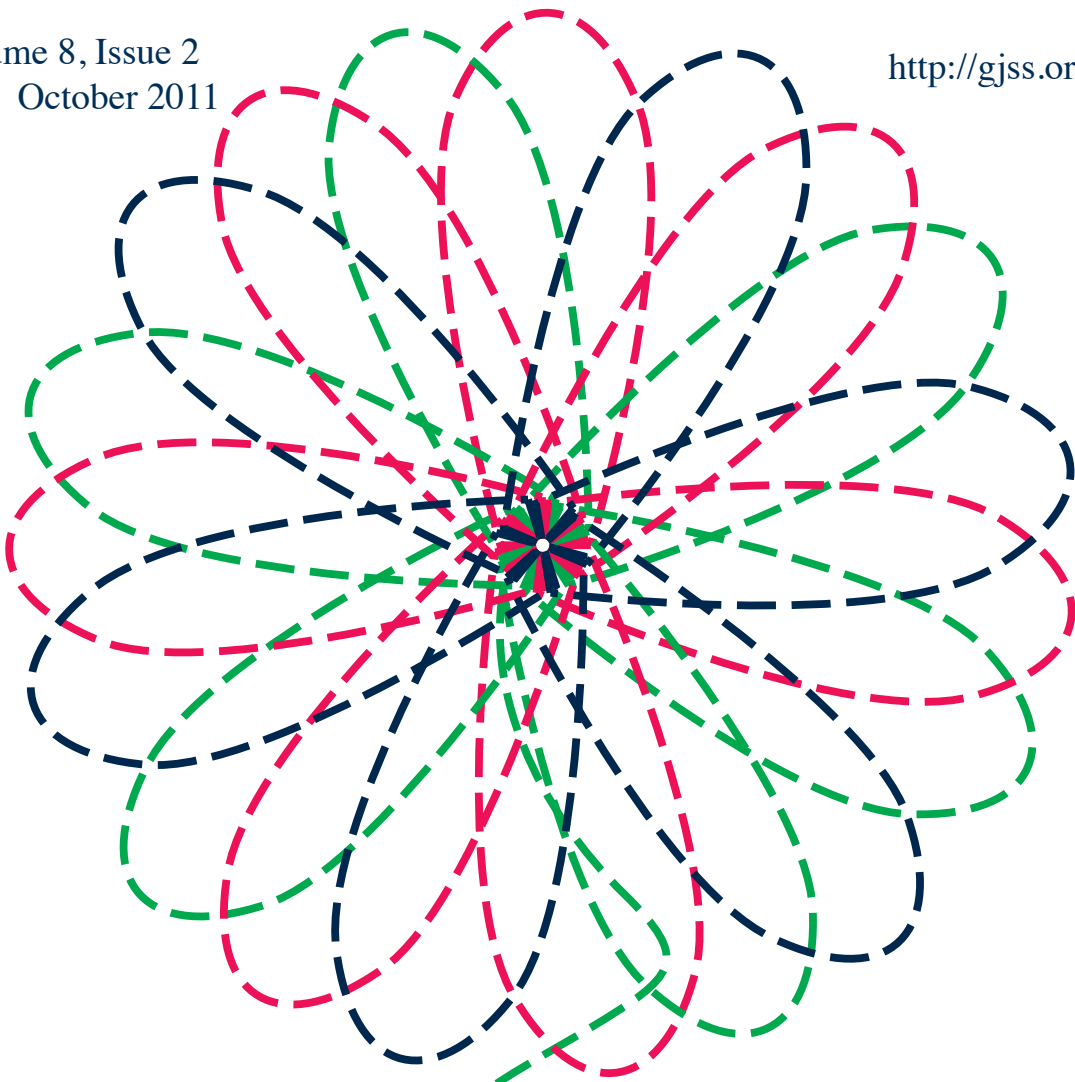


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Special Editors: Alexa Athelstan,
Cassandra McLuckie, Liz Mills,
Angelica Pesarini, and
Mercedes Pöll



