in cities are not important to her.

Di also identifies the complexities of towns, whereby one pub may be comfortable, because she knows and is known in that place but another strange pub can be threatening. Mary (section 5) believes that she must act differently in different towns. In the town that she is from she believes she would be beaten up for acting the way she does in town 1:

Mary: it's (the town she is from) quite similar to here (town 1) actually ... if I was to walk down (name of town) high street holding someone's hand, like we used to do around here, I would get the shit kicked out of me like that (clicks her fingers).

(Mary, Nina, Michelle and Di, focus group)

Towns can be differentiated on the same bases that cities have been differentiated from towns. Similar to Mort (1996), who differentiated smaller cities in Britain from London, Mary here understands the town she is from as different from town 1. She feels safer enacting non-heterosexual identities in town 1 than in her home town where she feels she would be subject to violent abuse. Mary thus illustrates that the dichotomy of town versus city is not a sufficient replacement for the rural/urban dichotomy. Rather, her account illustrates the complexities of ruralities, villages, towns and cities. Moreover, Janet differentiates spaces within towns:

Janet: but I am walking around town now holding Margrit's [girlfriend at the time] hand and stuff and I am just thinking I don't care. I have kind of got to the stage now where I am tired of having to hide everything. I am tired of you know not showing that you know (KB: mm) that I have something with her (KB: mm). But its like we walked around town on Sunday on Saturday [and] I was holding her hand and stuff (KB: yeah) like maybe not right in the centre of town. But when we were in the shops and certain like walking back here [to Janet's house] and stuff I just think I just can't be bothered with it any more. I don't really care so.

(Janet and Lorraine, focus group)

Janet discussed how she altered how she acted with her partners when she moved from London to town 1. She believed she could not do certain things in town 1, such as holding her girlfriend's hand, which she was able to do in London. The policing of her behaviours in the town have clearly frustrated her. She now transgresses codes she

298

identifies in town 1 and holds her girlfriend's hand. However she very carefully delimits spaces where she can and cannot do this (c.f. Valentine, 1993a; b; c). The main street of town 1 was often described as very heterosexual, being comprised mainly of 'families and push chairs' and perhaps this is the reason that Janet points to this space as one where she would not hold her girlfriend's hand (c.f. Valentine, 1995). Janet thus illustrates that imaginings of cities and towns are complex and do not simply exist in terms of cities versus towns. She does this by differentiating different spaces within towns, complicating her earlier assertion of towns as bad and cities as good. Therefore, towns can be conceptualised as fragmented with different spaces taking on particular meanings at specific times. Moreover, particular areas can be considered 'good' and others 'bad'.

Similar to towns (above), cities can also be differentiated at a micro level.

KB: so it does affect how you act?

Leanne: of course it does yeah. I think you are far more comfortable in places where there is like amm it is not even so much more people its just I guess its more cultures. I guess I think it is just more cultures I think (town 1) is very, very middle class white and it's hard to sort of feel comfortable with your sexuality here. Sometimes I'd like if I went back home to (Name of town north west of England) I wouldn't, you wouldn't see me anywhere near I would be walking four paces behind her at all times (KB: yeah). You'd, you'd get your head kicked in so you know you just tend to do. Of course you have to adapt slightly because I don't much as I am you know for pushing boundaries and stuff I think there is a time and a I think you have got to be really careful how you do that. ... Obviously if I went in the middle of Manchester town centre I wouldn't give a shit I would just (KB: yeah).

KB: hold her hand and (D: mm). What about if you went out for a meal in those kind of places?

Leanne: ... amm I think initially for the first couple of times it would be like it is here it wouldn't make, wouldn't make any difference but I think once I got comfortable with the places that you go I think yeah I think you would be, feel slightly more comfortable. (KB: mm) ... I think, I think walking through the town centre amm when it is busy and all that stuff is different to sitting in a restaurant. Still I think I'd still be maybe slightly uncomfortable about sitting in a restaurant cos it is like. Unless there was a group of us or something I think it is very you know amm sitting there with your, with your partner. I still I think feel slightly uncomfortable with it.

(Leanne, individual interview)

The Chicago school of the 1950's and 1960's argued that cities could be differentiated into zones. Mort (1996: 150) understands cities as composed of diverse cultural zones such that there are specific zones associated with 'configurations of gendered commerce'. Similarly, Leanne believes that cities are places with diverse cultures which she understands in terms of class and ethnicity rather than gender. However, she understands this in relation to the homogeneity of the town where she lives. She differentiates towns from cities in terms of the threat of violence compared to the carefree ideal of Manchester town centre. In her hometown she would keep a distance between her and her partner for fear of violent policing of heterosexual norms. She believes there are times and places when and where it is dangerous to 'push boundaries'. Even within cities, Leanne differentiates spaces. She sees the space of the restaurant as different from the street. She, similar to Di (above), argues that in a restaurant feeling comfortable as a couple relates to familiarity which, she argues, develops over a period of time and through returning to the same restaurant. In this way, Leanne illustrates that understandings of cities and towns are complex and she challenges the simplistic dualism which understands cities as superior to towns. Moreover, she illustrates that her experiences of daily life (in)form her understandings of towns and cities and that these are fluid, developing through time.

The town/city dichotomy is useful in problematising the urban/rural binary, complicating spatial conceptualisations and illustrating that imaginings and fantasies produce cities and towns as well as identities, bodies and microspaces. However, here the town/city dichotomy is also seen as problematic. The complex of regional imaginings of towns and cities and the everyday experiences of local spaces blurs boundaries between towns and cities, illustrating their contingency and fluidity. This is not to negate their relevance and, as section 9.5 illustrated, imaginings of towns and cities can influence the performances and embodiments which (in)form daily life.

9.6 Fantasies, myths and realities?

It could be argued that this chapter should now compare what it is 'really' like in a city to the accounts which have been produced here. As was argued, following the literature in geographies of sexualities, urban Meccas may only exist for young, white, gay (or even straight) men. Moreover, it has been suggested to me in anecdotal conversation about this chapter and related conference papers that these visions of cities are somewhat 'distorted'. Cities are 'not really like that', in terms of experiences of non-heterosexualities. What cities are 'really' like is, of course, subject to individual interpretations and variations. The women in my research 'gaze' on cities often creating them as the favourable other in comparison to unfavourable towns. Shields (1996) contends that within the dualism of country/city those in the country will view the city differently to those who live in the city: 'To the city cousin, it suggests that the city is better in every way than the country' (Shields, 1996: 233-234). Whilst I have contested the city/countryside definition, Shields' emphasis on the perspective of the gazer is important. Shields (1996) goes on to contend that representations of the city are always undertaken on shifting grounds, illuminating certain issues whilst concealing others. In this context, it is not representations but perceptions which are constituted within powerful dualisms and dichotomies. This section will further explore non-heterosexual women's 'gazing' on cities from their perspective in towns and (hopefully) offer further insights into their imaginings of towns and cities.

Word of mouth and stories told to women by friends had a huge influence, where women had not experienced cities:

Michelle: ... As far as I can tell from like what Di and Nina have said (town 1) is really small. But seeing as (name of gay club) is the only place we can go, well not the only place, but the only place that is openly gay where to meet people and it's the same people all the time (KB: yeah).

(Michelle, individual interview)

Michelle had never been on another scene besides that in town 1. Her perception of cities relied on stories she had been told by her friends. Her imaginings of cities are from

afar and informed by women who are seen as more experienced on the gay scene. Interestingly, although these women may have experience of cities in other ways, such as with their parental families, the gay areas of cities are those that are highlighted. Here cities are literally and imaginatively constituted through favourable stories in contrast to negative realities.

Importantly, travels to cities can inform women's perceptions however tourism is a wide and diverse subject field it is not within the scope of the thesis to address it in any depth. Selwyn (1996: 13) contends that tourism plays a 'significant role in the construction of relationships between centres and peripheries'. The relationships he (1996: 12) refers to are 'politico-economic and cultural' where the '(predominantly tourist receiving) peripheries' depend upon the '(predominantly tourist sending) centres'. Here these relationships are reversed and the 'peripheries' of towns are sending visitors to 'centres' of cities. Due to the existence of gay areas in cities, this form of tourism can be an important expression of sexual identities and to meet other non-heterosexual men and women (Krammer, 1995: Weston, 1995). These perceptions, however, inform how individuals understand towns where there is no identifiable 'gay area'. Consequently, this form of tourism can mean that everyday 'masks' are discarded (Edensor, 2001). Cities, by offering 'safety' to enact non-heterosexual identities, can be understood as spaces where women can 'be themselves' (Krammer, 1995; Warren, 1974; Weston, 1995). This is then contrasted with towns where some women feel they have to hide their non-heterosexual identities and embodiments. These tourist gazes are, therefore, not simply reserved for the visit. Edensor (2001: 61) argues that due to our society, which is 'bombarded by signs and mediatized spaces, tourism is increasingly part of everyday worlds'. In a different way, tourist experiences can, and have, become part of these women's everyday lives.

Favourable experiences can inform favourable imaginings of cities and understandings of mundane everyday life when the holiday finishes. 'Fantasy city(ies)' (Hannigan, 1998) can be created when one goes to a city for the purposes of using the gay scene and other sections of the city are not be visited. Perhaps feelings of freedom, of being able to

be more open about your sexuality may result from the 'city' only being conceptualised as the gay area of that city. Moreover, the city may be more anonymous simply because one does not live there and work identities, for example, may not be threatened. This is not to negate the perceptions of towns and cities from those who live in towns. Rather it is to contextualise the accounts above as perhaps particular to those who do not live in cities.

9.7 Conclusion

This chapter began from the premise that place is fluid and examined how women differentially understood and (re)created their bodies and identities in relation to their imaginings of towns and cities. Rose (1999) and Masseys' (1999) understandings of space as performatively produced (see Chapter 3 sections 2.3 and 4.3) have been used to conceptualise place. Considering place as performative allows for the possibility of 'performing place'. This presents a similar argument to that regarding sex and gender, namely, that as there is no pre-discursive place but place is, instead, materialised continually through enactments and imaginings. This enables us to address the dualistic dichotomy of rural/urban as these are not pre-given descriptions of physical places but are, instead, formed as opposites through relations of power. Women's perceptions of towns as 'urban' sites conceptualised in 'rural' terms were the focus of this chapter.

Geographies of sexualities have conceptualised cities as an 'escape from the isolation of the countryside and the surveillance of small-town life in contrast to the freedom and anonymity of the urban landscape' (Weston, 1995: 274, see also Castells, 1983; Knopp and Lauria, 1985). Within geographies of sexualities cities have mainly been explored from the perspective of those who live there (e.g. Weston, 1995). Here, cities have been written predominantly by those who live in towns. From this perspective towns were understood in 'rural' terms, particularly as having a small population, conservative attitudes and small social networks. These understandings rest on the city as opposite to this (large population, liberal attitudes and anonymity) and therefore cities and towns as

relational and interdependent. Drawing on assertions of cities as more than physical phenomena (Mazzoleni, 1993; Badock, 1996, above 9.1) both cities and towns are understood as (re)formed rather than pre-existing. This is not only through representations, such as advertisements, maps and photographs, but also through stories, imaginings and women's gazings on cities (c.f. Simonson, forthcoming). These stories are formed through relations of power, in this case heterosexism.

In Chapter 7 the dualism of transgression/passing was contested. Here, favourable associations of cities are valorised over experiences in towns. Perceptions and imaginings of cities as distinct from towns (in)formed women's enactments and therefore (re)formed their identities and bodies. Consequently, fantasies (in)form 'realities', which, in turn, (re)form imaginings and perceptions of places. Moreover, cities as fluid and performatively (re)constituted, are also (re)produced through imaginings. Experiences, travel and narratives (re)make places as different and distinct and (in)form everyday realities. Consequently, earlier chapters' understandings of space are (re)conceived in terms of regional imaginings which contrast cities with towns. Performing place involves imaginings of place and these performances and imaginings are formative. These performances are complex and diverse, problematising dualistic dichotomies of urban/rural, towns/cities and imaginings/realities. The thesis will now conclude by summarising each chapter, drawing together key concepts and reflecting on the research process.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

Chapter outline

10.1 Introduction

This thesis sought to examine intersections between performativity, power and place using 28 non-heterosexual women's accounts of their everyday lives. It moved from theoretical discussions to integrate theory and empirical research. The thesis aspired to use theory to understand empirical accounts and, in turn, to employ women's stories to further theoretical conceptions. Initially this study sought to investigate food and eating practices, but due to the emotive stories told by the participants and my own changing understandings and perceptions, the power relations of heterosexism and genderism have instead been the focus. The conclusion will trace the development of the thesis and then address some issues which transgressed the chapters, drawing together the key concepts. Finally the chapter will reflect on the research relations involved in the processes of undertaking a thesis and offer some thoughts regarding future research directions.

10.2 Reviewing the Map

The thesis began by introducing a map which would guide the reader through this research. To begin the conclusion I will review this map, highlighting what I see as the key issues in each chapter. Although this may reinforce the illusion of a coherent and tidy research project it will, however, also enable further discussion of the intersections between chapters.

Chapter 2 contextualised the discussions in Chapter 3 within wider postmodern, poststructural and feminist theories. The chapter did not attempt to provide a coherent picture of feminism, postmodernism or poststructuralism as it was argued that these are multifaceted and resist classification. Nevertheless, certain concepts attributed to poststructuralism, feminism and postmodernism were understood as salient to this thesis. Postmodernism's questioning of grand narratives and universal truths, and the emphasis on the importance of voices

from the margins, are pertinent. Cultural geographies are, in some senses, 'postmodern' and establish place as an important consideration in postmodern theory. However, relativistic postmodernism, that does not account for power relations, is problematic. In contrast, poststructuralism, particularly that which draws on understandings of social structures, enables the deconstruction of dualistic power relations. Moreover, linguistic poststructuralism renders the subject fluid and produced, recognising the importance of discourse in this formation. This chapter then went on to discuss feminism, addressing the exclusion of women from histories of postmodernism and poststructuralism. It was argued that multiple forms of feminism co-exist, that feminism is inherently plural and that feminist categories are problematic.

Chapter 3 discussed feminist poststructuralism, understood following Aitchison (2000b), as the ongoing journey between feminism and poststructuralism. It focused on gender, sex and sexuality introducing the thesis' conceptualisations of power, performativity and place. The chapter began by arguing that gender is not the social manifestation of a preexisting sex and, consequently, bodies are constantly formed through performativity. Performativity was conceptualised following J. Butler (1990a, 1993a) as the reiteration of norms which create the illusion of fixed gendered and sexualised identities and bodies. Space was also understood as performatively (re)made (Gregson and Rose, 2000) such that place can be considered as materialised through enactments and not preexisting its performance. Performative identities and bodies have often been understood as volunteeristic and understandings of performativity have been accused of ignoring issues of power (Nelson, 1999). However, power is central to J. Butler's theories of performativity. Power, following J. Butler (1997a) and Foucault (1977), is understood as formative and exists as common sense norms and understandings. These understandings of power informed discussions of the formation of bodies, identities and spaces/places. The chapter concluded by arguing that feminist poststructuralism can be politically potent although there is no set agenda. Rather subversive practices can be diverse and multiple.

Chapter 4 began the examination of the empirical research undertaken for the thesis with a discussion of methodologies; that is how the research was

conducted and theorised. It separated methods and methodologies contending that debates regarding *a* feminist method and the quantitative/qualitative divide are methodological debates (Oakley, 1998; Stanley and Wise, 1993). The chapter then integrated discussions of methodologies and epistemologies to argue that there is not one feminist methodology. Instead, principles of feminist research need to be critically explored in individual contexts. This chapter explored three aspects of feminist methodological debates in the context of this thesis. These were the importance of reflexivity, power relations and research and the need for research which effects social change. In this way, the chapter considered theories of power and performativity, arguing that research is produced through negotiated relations of power which are made in the *spaces between* individuals (England, 1994). Consequently, performative understandings of research enable a conceptualisation beyond neutral 'data collection'. Research as formed can be (re)made differently and therefore power relations can be negotiated rather than imposing the researcher's agenda onto participants.

Chapter 5 outlined the techniques of research and the details of this research that had not been addressed previously. The research was conducted with 28 women who lived outside of heterosexuality and who: participated in six focus groups, three coupled interviews, 23 individual interviews; completed 24 diaries; and produced six sets of auto-photography. This chapter also explored grey areas between methods and methodologies exploring the interpersonal formation of the sample and the accounts formed. Moreover, it investigated, through a focus on methods, how the research evolved and the consequences of these changes for the final thesis. The chapter concluded by recognising all accounts as partial and indicating the references to method and methodological issues throughout the discussion chapters.

Chapter 6 began the discussion chapters by introducing heterosexism as a material and discursive process which others non-heterosexual women in everyday food and eating spaces. The socio-spatial power relations and enactments of consumption, including food and eating, can form bodies, identities and spaces (Probyn, 1999a; b; Valentine, 1999a; b). The chapter

argued that discourses can be materially experienced even if they go unnamed; exemplified in the discussion of 'it'. The term 'it' was used in lieu of labels such as 'lesbian' or 'gay' and heterosexism, a word that was never used by participants. The discussion of heterosexism addressed both perceptions and experiences. Moreover, the chapter argued that everyday lives were lived in spaces between the dichotomies of work/leisure, public/private and professional/social. Perceptions of being subject to othering processes (in)forms how women act along with actual experiences of these processes and both perceptions and experiences differed between places (c.f. Valentine, 1993b).

Chapter 7 examined how and when women passed as heterosexual, and how and when they transgressed heterosexual norms. It argued that how women live with 'it' (heterosexism) is not uniform and women's multiple enactments (re)produce not only identities, bodies and spaces but also (re)form normative codes. The chapter explored women's differential use of strategies of passing and transgression and challenged the dualism which celebrates transgression over passing. Moreover, it identified women who move between passing and transgression and who adopt different strategies in different spaces, at different times (c.f. Valentine, 1993a; b; c; 1995). The chapter contended that diverse and multiple strategies coexist and neither transgression nor passing should be privileged; rather, each has both potentials and problems. The choice and diversity of strategies illustrated that women may reflect on othering processes and how they enact their identities. Therefore, following Nelson (1999), norms and codes can be reflected upon whether or not they are repeated.

Having addressed the formation of sexualised bodies, identities and spaces, Chapter 8 explored how bodies which do not fit the dominant versions of femininity are policed and othered. It introduced genderism, which is when an individual experiences discrimination because their sexed bodies are read as distinct from their lived gender, in this case where women are 'mistaken' for men. The chapter began by examining the literature on gender transgressions which contends that, although it is often assumed that there are only two sexes and genders, this binary and dichotomous system is made (Hird, 2000; Lorber, 1996). The chapter went on to explore those who move between the dichotomy

of male and female purporting that bodies and spaces take on the markers of femininity, and in this way are feminised, through processes of policing and self-surveillance. Genderist actions, such as removing women from female toilets, go unnamed and are frequently considered 'not real' because they are unidentified. Women react in different ways to being read as male. Some challenge this reading using breasts to illustrate their place in the category woman. Others use male privileges such as shorter toilet queues. Nevertheless, all understood the reading of their bodies as male as a 'mistake'. These 'mistakes' can be read as moments of resistance where dichotomous genders are exposed as contingent prior to being recuperated (J. Butler, 1994). In this way, the symbolic organisation of gender writes bodies and is incorporated into who we are and how we make sense both of ourselves and to others. The profound challenge to these women's intelligibility as human is contested by rendering visible, defining and explaining the 'mistake'. Through these processes, however, the very contingency of 'the correct' may be exposed.