Thriving on the Edge of Cuts Inspirations & Innovations in Gender Studies



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Editorial

Special Issue

Thriving on the Edge of Cuts: Inspirations and Innovations in Gender Studies

**Alexa Athelstan, Cassandra McLuckie, Liz
Mills, Angelica Pesarini, Mercedes Pöll**

With a Special Contribution on the Political Context of the Editorial
by **Stefanie C. Boulila**

Resolutely Thriving in a Bleak British Political and Economic Climate: Towards a Political Con- text for the Thriving on the Edge of Cuts Conference and Edition

In June 2011, a group of postgraduate students from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies and the Department of English at the University of Leeds held a one-day conference entitled *Thriving on the Edge of Cuts: Inspirations and Innovations in Gender Studies*. This conference was organised in direct response to the British Government's recent budget cuts. With this conference, we sought to play our part in opposing the UK Government's withdrawal of public responsibility to the British education system through its dramatic cuts to higher education funding initiated in

December 2010. As postgraduate students from various socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, we were directly affected by the decision to further privatise higher education and wanted to contribute to the national student protests that had emerged by resisting these changes. In solidarity with all students who have been demonstrating, occupying university premises, and lobbying against the cuts, we are outraged by the government's decision to jeopardise the futures of a whole generation, along with the futures of academic and administrative staff employed in the educational sector.

As researchers who are academically and politically concerned with social inequalities, we are deeply troubled about the effects

the budget cuts will have on the accessibility of higher education for people facing social and economic disadvantages. This is especially problematic when the rise of fees is accompanied by the abolition of programmes supporting students from low-income households, such as the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and AimHigher. The pressure of the envisaged debts and the lack of funding will have a disproportionate effect on young adults who are already facing discrimination and poverty based on classed, raced, aged, gendered and other inequalities. A quick glance at the findings of National Statistics (2004) shows that social and economic background plays a significant role as to whether somebody participates in higher education or not. This, coupled with the fact that a university degree significantly affects the level of income at a later stage, makes university education an important realm for balancing out social inequalities. To complicate access to degree programmes will therefore directly impact social mobility.

The government's decision to force young people into employment at the peak of a recession is a further absurdity. Recent statistics have shown that there has been a drop in the employment rates of young adults aged 16 to 24 since the start of the recession in 2008 (Office for National Statistics, 2011). As an effect of increasing youth un-

employment, many young people were pushed into full-time education. Therefore, to make higher education unaffordable at a time where employment opportunities are scarce will leave even more young adults with nothing.

Alongside these grave issues, the reform that caused us to frame this conference around Gender Studies in particular was the government's decision to fully abolish all funding for the teaching of social science and humanities subjects. In the name of '[s]ecuring a sustainable future for higher education' (Browne, 2010, 1), the coalition gave clearance to what one might describe as an academic exodus. Although this reform caused less public outrage than other policies that have recently been brought in, its aftermath will be disastrous for the much needed diversity in the academic sector. In justifying these spending cuts, the report states that when it comes to funding, priority is given to courses that create what are regarded as "wider benefits" for society. According to the Browne Review (2010, 25 & 47), such subjects are medicine, science, engineering and 'strategically important language courses'. The hypocrisy of this statement can easily be unpicked. Although the Browne Report (2010, 17) recognises that in the OECD (Organisation for Economic and Co-Operation Development) comparison, the UK has one of the most unequal societies when it comes to social (in)justice,

it nevertheless declares precisely those disciplines as unimportant which directly research the causes and remedies of these inequalities. Instead, its list of fundable subjects seems like a secret path to secure investment for defence, the pharmaceutical sector, as well as the automotive and the building industries. The composition of the panel responsible for the Browne Review is also telling. With links to institutions and companies such as BP, the Royal Academy of Engineering, DaimlerChrysler, Goldman Sachs, McKinsey, Standard Chartered (Curtis, 2009) and Rolls/Royce (Aston University, 2011), it is obvious that this choice of academic “priority” has more to do with specific lobbying, rather than concern with broader social benefits.