Chapter 9 conceptualised place as performed using non-heterosexual women's imaginings of cities and towns. It began by conceptualising cities as formed through narratives (King, 1996; Simenson, forthcoming). It was asserted that geographies of sexualities recreate an urban/rural dualistic dichotomy. The chapter contested the urban/rural binary by contending that cities and towns are relationally formed and imaginings of cities can inform performativities in towns. Consequently, identities, bodies, spaces/places can be reproduced not only in relation to perceptions (Chapter 6) but also in terms of imaginings of place. The chapter went on to problematise the town/city dichotomy from the perspective of those who live in towns, concluding that space and place are complexly imagined. Moreover, it was argued that fantasies, myths and realities are mutually constituted.

10.3 Power Performativities and the (Re)construction of Place

10.3.1 Making Bodies, Identities and Places/Spaces Through Power and Performativity

We are constantly (re)made through how we act, what we do and what we do not do (J. Butler, 1990a; 1993a). The conception of bodies, spaces and identities as (re)made relies on understandings of performativity which were introduced in Chapter 3. How this theoretical concept can be used to understand non-heterosexual women's lives was discussed in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9. Throughout these discussions the (re)formation of bodies, identities and spaces/places was considered.

Chapter 3 introduced the concept of performativity contending that bodies, identities and places are performatively formed. In particular, Chapter 3 used J. Butler's (1990a; 1993a; 1997a) conception of performativity to understand gender and sex as (re)formed through relations of heterosexual power such that there is no prediscursive body. Instead, bodies are constantly materialised and identities and bodies are fluid rather than fixed (J. Butler, 1993a; Connell, 1999). It contended that readings of J. Butler's subjects as volunteeristic were problematic (Nelson, 1999). Instead, following Nelson (1999), J. Butler's subjects can in some senses be seen as unreflexively repeating dominant codes and norms. The absence of space and place in these accounts is problematic and place was introduced and (re)conceived, drawing on work by Rose (1999) and Pile and Rose (1992), as performative in that it is continually (re)formed through relations of power. In this way, previous understandings of bodies, identities and places were contested. Bodies were not conceptualised as preexisting and 'written on' (Conboy et al., 1997). Understandings of identities as preexisting and simply performed (Goffman, 1969) were challenged. Finally, the chapter questioned conceptualisations of people as merely reacting to the structures of place (Maroulli, 1995). Identities, bodies and place were thus, in a poststructural

sense, rendered fluid and, in a feminist sense, understood as 'saturated in power' (J. Butler, 1997a; Rose, 1997).

Chapter 4 introduced the concept of spaces of betweeness (McDowell, 1992; England, 1994; Rose, 1999) which was used to understand the formation of research accounts for the thesis. In particular, my positionality was seen as formed in the spaces between participants and myself. Friendships and other relations within and beyond research spaces also formed these spaces and constituted the participants. In addition, spaces of betweeness can usefully conceptualise the formation of bodies, spaces and identities as it enables us to conceptualise as formative the interactions between individuals.

Chapter 6 explored how processes of othering differentially make bodies, identities and spaces. Understanding J. Butler's (1990a; 1993a) argument regarding formative potentials of performances, how women acted in relation to their experiences and perceptions of 'it' differentiated and formed spaces of restaurants, work and home. The importance of perceptions can be explained using Foucault's (1977) concept of surveillance. Women felt that they *may* be watched and therefore policed their behaviours within what they considered acceptable codes and norms (c.f. Valentine, 1993a; b; c). Consequently, it is unimportant if they were being watched as the operations of power were *felt* if not directly experienced. Understanding space as performatively (re)formed (Gregson and Rose, 2000), differences between how individuals perform their sexualities can be understood as forming places differently. Moreover, as performativities vary between places, bodies and identities are spatially and diversely (re)formed.

Understanding othering processes as formative, Chapter 7 contended that 'it' can be (re)appropriated differently, and this reforms women's experiences of heterosexism. This chapter challenged J. Butler's conception of an unreflexive subject who simply repeats codes and norms (Nelson, 1999), arguing that where codes and norms are repeated they may be considered and reflected upon. Moreover, the chapter contended that, rather than individuals developing into the 'type of person' who either passed or transgressed (c.f. Troiden, 1979),

individuals' reactions to heterosexism are contextually based. These repetitions are not beyond or before power but rather, following J. Butler (1990a; b), they are understood as reworking power relations. Consequently, understanding performances as formative, bodies, identities and spaces (re)make, and are (re)made through the (re)enactment of particular codes and norms. Moreover, these codes and norms are also made and can be (re)made differently.

As policing processes and norms are conceptualised as formative and unstable, Chapter 8 explored how bodies, identities and spaces are emotionally imbued with gendered codes which exist in a dichotomous system. The chapter drew on understandings of gender as an illusion (J. Butler, 1990a; 1997a) to argue that bodies can exist in spaces between male and female but, in order to be intelligible as human, have to be inscribed into the categories of either man or woman. These categories are, in turn, reformed through that inscription. Thus relations of power, whilst performative, are not arbitrary or without form (Nast and Pile, 1997). Instead, the form of power relations writes, and is written by, bodies, identities and places.

Having conceptualised spaces, bodies and identities as mutually constituted through performativities, Chapter 9 argued that *imaginings of place* also (re)form identities and bodies. This again challenges performative subjects as unreflexively (re)produced (Nelson, 1999) because imaginings imply consideration and in this case these considerations concern heterosexist power relations. Chapter 6 highlighted the importance of perceptions in forming bodies, identities and spaces. As perceptions are power-laden and formative it can, following Foucault (1977), be contended that imaginings of cities and complex spatialities (re)form bodies and identities. In addition, it can be suggested that towns themselves are (re)produced through their (re)conceptualisation of towns as different from cities.

This thesis therefore argues that bodies, identities and spaces are formed through relations of power just as relations of power are constituted by the nexus of bodies, identities and spaces. In addition, bodies, identities and spaces are produced in a nexus where materialities/discourses, natural/social,

biological/constructed are not separate. Instead the nexus which (in)forms everyday life moves across and between dualistic, dichotomous and binary categories.

10.3.2 Deconstructing Dualisms, Dichotomies and Binaries

At the outset the thesis differentiated dualisms, dichotomies and binaries, recognising the overlap between these categories and asserting that the aim of the thesis was not to create rigid boundaries between these categories. Instead, the thesis acknowledged that these terms are not always distinguishable and this section will explore how the thesis has deconstructed these concepts.

Binaries were conceptualised as pairs or two parts of a whole and dichotomies were understood as pairs which are opposites and reiterated. Dualisms, as philosophical conceptions formed through relations of power, have been addressed in poststructural theory (Derrida, 1978). The self and other of dualisms are considered as interdependent and mutually formative. The self can only be formed through creating an opposite which is usually inferior (Aitchison, 2001b). This 'other', however, is not simply a copy of the self. Instead, because of the dependency of the self on its other for its definition and identity, there is no self without the other and consequently these are interdependent (J. Butler, 1990a; 1993a; b). Deconstructing dualisms can enable the reconsideration of apparently 'fixed' categories. The thesis has deconstructed dualisms, dichotomies and binaries in diverse ways by: exploring how they can be mutually formed; contesting the associated assumptions; investigating spaces between binaries, dualisms and dichotomies; and examining their relational formation.

The importance of integrating materialities and discourses was emphasised from the outset. Whereas poststructuralism is often believed to focus on the textual excluding material realities, this thesis has contended that the nexus of materialities and discourses are mutually formative. Following J. Butler (1993a; b), discourses were seen as materialising everyday life, such that bodies do not

314

preexist their performances within relations of power. The distinctions between language and discourse, and the mutual formation of discourses and materialities, is exemplified in the conception of 'it'. Each discussion chapter reviewed the experiences of living as other and, in particular, discussed the place of heterosexism and genderism in constructing the other. However these prejudices were never named and, instead, women referred to 'it'. This did not mean that these experiences were not 'real' or that they existed outside of discourses of heterosexuality. Instead, in understanding discourses and materialities as mutually formed through relations of power, *discourses can be materialised without being named.*

Dualistic thinking privileges one term over another. Chapter 7, for example, argued that transgression is often considered 'healthy', 'good' and 'politically important' (Bell *et al.*, 1994; Clarke, 1981; Troiden, 1989) whereas passing can be considered negative to both personal and societal development (Clarke, 1981; Huweiler and Remafedi, 1998). In this chapter I contested the assumptions associated with passing and transgression. Passing can be seen as challenging the self/other dichotomy by not separating the self in terms of heterosexuality from the other (Ahmed, 1998; Johnstone, 2001). When the self and other are not constructed as opposites the coherency of the self is questioned. This chapter understood transgression as being both fun and costly. In this way, feminist understandings of the importance of materialities and queer theory's recognition of the fun of transgression were intersected thereby challenging transgressions as always 'good' whilst recognising the potential of resistive acts. Therefore, the ideas of fixed psychological models of development are contested and the 'natural' associations of dichotomies are questioned.

Chapter 8 examined when women are 'mistaken' for men and thus moved between the dichotomy and binary of male/female. Although gender can be considered in dualistic terms with one term (usually male) privileged over the other (usually female) (Aitchison, 2001b; Bondi, 1997), this chapter explored those who do not fit into either gender category. In this way, the chapter did not contest the hierarchical relationship between men and women, yet it still challenged the opposition between men and women. As outlined in the

discussion of passing in Chapter 7, women who are (mis)read are threatening because, without a clearly defined 'other', the self is unstable. These women can, in some senses, be understood as existing in spaces between the apparently fixed categories of man or woman. The use of the term 'mistake' discursively (re)made women's bodies human. However, women's existence beyond normative genders and sexes problematised the male/female divide (Halberstam, 1997). Moreover, the recuperation of bodies illustrated the fluidity and instability of the sexed categories which require constant reiteration (J. Butler, 1993a; 1997a). Moving between dualistic conceptions of binary sexes and rendering man/woman, male/female unstable was possible because women who are read as men exist in the interstices of apparently 'natural' and 'biological' sexed categories.

Chapter 9 contested the rural/urban dichotomy which can be seen in the literature on geographies of sexualities. This dichotomy was challenged in two ways. Firstly, the chapter examined towns which are in some senses 'urban' but in this research were given rural associations such as 'small minded'. In addition, the chapter explored women's imaginings of cities in relation to their daily life in towns. It was argued that towns and cities can be understood as relationally formed and cities may be (re)made by those 'gazing' in as much as by those living in the city. Consequently, the chapter moved beyond social constructionist/structuralist analyses of place as fixed and space as constructed through constraints and possibilities (see for example Maroulli, 1995). McDowell (1996) contends that social space is now accepted as a construction which reforms place and Gregson and Rose (2000) understand space as performatively (re)produced. It can be seen that heterosexist relations of power form both place and space such that neither pre-exists their doing and these actions are (in)formed by imaginings. Moreover, similar to bodies and identities, there is a constant interplay in the materialising of place and the social relations of space. Just as sex and gender cannot be separated or sex assumed to preexist gender (J. J. Butler, 1990a; 1993a) space and place are also mutually constituted through relations of power.

10.3.2.i Inclusion/exclusion

'Women are not excluded from public spaces, they are isolated from them' (Marouli, 1995: 546)

There is one final concept which operates as a dualism and a dichotomy which has been contested throughout the thesis, and which I now wish to address overtly. In Chapter 3 I contended that power is more than a relation of dominance and resistance and that cultural power, in addition to material power, is important. Arguing that exclusions beyond state policies are salient, and following Aitchison (1999a; b; c) and Foucault (1977), everyday cultural power relations can be understood as important. More often than not gestures, looks and feelings associated with heterosexism, homophobia, racism, sexism and ableism do not lend themselves easily to formal political intervention (Fraser, 1998; Young, 1992). However, these social relations can have profound influences. Here I want to explore the inclusion/exclusion binary by drawing together strands that have been developed throughout the thesis.

Discourses of inclusion/exclusion have become popular in both academic and mainstream discussions (for example, Moran *et al.*, 2001; Sibley, 1995; 1999a; b; Smith, 1997). The scope and diversity of these discussions is beyond the reach of this thesis, suffice to note that inclusion and exclusion are often conceptualised in a dichotomous framework (Aitchison, 1999b; Hornsey, 2002). Here I have not examined issues of poverty or race which are often central to discussions of social exclusion (Smith, 1997), nor have I explored exclusion *per se.* The women in this study are incorporated into society. They participate in everyday activities such as going out for a meal. However, they can feel 'uncomfortable' or different in these spaces. Moreover, they can be made to feel this way. Consequently, these women's experiences were understood in terms of *othering* rather than exclusion. Sibley (1995; 1999b) describes geographies of exclusion, namely how boundaries and borders are spatially (re)made in order to exclude those who do not fit society's normative conceptions of itself. He argues that stereotypes and socio-spatial relations create, and exclude, others who are threatening and different (Sibley, 1999a). Moran *et al.* (2001: 416) argue that boundaries create exclusions but they also produce identities and the conditions

for membership of a group. Whilst this is important, the dichotomy of exclusion as opposite to inclusion did not explain what the women I spoke to experienced. Instead, the processes of othering they described can be seen as far more subtle in that they move between inclusion and exclusion.

In Chapter 2 I argued that the self is dependant on the other and Chapter 3 conceptualised this in terms of heterosexuality, such that heterosexuality cannot exist without its other, homosexuality. In the Chapter 6 I then argued that women can and do feel different or out-of-place in everyday spaces. The dependency of heterosexuality on othering those who do not fit is not simply about excluding them. It can be about rendering them visible to understand them as different. This has resonances with issues of 'belonging' that are beyond the scope of this conclusion (see Probyn, 1996). Here it is suffice to note that where women are visible and apparently 'accepted', heterosexism, as the privileging of heterosexuality over other forms of sexuality, may still be experienced. For example, in Chapter 6 Andie and Julie spoke of their workplaces where, although their sexualities were not understood as a 'problem', their relationships were considered inferior to straight relationships. In addition, the concept of 'it' challenges the inclusion/exclusion binary as there is no named exclusion. Women, perhaps as a result, often do not feel 'excluded' but feel different.

In Chapter 2 section 3.2 I contended that although liberal equality laws may result in equality in the face of the law, practices may remain unaffected. Similarly, in Chapter 6, I contended that cultural power is everywhere and (re)forms everyday life. Conceptualising everyday processes in terms of othering rather than inclusion/exclusion enabled Chapter 7 to explore how non-heterosexual women negotiate othering processes. Whilst women may choose not to go to particular spaces because of these processes, and therefore in some senses 'exclude' themselves, there is a need to be critical of the supposed 'benefits' of inclusion (c.f. Aitchison, 1999b). In Chapter 7 some women argued 'why should I?', contending that they did not need or want to subject themselves to othering processes. These processes were not about inclusion or exclusion, instead these women knew the consequences of being 'included' and chose not to go places at particular times. Moreover, it should be recognised that some

women do not want to be included into mainstream society. Inclusion begs the questions: inclusion into what and on whose terms? (c.f. Adkins, 2000). Donovan et al. (1999), for example, discuss the unimportance of marriage to some non-heterosexual women and men. Therefore, there are dangers in assuming inclusion into dominant heterosexual cultures is always desirable (Hornsey, 2002). Similarly, integrating heterosexual cultures into non-heterosexual spaces is not necessarily positive. Whittle (1994) argues that including 'straight' people into attractive gay spaces destroys the safety of those spaces (see hooks, 1994; Pritchard et al, 1998; Skeggs, 1999). Inclusion thus needs to be critically examined, as there are many centres and margins and being included in one sense may mean exclusion in another (Aitchison, 1999c; Bar-on, 1993). The full extent of this discussion is beyond the scope of this conclusion. Here, it is suffice to problematise the inclusion/exclusion dualism that privileges blanket inclusion over exclusion.

Chapter 8 used understandings of othering to describe women's feelings and experiences of being 'mistaken' for a man. In order to reinscribe the dichotomous categories of woman and man, these women described instances of verbal and physical abuse and 'genuine' embarrassing 'mistakes'. These experiences cannot be conceptualised in terms of spatial inclusion/exclusion because the women are occupying the same spaces as those who fit dominant codes and norms. Instead these women are made to feel out-of-place and different. Discourses of 'mistake' also transgress the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy, at the moment of mis-recognition women are included into the male category but excluded from, for example, female toilets. Their presence in these places is seen as a 'mistake' but it is the viewer who has made the 'mistake' and if this is realised the body is (re)read as female. However, the movement back is never complete. The woman still 'looks like a man' but is accepted (sometimes) into female-only spaces. Consequently, these movements transgress the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy and illustrate that there are multiple 'inclusions' and 'exclusions' (c.f. Bar-on, 1993).

Chapter 9 equated being the 'other', in terms of sexuality, with living in towns that are also considered 'other' in relation to the 'urban Meccas' of cities. In this

way, the chapter in part reinforced the dualism of the heterosexuality of towns/the sexual freedom of cities and, implicitly, the 'inclusion' of cities versus the 'exclusion' of towns. However, the inclusion/exclusion dualism, using the conceptualisations of Chapter 9, can be seen as imaginatively (re)formed. In Chapters 3 and 6 it was contended that power can operate through expectations of policing (Foucault, 1977). In other words, one does not have to directly or consistently experience othering processes in order to be wary of the consequences of transgressing normative boundaries. Chapter 9 argued that place can be imaginatively (re)produced, in that images of cities can (in)form everyday performances in towns. Similarly, non-heterosexual women can feel that they would be 'included' in big cities but because they live in towns they feel 'excluded'. Consequently, the inclusion/exclusion dualism can be spatially (re)imagined. Moreover, as Di illustrated, it can be reversed such that cities can be understood as exclusionary and towns as inclusive. Consequently, fantasies differentially appropriate the inclusion/exclusion binary and othering processes not only inform but (re)form these imaginings. Moreover, in arguing for the relational formation of towns and cities in these distinctions, the opposition upon which the dichotomies of urban/rural, as well as inclusion/exclusion depend is contested.

Processes of 'othering' can transgress the inclusion/exclusion binary. Othering processes have been central to this thesis because women are not spatially excluded, rather they are made to feel 'different'. Sibley (1999a: 127) argues that social spaces have been complicit in producing others who are different. Feeling 'different' can inform how non-heterosexual women act and, consequently, how spaces/places are (re)formed. It should be acknowledged that individuals and groups can be spatially excluded through creating a stereotypical 'other' (Sibley, 1995; 1999a; b). However, the dichotomy of inclusion/exclusion has not been helpful in understanding these participants' experiences. Here, it has been important to look beyond this dichotomy to the everyday processes of power which move between inclusion and exclusion.

10.4 Reflecting on the PhD Journey

10.4.1 Reflecting on Research

This is not a traditional linear conclusion that progresses from theory/literature to research and finishes by reporting on findings. Instead, issues of research are addressed at the end of this chapter. The thesis has challenged particular aspects of traditional research and this section will reflect on the messiness of research and the formation of research and the position of myself as a researcher and an active agent in the creation of participants' accounts (Falconer Al-Hindi and Kawabuta, 2002).