A significant achievement of Gender Studies is that it has taught us that there is no objectivity beyond partiality, and that as critical thinkers we should be wary of spurious claims towards objectivity. Thus, whilst the Browne Review claims to “objectively” evaluate the condition of higher education in the UK, in actuality, it disguises the widespread political interests of the few powerful players involved in decision-making. The same businesses that are bound to the causes of the economic crisis are now turning the recession to their advantage. As students of a discipline that has grown out of a political struggle for equality, we condemn the defini-

tion that this small circle of elite social, political and economic players have of what is beneficial for society as a whole, especially when it is their capitalist ideology that continues to broaden the gap between the richest and the poorest in both this country and abroad. The coalition government’s spending cuts disproportionately target poor and disadvantaged people. Research that contests the government’s definition of which knowledge matters for a fair and prospering society is therefore desperately needed. As students and researchers in Gender Studies, we aim towards shaping a society in which all individuals can live their lives free from discrimination, especially if that discrimination is carried out by a supposedly democratic government.

The state’s decision to withdraw funding from the teaching of humanities and social science subjects has furthermore gone in line with cutting equality services and equality expert commissions. This will provide racism, homophobia, misogyny and other inequalities with new breeding grounds. Additionally, the government relies on its citizens to deliver free labour on behalf of a state that contracts private companies to make profit delivering public goods at lower quality. Such policies unmask the “Big Society” as a cruel society for those who are lacking resources. It is our duty as researchers to defend the achievements made inside and outside of academia and to strive

further on our journey of tackling social injustice. It is vital to increase diversity amongst ourselves and to extend our portfolio of researched issues. We need to make our knowledge accessible to people outside of academia and enter dialogues with individuals directly affected by the government's financial irresponsibility. Our knowledge is crucial in empowering ourselves and others in the battle against inequalities.

Taking these factors into account, in a time where the achievements made from previous struggles have come under scrutiny, we thus invited students and researchers to share their findings in gender and sexuality related topics – firstly, in the context of the *Thriving on the Edge of Cuts* conference that was held in June 2011 at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies of the University of Leeds; and secondly, in the context of this special edition of the *Graduate Journal for Social Science*.

The Thriving Conference

Within this context of increasing impediments to higher education, especially for younger and early career academics, it is notable that the driving force behind organising *Thriving on the Edge of Cuts* was a dedicated committee of post-graduate students at both MA and PhD level. We came together holding a variety of academic interests grounded in our strong concerns for gender issues. Recognising the

importance of highlighting the vitality of discourse, the sharing of ideas and the significance of strong visibility of an endangered academic species like Gender Studies, the conference was envisioned, organised and executed jointly and with determined enthusiasm. We thus worked with what, in retrospect, can be described as a Rosi-Braidotti-inspired philosophy, which believes that the creation of sustainable futures and the 'transformative edge' of feminist activist politics and knowledge production lies in our capacity for enacting 'the transformation of the negative into a life affirming alternative,' of transforming a time of crisis into a potential time for thriving on the edge of an intense wave of social and political change, in ways that 'not only empower the marginal but also change the structures of the social order,' even if only on a micropolitical level (Braidotti in Bui-kema, 2009, p.258).

The development of the conference and this subsequent publication created the opportunity for us, as students, to take part in a practical and proactive learning experience. With the guiding support of staff from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at the University of Leeds, the organisation of this conference became simultaneously an exercise in skill building and in the deployment of existing knowledge resources. Adopting a working structure that focused on collaboration and dynamic leader-

ship - because realistically speaking no organisation can truly claim to be without some sort of explicit or oblique hierarchical system - organising committee members were able to focus on tasks complementing their own interests, as well as tasks that presented new challenges.

However, this learning endeavour of building practical organisational and academic skills did not stop merely at the organising committee. With a Call for Papers that explicitly encouraged abstract submissions by researchers at very early stages - or even the start - of their careers, the conference provided a platform for exchange and cooperation on a broader collegial level as well. Tying in with Say Burgin's and Dr. Julia Horncastle's contributions to this special edition, a supportive academic environment was fostered through voluntary inclusivity rather than an enforced hierarchy. Moreover, an ethics of care and an awareness of the socio-political positionality of the project proved to be another clear benefit of the event.