Chapter 4 challenged the conceptualisation of the researcher as detached and separate from the research. Often 'reflexive' chapters and the researcher's place in the study are separated from the discussion and findings chapters. Therefore, once 'biases' are acknowledged, they are ignored or separated from the research findings (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). This detachment can, intentionally or unintentionally, give the illusion of objectivity. One way of contesting the detached researcher approach is through the inclusion of the researcher in the discussion of research 'findings'. Throughout the discussion chapters of this thesis I am included in the quotes from participants. These quotes were long and often taken from different sources (for example focus groups and interviews). They enabled my questions and assumptions to be included and offered a deeper insight into certain issues. This is perhaps best illustrated in my reaction to Julie's question 'do you think I look like a bloke?' I immediately said 'no' and this provided an insight not only into Julie's self-perceptions but also my taken-for-granted assumptions (see Chapter 8 section 6). Winchester (1996: 123) (see Chapter 4 section 4.2) contends that researchers should 'expose something of themselves'. These revelations may be unintentional and yet can lead to further discussions, should they be included into the analysis. Consequently, rather than 'biasing' the research or negating my 'results', because I have incorporated myself and my part in the formation of participants accounts these can be explored in more depth. In addition 'biases' or assumptions which may not or

cannot be known at the beginning of a research project may come to the fore during the analysis of research accounts. Consequently, discussions of positionality and reflexivity do not have to be confined to methodology chapters and can offer further insights into the area under study.

It has often been said that there are finished doctorates and there are perfect doctorates. I am dubious of accounts of research that make everything perfect by forming coherent stories of the research process. There were a number of problems in this study which have not been addressed because of the nature of thesis writing. Some of the messiness of the empirical research included: loose ends that are not incorporated into the discussion chapters, mistakes when undertaking the research and chance happenings some of which were beneficial and others that lead to time 'wasted'. Some aspects, such as the changing of the research focus, happened almost accidentally and are justified retrospectively.

Finally, the research contests specific criteria that determine the value and credibility of a study, for example 'reliability'. Payton (1994: 64) argues that for a study to be reliable the same answers have to be provided should the study be repeated. It has been contended that another researcher would not have been given access to the same sample, as some of the women would not speak about their sexualities to strangers and some women were involved because of their friendship with me (Chapter 5 section 2). Therefore the same people would not have participated in the study should it be repeated by an 'independent' researcher. In addition, even if I attempted to replicate this study with the same participants the fluidity of friendships would make a replica impossible. Some couples in the study broke up and friendships were dissolved, individuals have moved to new places and new jobs and I am not in contact with all the participants. Participants' attitudes and experiences have changed and developed. Consequently, if the same participants were to be involved they would recount different stories and would not be involved in the same format (for example a coupled interview or a focus group with the same people). In addition, my friendships with informants have changed. Some would not be involved again, whilst others have become closer friends and we would form different accounts. In addition their lives have changed in many different ways

and consequently the stories they would tell would be different. Thus, understanding that research is messy contests assumptions that 'good' research must follow particular rules or criteria.

Domosh (forthcoming) argues that when reflecting on research we all too often focus on our (as researchers) interpretations and understandings. My reflections can certainly be seen as evidence of this. However, having asked participants for their reflections on the research process, and not claiming to be doing action research, I feel I should not attempt to speak for them. I do not feel I am alone in my research being 'messy' and anecdotal conversations have suggested that these practices are more common than is acknowledged (see Moss, 2002 for a fuller discussion of the 'messiness' of research). Having reflected specifically on the research process the next section will offer further reflections regarding this thesis and my thoughts on the 'journey'.

10.4.2 'Limitations' and Reflections

As a thesis nears its final conclusion it has become more customary to reflect on the research process and offer some thoughts on the limitations of the study. I find it difficult to speak of 'limitations', not because I think my project perfect but because throughout the thesis I have been emphasising the partial view that is presented here. To speak of limitations implies that a 'perfect' project could exist. However, understanding all research as produced and partial, this study did have a small 'homogenous' sample, non-generalisable (yet potentially transferable) results and, to my mind, a limited literature review. There is always more to be done and speaking in terms of 'limitations' is problematic because it also assumes that limitations can be known (c.f. Rose, 1996; 1997) and often relies on positivistic assumptions about what 'limits' research. Consequently, recognising that all research is exclusionary and selective this section will offer some reflections on my journey through the doctoral process.

I want to begin with one of the most rewarding experiences of doing this research. As I have mentioned previously, I published a magazine article in the lesbian lifestyle magazine 'Diva'. This article went out in April 2002 and throughout April, May and June I received a number of emails from women who expressed sentiments such as:

Thanks to your article I realise that I am not the only person to experience this and it gives me some hope.

(Email correspondence, 17th April 2002. Used with permission)

I picked up your article and was suddenly enlightened, do you know that I hadn't even thought about this being a discrimination? ... Thank you for giving this misunderstood issue an intelligent voice.

(Email correspondence, 6th May 2002. Used with permission)

This was personally rewarding because, in some small way, it felt as if I was 'doing something' with this research. Having begun with a very theoretical outlook this moves more towards practical application of theory. This is not to neglect or diminish the importance of theory. In this case, without the development of theories of gender/sex as fluid concepts, it would not be possible to conceptualise individuals' existence between man and woman. However, having only been 'mistaken' for a man once, I feel that although I can empathise with these women I am in some senses an 'imposter' gazing upon the 'other' while (unintentionally) masquerading in print as the 'same'. Debates are ongoing regarding positionality, others and power (Chapter 4) and this will be a salient consideration should I continue to research in this area. Nevertheless, the 'Diva experience' is a significant point in my personal journey which is intertwined with this doctoral research.

Throughout my Masters I struggled with the label feminist having little knowledge of feminist literature prior to commencing this doctoral research. My understanding of 'feminists' came from media portrayals and I did not identify with these stereotypes. I wrestled with feminist understandings and issues of power when beginning this thesis. Consequently, the thesis began by exploring theoretical debates and, whilst acknowledging power, did not centralise this

issue. However, through engaging with feminist research, particularly poststructural feminist literature, I have gained a broader and deeper understanding of feminist issues. In addition, participants in this research have shown me that gendered and (hetero)sexualised power is a salient consideration in their lives, even if 'it' is not named. My concern that my participants' voices are heard, together with the in-depth analysis of power that is prioritised in this thesis, illustrates a significant shift in my thinking. Moreover, I have become increasingly 'politically' aware which is reflected in both my writing and my everyday life. I consider my positionality as fluid and not a set of static characteristics and my changing outlook has formed this thesis. The continually evolving nature of this research, and the simultaneous creation of my identities, means that this research could never be repeated negating, unapologetically, claims to reliability (see above section 10.4.2).

In the introduction I suggested that part of the reason I used the term 'non-heterosexual' was because of my discomfort with terms such as dyke, lesbian and gay. Throughout the thesis I have become more comfortable with these terms, understanding them, following Butler (1991) and Wilton (1995), as fluid. This is related to the environments I work and socialise in as well as undertaking this thesis. However, I do not see this 'development' in terms of improvement. At the start of the thesis I did not have a negative self-perception related to my sexuality, rather I preferred not to label it. Now I understand the importance of labelling and use labels, similar to Leanne (see Chapter 1 section 2), when it suits me and to identify with other individuals and groups. Whilst I have now developed a more positive association with these terms I recognise that some women still do not wish to use any of these labels, preferring to see themselves as 'just Nat' (see Chapter 1 section 2). This is not 'wrong' or 'backward', nor do I feel that I have 'progressed' but simply that I have changed. Whilst I now feel comfortable with terms such as 'lesbian', I still feel that the use of the broad term 'non-heterosexual' is more encompassing than particular labels and is descriptive of the processes of othering central to the thesis.

The introduction began the discussion of the tensions of writing. The tensions of writing relate to poststructural and postmodern thought which emphasise the

fluidity and partiality of writing, however they/we write about these issues (Derrida, 1978). Moreover, where categories are fluid and produced writing itself is productive rather than reflecting a fixed 'reality' (Ahmed, 1999). There is a difficulty in writing without categorising or generalising. Although I have tried to avoid this there are some parts of the thesis which fall into the trap. The thesis is seen as making the story of these women's lives and perceptions in the context of doctoral research. As theories move beyond 'representation' (Thrift, 1996), there is often an emphasis on finding new or different ways of writing or expressing ideas and concepts. This thesis could be seen as quite traditional and not 'experimental' in terms of writing styles or different ways of presenting the arguments. This is deliberate because I wished to engage with complex theories which are presented in a written prose form and empirical accounts which, although collected verbally, were transcribed. Rather than centralising 'new' styles of writing I wished to highlight women's experiences and the potential dialectic relationship between these accounts and feminist poststructural theory. This does not negate the tensions of writing, the forced coherency and selective appropriation of sources both theoretical and empirical. Nevertheless, academic writing can be used as a medium for advancing one form of feminist politics (Bondi, 1997; Flax, 1991). I often feel I am straddling a chasm between poststructuralism and feminism as these often have conflicting views regarding writing. This is exemplified in writing theoretically of feminist issues. This can alienate those who see it as passé to speak of power and, on the other hand, distance those who argue that feminist writings should be accessible. The thesis has written academically of issues of power and thus exists between these views. However, to reiterate, the tensions of writing of issues of power within a theoretical context should not prevent 'us' (feminists/feminist poststructuralists) from speaking in the academic forum (c.f. Bondi, 1997; Flax, 1991).

10.6 'Future' Directions

Poststructural writing has suggested that, because texts can be read in many different ways, texts are constantly being reformed (see for example J. Butler,

1993a; Morley, 1992; Rose, 1996). Thus the thesis will constantly be (re)worked through each reading. However, convention suggests that I should offer potential 'future avenues of research', again making coherent and linear processes which are messy and often spontaneous. The 'future directions' offered here can be understood as (re)workings of what has gone before, therefore refuting the linear model of research where each piece is an advancement of, and improvement on, previous 'findings'.

This thesis exists between disciplines and subject fields and the porous boundaries between these means that defining borders becomes impossible. This can be understood as a strength as defining and entrenching disciplinary, or subject, positions may stifle innovative research which moves between the artificial borders and boundaries. When everyday life is considered boundaries of geography, sociology, gender studies and leisure studies are dissipated and knowledges themselves can be seen as formed in 'spaces of betweeness'. Epistemological, ontological and methodological spaces between disciplines and subject fields could be further explored and the power relations which retain borders and recreate boundaries examined.

I argued, at the start of the thesis, that there is a dearth of empirical research which addresses the everyday lives of non-heterosexual women. Recent gender theories, along with the recent proliferation of writing in social and cultural geographies, have formed a space in which to explore power relations in everyday 'cultural' practices such as eating but also in activities such as dress, television, music and socialising. Moving beyond concepts of 'equality' and 'justice' to explore daily practices of power may enable analyses which reveal the complexities of everyday spaces, bodies and identities. Certainly, non-heterosexual women's everyday lives and micro-scale practices are salient in this sense and under-investigated areas of consideration.

Gender transgressions are becoming increasingly discussed in sociological and gender studies literature. With the exception of Namaste (1996), this area has yet to be addressed as a geographical consideration. However, gender transgressions can illustrate how places/spaces are gendered and sexualised. Moreover,

concepts of betweeness and formative spaces of interactions (Rose, 1999) may enable conceptualisations of sex and gender which contest binary assumptions. The question of context is important in exploring how bodies are made as male and female and how transgressive bodies are experienced and othered. Gender transgression may also enable further explorations of how spaces are occupied and (re)made. Consequently, a dialectic relationship between social and cultural geographies and gender transgression theories and research may enable the further deconstruction of the binary categories of sex.

In many senses this thesis has been a journey or perhaps more of a 'mystery tour'! I have literally and metaphorically gone places I would never have imagined and now find myself in a position I previously actively resisted. The journey has (re)formed my (multiple) identities and (re)placed me overtly within feminism, albeit mainly 'academic' feminism. Having explored feminist poststructuralism and placed myself within this, it seems apt to conclude that I am not going to offer any final conclusions. Instead, I am going to finish by asking the reader to note that although what I have said is contingent, unstable and fluid, power performed in everyday places is salient and often lived as permanent and fixed.

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334

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358

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APPENDIX

Contents

1. Initial Pack
1.1 Pilot Letter

(Direct line: 01242 543315
Mobile phone: 07932 726833
email: kbrowne@chelt.ac.uk)

Dear ....,

Thank you for agreeing to be involved my pilot study. I am researching non-heterosexual women's food and eating practices and how your friendships and relations inform these. The actual title of my PhD is *'Sexualities and Leisure Spaces: the place of food in non-heterosexual women's identities, bodies and spaces'*. I have prepared a proposal which I can send you if you want to see in detail the content of my PhD.

The pilot study is designed to assess the appropriateness of my chosen research methods. It should also highlight any changes that need to be made before I begin my main study. Specifically, I am aiming to finalise the themes and topics of focus groups and interviews, to investigate the wording of the logbooks and to assess the usefulness of the photographs. Basically, I am hoping that you will be my 'guinea pigs'! I am looking for you to be honest and make constructively critical comments on all aspects of the research process and ways I could improve it, so please feel free to say anything that you think is important.

The pilot study consists of filling in a diary (which is enclosed), taking pictures (for those of you who are willing), a focus group and an individual interview. These are detailed in the attached sheet. The focus group is planned for

Please feel free to participate in this study as much or as little as you wish. I am really interested in any comments and feedback that you have. I am also keen to get more people involved in this study. If you have any friends that you think would like to come along to later focus groups can you please contact me with their details or ask them to contact me? Thank you.

Please contact me with any queries you have and I hope you enjoy being part of this study.

Thank you again,

Kath Browne

1.2 First Letter sent to all Participants Outlining the Study

(Direct line: 01242 543315
Mobile phone: 07980 314999
email: kbrowne@chelt.ac.uk)

Hi,

Thank you for agreeing to be involved in my study. I am researching non-heterosexual women's food and eating practices and how your friendships and relations inform these. The actual title of my PhD is *'Sexualities and Leisure Spaces: the place of food in non-heterosexual women's identities, bodies and spaces'*. I wish to explore your views concerning; comfortable/uncomfortable places to eat. This will hopefully consist of things that you consider normal, obvious and perhaps even 'boring'. I have prepared a proposal that I can give you if you want to see the original academic conception of my PhD. At the conclusion of the study I will send you details of how what you said was used in the study.

The study consists of filling in a logbook/diary, taking pictures, a focus group and an individual interview. It is up to you if you want to take part in all or just some of these research activities. The research techniques are detailed in the attached sheet and a camera and a diary/logbook are enclosed. (If you do not want to take pictures, can I please have the cameras back?)

Confidentiality is important and your personal details will be kept secret, in addition all names and faces will be excluded from the study. This is detailed in the attached sheet.

I am really interested in any comments and feedback that you have. I am also keen to get more people involved in the study. If you have any friends that you think would like to come along to later focus groups can you please contact me with their details or ask them to contact me?

Please get in touch with any queries you have concerning the study. I hope you enjoy being part of the research and I would like to thank you for your involvement.

Thank you again,

Kath Browne

1.3 Information sent to all Participants on Techniques to be used for the Study

This is a brief outline of the aspects of the study that you can be involved in and procedures for confidentiality. In every aspect of this study *there are no right and wrong answers. I am interested in what you think and your experiences.*

LOGBOOKS/DIARIES

The logbooks are for you to record everyday food and eating practices for a week as well as any comments you want to make. The idea of the logbooks is to start thinking about everyday things and perhaps to give you some ideas for photographs. They are designed to be flexible enabling you to write as much or as little as you want.

FOCUS GROUPS

A focus group is a taped informal group discussion with non-heterosexual friends/girlfriends and/or people you eat with regularly. The intention of focus groups is that we can discuss what you do together, any stories you have about food and eating. In addition ideas, opinions and experiences can be 'bounced off' one another, debated and discussed. What you think is central. We could chat about:

➤ Patterns of eating (e.g. where do you eat, with who, what, who cooks, washes up etc.) Changes in these patterns (e.g. since shared a house etc.)
➤ Comfortable/Uncomfortable places to eat
➤ Eating out (e.g. negative/positive experiences of eating out, influences of how you act, how you look?)
➤ Eating at home (e.g. How do you feel at home?)
➤ Special occasions and eating (e.g. what do you do on Valentines Day, birthdays, Easter, Christmas?)
➤ Sexuality and eating (e.g. change where you eat? with who? what you talk about?)

CAMERAS

If you are willing to be involved in the photographic aspect of this study a camera will be provided for you and you will get a set of prints. It would be ace if you could take photos of people and places related to food and eating that are relevant or important to you. This could include pictures taken during everyday meals, people you eat with, where you go to eat, restaurants, friends houses etc. Pictures could also include places you have felt uncomfortable. If the cameras are returned before the interviews, the pictures can be used as part of the conversation. For both the diaries and the photographs the idea is include things that are part of your daily life (although unusual events can be included), things that you may think are everyday, mundane and even 'boring'.

INTERVIEWS

These are casual individual conversations, where what you think is important. If you are part of a focus group I hope you will be willing to be involved in an individual interview, if possible a week or so later. The interviews will hopefully discuss the part that food and eating play in your life. Things that could be addressed in these chats are:

➢ Individual eating patterns, previous eating habits, changes and reasons behind these changes (e.g. lifestyle partner, job, where you live?). Relationships, friendships and eating (e.g. has food ever been a significant part of a relationship? Changed what you eat/ what your partner eats?)

➢ Places you feel comfortable/uncomfortable eating, why? What do you do about it?

➢ Eating Out (experiences, where would you go? With who? Gay friendly restaurants)

➢ Eating In (who eats in your home? How do you feel at home?)

➢ Influences of where you live (town/city), how you look?

➢ Any negative experiences because of your sexuality?

PROTECTING YOU

As much as possible I will keep you informed of how I am using the information you have given me and any additional information you want will be made available. Confidentiality is very important in this study. This means that your personal details (name, address etc.) will be kept secret. Your names and addresses will be kept safe and away from the actual transcripts, photographs and diaries. If I use any of the photos your face will be blocked out, as will names of places contained in the photographs. I want to use **your ideas** as the central part of my dissertation this doesn't mean you will be identifiable and obviously I won't discuss anything you say with anyone else in a way that they could tell it is you. The final write up and any papers that come from **the study will not include your names or any identifiable information**. I need your consent to use your ideas, this means that I can use quotes from the focus groups, logbooks and interviews, and discuss your ideas in my project. You can withdraw your consent at any point during the research. It is expected that this study will become a PhD, which will be kept in the University library, It is hoped that papers in academic journals will be published and conference papers will arise from the study.

1.4 Diary

LOGBOOK

Can you please record anything related to food, eating and drinking activities that you do this week and any changes from what you do normally. The idea is not to do unusual things that would not be part of your daily life (although these can also be included), but to record things that you may think are everyday, mundane and even 'boring'. Hopefully this logbook will bring things to mind that may be relevant to the study but are not things you generally think about (e.g. who you eat with).
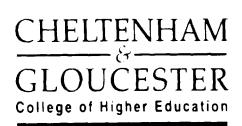
The logbook can include:

➢ Meals, snacks, drinks, tea/ coffee breaks and alcohol consumption

➢ Thinking and talking about food/eating

➢ Preparing food, shopping

➢ Other activities you can think of related to food.

➢ Any social activities involving food and eating that you feel are important

If you think of anything else or any comments/ explanations/ notes that you wish to make, please use the final pages. If you want to write more than the logbook allows, you can write on the back of the sheets or include additional pages.

Please fill this record in as regularly and as fully as possible.