In an austere climate that prohibits easy access to higher education, this collaborative approach to the generation and discussion of cutting-edge research was therefore also meant to highlight the important contribution that student researchers, at various stages of their engagement with the academic world, are capable of making to the wider interdisciplinary scholarly

community. By playing an active role through participation in all aspects of the conference, younger or less experienced researchers were able to demonstrate that they are much more than merely passive consumers of educational provisions. Indeed, their exciting contributions spoke for themselves and highlighted their crucial role in furthering research. Contrary to the government's neoliberal justifications of the funding cuts, the conference posed a vibrant platform speaking to members of an activist-academic community of practice across the board and, in parallel, let concerns and suggestions be voiced instead of silenced.

Such voices were heard from a range of sources, leading to an interdisciplinary experience of both cuts-orientated research and projects which showcased ideas and criticisms crucial to understanding sexed, gendered and sexualised social realities. Over 50 international presenters and attendants from within the UK and across Europe, spanning fields such as Sociology and Social Policy, Psychology, Religious Studies, Geography, Anthropology, Media Studies and Translation, put their own spin on dealing with the matters at hand. The topical focuses of the individual panels touched on issues high up on the political agenda, proving the tangible relevance of Gender Studies research for contemporary communities. Themes around social

privilege, (non-)normativity, border crossing, marginalisation, contemporary feminism or citizenship generated a lively response not only on an academic level, but for their applicability and thought-provocation in working through policy developments in the UK and abroad. One such piece of research was presented in the keynote lecture by Dr. Kath Browne from the University of Brighton, whose work on transgender equalities in the context of political changes provided the culmination of a day of exciting, sobering and challenging discussions.

In recognition of the range of impact of the conference, we were able to obtain funding from the University of Leeds Faculty of Education, Social Sciences and Law, as well as the Faculty of Arts. Moreover, in order to further disseminate the contributions, the *Graduate Journal of Social Science* (GJSS) supported our endeavours, being a perfect fit for the overarching aims of the conference through its clear focus on providing a critical discursive space for postgraduate and early career researchers. The result of the support gained from the GJSS is this October 2011 special edition, for which submission was encouraged throughout the event. Additionally, a training session on writing for publication was hosted by GJSS representative Rob Kulpa (Birkbeck College, University of London) and Ruth Garbutt (Staff and Departmental Development Unit, University of

Leeds) as a way of helping presenters prepare for the potential transformation of their conference papers into the journal articles that form this edition.

The *Thriving* Edition

From conceptualisation to collaboration, to the finished special edition that you are currently reading, the *Thriving* conference became the inspiration for the *Thriving* edition, which directly follows on from the June 2011 *Interdisciplinarity and the "New" University* edition of the GJSS. The edition is broadly split into two sections. The first four papers by Say Burgin, Julia Horncastle, Sarah Harper, and Kath Browne and Leela Bakshi deal directly with the cuts. The later five papers by Liam Hilton, Daniela Cherubini, Carin Tunåker, Flávia Kremer and Roland Weißegger demonstrate the rich variety of perspectives and concerns informing the field of interdisciplinary Gender Studies today. Thus, this edition mirrors the *Thriving on the Edge of Cuts* conference, both in terms of its double foci on debating the impacts of the cuts and in showcasing innovative research currently being conducted by postgraduate students and early career academics. Furthermore, we feel the edition benefits from its mixed demographic, and our active striving to provide a space for Masters, PhD, early career academics and, importantly, also enthusiastic Bachelor students, to engage in contem-

porary debates.