Thanks,

Kath

CHELTENHAM
&
GLOUCESTER
College of Higher Education

Example

What activity did you do/ where did you go	With Whom	When Time Start Time Finish	Comments/ observations/ notes
Had coffee by myself in the refectory	No one	Morning 9.30-10.00	Sometimes I really enjoy spending time on my own, gives me time to think
Had lunch in my office	Office mates (3 of them)	Afternoon 2.00-3.00	We are sad! Sitting in our office for lunch but oh well! We don't talk about work all the time, but I don't think they would be comfortable about me detailing my love life either!
Tea break in the common room	Two of my office mates	Afternoon 4ish 20 minute break	We were avoiding work a bit today, but I was being good and not having chocolate (for once!)
BEERS, pub around the corner	LSRU research students and lecturers	6pm – 10pm	We always go out for beers after seminars. I am quite comfortable around the people who were there and we end up talking about more than work, but still not as much as I would with my really close friends.
Chinese, takeaway, pub for one while we waited then home	My (male) housemate /landlord	10pm-11pm	Went into a pub in Leckhampton, it was definitely I felt totally out of place, even though I was dressed quite smartly because I had been teaching
Eat takeaway, Coffee, home	My housemate	11.30	Coffee usually keeps me awake but not when I am tired or have had lots of beer!! My housemate and I always end up talking about work and he usually falls asleep in the middle of a sentence!

Day 1: _____ (x 7 pages)

What activity did you do/ where did you go	With Whom	When Time Start Time Finish	Comments/ observations/ notes

Notes/ Comments/ Explanations (x 4 pages)

2. Schedules
2.1 Pilot Focus Group Schedule

Introduction
PRIVACY; NO RIGHT/WRONG ANSWERS; WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU
THINK

FORMATION OF THE GROUP (How you became friends)

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES (What kind of things do you do together now? Any
changes, why? Where, why?)

EATING/FOOD (Patterns; How did they start, any changes since they known
each other; Who cooks do they eat together?; Where?)

EATING AT HOME/ EATING AT RESTURANT/ BARS? DRINKING
(Comfortable)

TALKING ABOUT EATING/DRINKING (what do you talk about with the
people you eat and drink with?)

SHOPPING/ FOOD PREPARATION

ON HOLIDAYS

CELEBRATIONS (Valentines Day, birthdays, Easter, Christmas)

RELATIONSHIPS

NON HETEROSEXUAL IDENTITIES

ANYTHING ELSE?

COMMENTS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

2.2 Pilot Interview Schedule

Consent forms, nothing said to others in the group, want to know your opinions and experiences

Anything from focus groups, diaries, photographs you want to bring up?

Eating practices (who do you eat with where? what do you talk about? what don't you talk about? why?)
Differences between eating food (What is a meal? Do you think there are differences between meals? What classifies as a meal? What doesn't? who you eat with, where you eat? What you talk about?)

EATING OUT Where would you go to eat out? where wouldn't you go? Why do you eat out?

EATING IN Who cooks when you eat in? Shops? washes up/ clears up? How do you decide?
eat with who, where: what do you talk about, what don't you talk about

Differences between eating at home and eating out

CHANGES Have you ever changed what you eat? where you eat? who you eat with? why?
Has anyone influenced what you eat? where you eat? who you eat with? Relationships? Workmates? Families? Friends?

Differences in eating alone and eating with other people?

Anything else about eating and drinking?

Any comments on the research?

2.3 Initial Focus Group Schedule

PRIVACY; NO RIGHT/WRONG ANSWERS; WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK; OKAY TO DISAGREE; TALK TO EACH OTHER NOT ME

PATTERNS OF EATING Do you eat together? Where? When? What do you eat? Who cooks, washes up? How did you start eating together?

FOOD PREPARATION (who prepares food/ cooks?) SHOPPING (who shops for food? Why? who would you shop with? Does anyone influence what you buy?)

CHANGES SINCE YOU HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER?

TALKING ABOUT EATING/DRINKING (what do you talk about with the people you eat and drink with? Is it different with different people)

DO YOU THINK EATING CAN BE A SOCIAL OCCASION? (when?) DIFFERENCES IN EATING ALONE AND EATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE?

ARE THERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EATING AND OTHER SOCIAL ACTIVITIES?

WHAT PLACE DO YOU THINK FOOD HAS IN RELATIONSHIPS, FRIENDSHIPS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT DIETS AND DIETING?

PLACES YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE/UNCOMFORTABLE EATING?

DOES IT DIFFER BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE WITH? Places you go?

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EATING OUT AND EATING AT HOME? Work meals? Lunch out and dinner out

DO YOU CHANGE HOW YOU ACT?

EATING AT HOME (who do you invite, who normally eats in your home? How is cooking etc. shared?)

EATING OUT: (who do you go out to eat? who would you not eat with? Does who you are with influence where you go? What you eat? How you act)

NEGATIVE/POSITIVE EXPERIENCES IN RESTAURANTS OR WHEN YOU WERE EATING?

VALENTINES DAY, BIRTHDAYS, EASTER, CHRISTMAS Where? who with

WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT IF YOU WERE HETEROSEXUAL?

NON HETEROSEXUAL IDENTITIES (do you think food plays a part in non-heterosexual identities? e.g. change where you eat? with who? what you talk about?)

DO YOU THINK THERE ARE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMENS EATING PATTERNS AND/OR ATTITUDES TO FOOD?

ANYTHING ELSE? COMMENTS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

2.4 Initial Interview Schedule

Consent forms, want to know your opinions and experiences

Anything from focus groups, diaries, photographs you want to bring up?

WHAT PART DO YOU THINK FOOD PLAYS IN YOUR LIFE?

INDIVIDUAL EATING PATTERNS (can you tell me about your eating patterns in the past week? People you eat with regularly? Where? Where do you eat, with who, what? Can you see a pattern from the diaries/photographs?)

PREVIOUS EATING HABITS, CHANGES AND REASONS have you ever changed WHAT you eat? WHERE you eat? WHO you eat with? WHY?

HAS ANYONE INFLUENCED WHAT YOU EAT? WHERE? WHO WITH?

WORKMATES, RELATIONSHIPS, FRIENDSHIPS AND EATING (Have you changed what you eat/ has your partner changed what they eat? What about for friends? IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FRIENDS AND PARTNERS? Arguments about food; changing over time?)

WHAT PLACE DO YOU THINK FOOD HAS IN RELATIONSHIPS, FRIENDSHIPS? Has food ever been a significant part of a relationship?

ARE THERE DIFFERENT PLACES/ATMOSPHERES WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE? How are they different why? Is there anything you wouldn't talk about? why? Are their differences between the people you eat with and what you talk about? Do you ever talk about food with other people?

FAT? DIETS? (what do you think about them? Ever been on one, why?)

WHERE DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE/UNCOMFORTABLE EATING? IS THERE ANYWHERE YOU WOULDN'T EAT? IS IT DIFFERENT WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE? HOW YOU ACT?

DIFFERENCES IN EATING ALONE AND EATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE?

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EATING AT HOME AND EATING OUT

EATING OUT Do you eat out? Where would you go to eat out? where wouldn't you go? Why do you eat out? How do you act? Do you change how you act? Any positive/negative experiences?

EATING IN When do you eat in? who do you eat with when you eat in? Eating at a friends/girlfriends? Do you have any patterns/rituals? Do you have any rules? Who would you invite/ expect to invite you? Do you ever cook for anyone/ cook for you? Who cooks when you eat in? Shops? washes up/ clears up? How do you decide?

VALENTINES DAY, BIRTHDAYS, CHRISTMAS MEALS

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN?

NON-HETEROSEXUAL IDENTITIES?

Does food have any influence in who you are?

Anything else about eating and drinking? Any comments on the research?

2.5 Final Focus Group Schedule

Privacy; no right/wrong answers; want to know what you think; okay to disagree; talk to each other

PATTERNS OF EATING Do you eat together? Where? When? CHANGES SINCE YOU HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER?

DO YOU THINK EATING CAN BE A SOCIAL OCCASION? (when?) DIFFERENCES IN EATING ALONE AND EATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE? ARE THERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EATING AND OTHER SOCIAL ACTIVITIES?

WHAT PLACE DO YOU THINK FOOD HAS IN RELATIONSHIPS, FRIENDSHIPS?

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT DIETS AND DIETING? DO YOU THINK THERE ARE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMENS EATING PATTERNS AND/OR ATTITUDES TO FOOD?

PLACES YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE/UNCOMFORTABLE EATING?

DOES IT DIFFER BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE WITH? Groups? Couple? Individual? Places you go? DO YOU ACT DIFFERENTLY? HOW YOU LOOK?

EATING OUT:

(How do you act? How are you treated?) NEGATIVE/POSITIVE EXPERIENCES IN RESTAURANTS OR WHEN YOU WERE EATING? Gay resturants

VALENTINES DAY, BIRTHDAYS, EASTER, CHRISTMAS Where? who with

WORK MEALS, FAMILY CELEBRATIONS (would you bring your partner? How do you feel?)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EATING OUT AND EATING AT HOME?

EATING AT HOME (Ever feel uncomfortable?)

SHOPPING (who do you go with? how do you feel?)

IS HOW YOU LOOK IMPORTANT?

HAS ANYONE EVER BEEN MISTAKEN FOR A MAN?

ANYTHING ELSE? COMMENTS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

2.6 Final Interview Schedule

Consent forms, want to know your opinions and experiences Anything from focus groups, diaries, photographs you want to bring up?

WHAT PART DO YOU THINK FOOD PLAYS IN YOUR LIFE?

INDIVIDUAL EATING PATTERNS

(Pattern from the diaries/photographs?)

PREVIOUS EATING HABITS, CHANGES AND REASONS have you ever changed WHAT you eat? WHERE you eat? WHO you eat with? WHY?

HAS ANYONE INFLUENCED WHAT YOU EAT? WHERE? (Have you changed what you eat/ has your partner changed what they eat? for friends?

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FRIENDS AND PARTNERS? DIFFERENCES IN EATING ALONE AND EATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE?

WHERE DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE/UNCOMFORTABLE EATING?

EATING OUT HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU GO OUT TO EAT? Are there differences between eating out with a GROUP AND EATING OUT AS A COUPLE? Differences between gay and straight restaurants?