Beginning this edition with a discussion of two examples of radical educational alternatives, one historical and one contemporary, Say Burgin's *Coarse Offerings: Lessons from the Cambridge Women's School for Today's Radical Education Alternatives* takes up the paradigm of higher education alternatives that developed in times of social and political change. Burgin draws on the examples of the Really Open University (ROU), which was recently founded in the UK, and the Cambridge Women's School (CWS), which ran in Boston from 1972 to 1992, to offer fresh ways of thinking through 'the multi-dimensional nature of educational justice.' By situating both these projects in their particular political contexts of feminist social activism, she encourages a view that distances education from economic commodification and quantifiable knowledge. Instead, the schools in question focus on teaching and learning as a collaborative, openly political and non-hierarchical acts, designed to bring together people of various backgrounds, to analyse, understand and challenge patriarchal, racist and imperialist impositions of traditional education systems. In particular, Burgin's efforts centre on the idea of learning and benefiting from the past. Through her paper, Burgin argues that the way the CWS handled issues of inclusivity with regards to their student population,

which consisted mainly of highly educated middle or upper class white women, highlights how a grounded and intersectionally informed commitment against discrimination is required for the manifestation of a sustained sense of diversity in both mainstream higher education and alternative radical educational projects, that endeavor to stand for social and educational justice, like the ROU.

A similar focus on the effects of the cuts to higher education is taken by Dr. Julia Horncastle in her paper *Taking Care in Academia: The Critical Thinker, Ethics and Cuts*. She deals with topics of inclusivity and transformation from a perspective that is grounded in personal experience and that results in a bold and unguarded look at austerity and higher education politics. In light of her own situation of "being cut" as an academic from an Australian institution, she presents an analysis of anti-liberal politics as a transnational phenomenon by introducing a discussion on care ethics within academia. She emphasises notions of collegial and institutional support especially in a culture in which higher education is being managed within frameworks of 'corporatisation' and 'market ideologies.' In relating care practices to economic and interpersonal power relations, Horncastle takes up Judith Butler's concept of "grievable life" and loss. Gender Studies (and other, smaller, specialised areas) are fre-

quently discussed as being at risk and struggling for a sustainable survival, since they are often marked out as existing in academic ghettos. Horncastle challenges such rhetoric strategies by analysing media accounts and questioning the idea of impact “value” applied to Gender and Women’s Studies, as academic fields and generators of social change.

Kath Browne and Leela Bakshi’s strategies of investigating trans people’s lives show a corresponding ethics of care and continual support through critically examining the everyday effects of social policy. In *Don’t Look Back in Anger: Possibilities and Problems of Trans Equalities*, they argue for a cautious and measured approach when attempting to understand the political changes we are experiencing in the UK today. The authors examine legislative changes, preceding the current government, aimed at extending the rights of LGBT people, suggesting that academic work needs to be able to account for complexity and that critical work must be both situated and critical *for* something. Concentrating on Brighton, Browne and Bakshi consider the impact changes in legislation have had on the lives of trans people, drawing out the specificities in experience that highlight the importance of working not just in conversation with a national context, but also through maintaining nuanced engagements with culture and sociality that encourage

reflexive and particularised understandings of the world. Refusing a-spatial and a-temporal accounts of the world, the authors ultimately call for working towards a ‘critique with a purpose,’ which understands the value of critical work as always being partially framed through envisioning hope and possibilities for the future.

In Sarah Harper’s *Spiritualised Sexuality Discourse: Impacts on Value Judgements*, such a purposive style of critique, as advocated by Browne and Bakshi, here focuses on sex work and the sex trade industry from a perspective that veers from more common discursive paths of sexuality. Her argument illustrates neatly the formative power of (political) rhetoric on the construction of identities. Harper posits that popular academic standpoints mainly deal with sex as an act or site of power enforcement. Subsequently, “spiritualised” discourses on sexuality have emerged, embracing a holistic view of sexual experience as a positive force for liberation that displays a healthy mentality. Concurrently, Harper draws from research such as Levy’s (2006) critical stance on sex work as subjugation hidden under the guise of liberation. Harper’s original focus lies in women’s subjectivities which contradict this spiritual holism. Specifically, she casts light on individuals who view sex work as income-generating labour and who subsequently understand their bodies as a means of achiev-

ing a financially compensated end. Harper argues that a separation of emotionality, spirituality and sexuality must not necessarily form a pathology in such cases, but may merely be a gainfully employed technique for generating income. Moreover, she assesses the potential impact of such discourses not only on feminist theory and academia, but also on the reality of policy making.