VALENTINES DAY, BIRTHDAYS, CHRISTMAS Where? who with

WORK MEALS, FAMILY CELEBRATIONS (would you bring your partner? How do you feel?)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EATING AT HOME AND EATING OUT

EATING IN
HOW DO YOU FEEL AT HOME? EVER FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE?

SHOPPING (who do you food shop with? Where? How does it make you feel?)

➢ Ever felt UNCOMFORTABLE/OUT OF PLACE? ANY NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES? DID YOU DO/ DO YOU DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT? DIFFERENT WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE/Places? HOW YOU ACT?
➢ are there differences in MEN AND WOMEN'S REACTIONS?
DOES WHERE YOU LIVE HAS AN INFLUENCE? Are THERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIVING IN A TOWN AND LIVING IN A CITY

IS HOW YOU LOOK IMPORTANT? HAVE YOU EVER BEEN MISTAKEN FOR A MAN? HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

Anything else? Any comments on the research?

3. Letters Sent with Transcripts

3.1 Letter sent to Participants Involved in Focus Groups

(Direct line: 01242 543315
Mobile phone: 07980 314999
email: kbrowne@chelt.ac.uk)

Hi,

Thank you for being involved in my study here is copy of the written version of the tape. If there is anything you want to change or add please do so and return the transcript to me.

The transcripts should not contain any names of people or places in them. If you find any please point them out to me and I will remove them. This is to protect your identities. There are a couple of abbreviations in the transcripts:

() = I couldn't hear what was said

Sha = should have asked (this is for me so that I can improve how I do the study)

Words in brackets either

➢ explain actions or

➢ the words were unclear and I think that is what was said or

➢ my thoughts on what was said

I hope you enjoyed being part of the study so far and I look forward to an individual chat with you.

Thank you again

Kath

3.2 Letter sent to Participants Involved in Focus Groups and Interviews after Interview

(Direct line: 01242 543315
Mobile phone: 07980 314999
email: kbrowne@chelt.ac.uk)

Thanks a million for helping me with my research. Here is a copy of the transcript, if you want to read through it and make comments that would be brilliant. The transcripts should not contain any names of people or places in them. If you find any please point them out to me and I will remove them. This is to protect your identities. There are a couple of abbreviations in the transcripts:

() = I couldn't hear what was said

Sha = should have asked (this is for me so that I can improve how I do the study)

Words in brackets either

➤ explain actions or

➤ the words were unclear and I think that is what was said or

➤ my thoughts on what was said

If you have any comments on my ideas please include them as well. Of course, it is entirely up to you how much, if anything, you want to say.

I have also enclosed an evaluation and an SAE, if you have time to fill it out and send it that would be brilliant.

I hope you enjoyed the research process, thanks again for being involved.

Take care,

Kath

3.3 Letter sent to Participants only Involved in the Interviews

(Direct line: 01242 543315
Mobile phone: 07980 314999
email: kbrowne@chelt.ac.uk)

Hi ,

Thank you for being involved in my study here is copy of the written version of the tape. If there is anything you want to change or add please do so and return the transcript to me. Of course, it is entirely up to you how much, if anything, you want to say. I have also enclosed an evaluation, if you have time to fill it out that would be brilliant.

The transcripts should not contain any names of people or places in them. If you find any please point them out to me and I will remove them. This is to protect your identities. There are a couple of abbreviations in the transcripts:

() = I couldn't hear what was said

Sha = should have asked (this is for me so that I can improve how I do the study)

Words in brackets either

➢ explain actions or
➢ the words were unclear and I think that is what was said or
➢ my thoughts on what was said

I hope you enjoyed being part of the study. Thank you again for being involved.

Kath

4. Follow-up Letters

4.1 Letter sent to Participants who were Quoted in Everyday Exclusions Paper

(Direct line: 01242 543315
Mobile phone: 07980 314999
email: kbrowne@chelt.ac.uk)

Hi,

Thanks a million for helping me with my research. Enclosed is a paper that I have just presented at a conference in Durham and would like your feedback on it (if you have time) before it becomes a final draft. I also thought that you might be interested to see how I used some of the information you gave me.

If you have any comments on the paper it would be brilliant to hear from you. Enclosed is an envelope and although it is addressed to someone else it will come back to me without being opened. Please feel free to write on the paper or if you want to keep the paper you could send back your comments on a separate sheet.

I look forward to hearing from you. If you do not have time/ do not wish to comment thank you again for being involved.

Thank you in advance for your help,

Take care,

Kath Browne

Ps: your pseudonyms are, if this is not okay please tell me and I will change them.

4.2 Letter sent to Participants Quoted in Everyday Exclusions Paper and Everyday Transgressions Paper

(Direct line: 01242 543315
Mobile phone: 07980 314999
email: kbrowne@chelt.ac.uk)

Hi,

Thanks a million for helping me with my research. Enclosed are two papers that I have just presented at different conferences and would like your feedback on (if you have time) before they become final drafts. I also thought that you might be interested to see how I used some of the information you gave me.

If you have any comments on the paper it would be brilliant to hear from you. Enclosed is an envelope and although it is addressed to someone else it will come back to me without being opened. Please feel free to write on the paper or if you want to keep the paper you could send back your comments on a separate sheet.

I look forward to hearing from you. If you do not have time/ do not wish to comment thank you again for being involved.

Thank you in advance for your help,

Take care,

Kath Browne

Ps: your pseudonym is, if this is not okay please tell me and I will **change** it.

4.3 Letter sent to Ruth

(Direct line: 01242 543315
Mobile phone: 07980 314999
email: kbrowne@chelt.ac.uk)

Ruth,

Just to say thank you again for your first letter it was really brilliant, really well written and raised issues that I hope to raise although perhaps not address in my thesis. I have enclosed an evaluation which if you have time I would really like you to fill out. The questions do not cover everything so feel free to enclose an extra sheet of paper and write on the backs of the ones given if you wish.

I hope to hear from you or see you soon

Take care,

Kath

5. Consent Form

I _____ give my
permission for Kath Browne to use excerpts from the conversations taped here and
(where applicable) the photographs taken. I understand that these will be used in
writing up and disseminating her research. I have been informed of the nature and
purposes of the study. I understand that I will not be named or made identifiable
in anyway and that I can withdraw from the study at any stage.

Signature: _____

6. Evaluation

If you have time/ want to, it would be really helpful for me if you evaluate the diaries, interviews and focus groups. I just want to know what you think. honestly. You can use the questions below as a guide or just write your opinions, views, comments and observations on another sheet. Please do not feel constrained by space and use as much or as little paper as you want to. Thank you for all your help, I look forward to reading your opinions and ideas.

1. Do you think the diaries, interviews and focus groups work? Why/Why no

2. Did you enjoy being part of this study? Why/Why not?

3. Would you do it again? Why/Why not?

4. What could be done to make the study better/ more fun?

5. Were you able to express everything you wanted to say? Were there things you didn't say?

6. Are there any comments you want to make on this study?

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR TIME AND EFFORT

7. List of Publications and Conference Papers

Publications

In progress   Aitchison, C. and Browne, K. (in progress) 'Sexuality, space and the city: discourses of social exclusions' in Hall, T (ed) *Discourses of Exclusion* London: Routledge.

2002   Browne, K. (2002) A Right Geezer Bird. *Diva*, May pp. 30-31

Under review   Browne, K. (under review) Genderism: Women's experiences of being mistaken for men. *Proceedings of Women's Studies Network Conference.*

Under review   Browne, K. (under review) Feminism, friendships and fieldworkings. *Acme: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographers*

Under review   Browne, K. (under review) Snowball sampling: Using social networks to form research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*

Invited Research Paper

2001   Genderisms: Women's experiences of being mistaken for men. Presented at Centre for the Study of Women and Gender Warwick University. 17th October 2001

Conference papers

2002   Browne, K. 'Gazing on cities: Non-heterosexual women's imaginings of cities'. Paper presented at, *Global and Non-Metropolitan Sexualities*, Annual Association of American Geographers, Los Angeles 19th-23rd March 2002. (Bursary received from St.Paul and St. Mary's University fund, to attend)

2002   Browne, K. ''Urban meccas' or 'rural idylls': non-heterosexual women's perceptions of cities and experiences of towns'. Paper presented at *Gender, the City and Everyday Life*, Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference, Queens University 2-6th January 2002. (Bursary received from the Women in Geography Study Group to attend)

2002   Browne, K. 'Friendship(s), feminism(s) and fieldworking(s)'. Paper presented at *Feminist Methodologies*, Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference, Queens University 2-6th January 2002. (Bursary received form the Women in Geography Study Group to attend)

2001   Browne, K. 'Genderism: Women's experiences of being mistaken for men.' Presented at: *Gender and Culture: Leisure, Consumption and Women's Everyday Lives*, Women's Studies Network Conference, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, 12-14th July 2001

2001   Browne, K. 'Imagining the city, living the other: non-heterosexual women's perceptions of towns and experiences of cities.' Presented at: *Performance of Place*, University of Birmingham 26th May 2001 and Leisure and Sport Research Unit Student Day, 3rd May 2001

2001   Browne, K. 'Friendship(s), feminism(s) and fieldwork(ings)'. Presented at 'Culture Club': Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education Cultural Studies Reading Group, February 2001

2001   Browne, K. 'Everyday Transgressions: Challenging heterosexual norms, forming identities bodies and spaces.' Presented at *Gender into the Future*, Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference, University of Plymouth, 3-6th January 2001 and seminar paper presented at internal seminar, January 2001. (Bursary received form the Women in Geography Study Group to attend)

2000   Browne, K. 'Everyday Exclusions: Producing non-heterosexual women's identities and bodies in restaurant spaces.' Presented at: Postgraduate Forum, Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers, University of Durham 4th November 2000 (Bursary received form Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers Postgraduate Forum to attend)

1999/2000   Browne, K. 'When two become one?: geographies of lesbian relationships.' Presented at Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference, University of Sussex 4-7th January 2000 and seminar paper presented at internal seminar series November 1999.