With Burgin, Horncastle, Browne and Bakshi, and Harper focussing on social and political discourses as determining of everyday lives, Liam Hilton highlights more broadly the precariousness that results from marginalisation and othering. Taking a broader look at justice and urging for a politics of location, his provocative essay *Peripher realities: Porous Bodies; Porous Borders. The "Crisis" of the Transient in a Borderland of Lost Ghosts* critically hones in on contemporary and ancient understandings of the concept of "the human", thus revealing conceptualisations of humanity to be intensely labile, yet still often forcefully determined. Hilton works to demonstrate the crucial relationship between the state and the human, or rather; the power of the state to fix what might count as human, while also exploring opportunities or possibilities for resistance. Hilton concludes by arguing for the importance of critical thought, specifically in Gender Studies, to provide resistance to these powerful normativities and to highlight the possibilities for conceptual-

ising "humanity" differently.

Linking such conceptualisations of humanity more directly to laws of citizenship and questions of belonging, Daniela Cherubini's paper *Intersectionality and the Study of Lived Citizenship: A Case Study on Migrant Women's Experiences in Andalusia* seeks to investigate the transformation of citizenship in the context of international migration in feminist studies. The author thus provides a solid feminist theoretical framework, supported by the results of her research on migrant women's perceptions of citizenship in the South of Spain to illustrate her argument. Intersectionality and lived citizenship are the two key concepts chosen by Cherubini to investigate the gendered, racialised, and classed dynamics behind the idea of "citizenship" and how different immigration profiles lead to unequal opportunities in terms of family relationships and intimacy in the everyday life. Through the voices of her interviewees, Cherubini shows how immigration laws can undermine women's self determination, especially in the case of irregular workers and those women employed in global chains of care. Her paper thus brilliantly highlights the heterogeneity of the migration process and women's different experiences of lived citizenship in a context marked by the power of immigration policies.

While Cherubini's migrant women struggle for agency in their borderland positions as Others in Andalusia, Carin Tunåker presents a very different conception of female subjectivities. Her article *The Matrifocal Household: Santería Religious Practice and Gender Relations Explored* provides an interesting ethnographic analysis that highlights instances of female empowerment in matrifocal households in Cuba, where both men and women have active roles, and gender relations are understood under different sociocultural frames of reference. Unlike canonical descriptions which follow the dichotomy of public and private in their depiction of matrifocality as a uniquely female space, Tunåker emphasises the importance of women in the workings of Cuban life, given their centrality in domestic relations and their importance within the household, which is defined by the author as 'the most active hub of social, economic, political, and spiritual life.'

Also drawing from ethnographic paradigms, Flávia Kremer's *Interrupting Research: Ethnography of a Research Encounter with the Bororo People in Central Brazil* turns up striking issues of social consciousness. Incidentally, she describes her research as a "failure", before taking the opportunity to investigate further. During a short fieldwork experience in Brazil among the Bororo people, Kremer was denied her request to conduct an interview with one of the

community members. This is the starting point of a fascinating paper that astutely analyses the research process and seeks to deconstruct the terms of the dichotomy between the researcher and the researched. Drawing on her interlocutor's words, Kremer provides a sophisticated analysis of research practices, emphasising the imperative of taking into account the political implications of the research we conduct. Through her deployment of a gender, globalisation and development focused analytical lens, Kremer challenges those imbalanced power dynamics and implicit assumptions of knowledge production present in the research process. Through the refusal of her interlocutor to be interviewed, Kremer invites us to question the hierarchies that organise the perspectives of "global" researchers and their "local" participants, within politicised networks of knowledge production.

Seeing as Kremer's research "failure" was caused by and subsequently accommodated through linguistic means, Roland Weißegger provides further insight into the importance of linguistic cues for navigating social worlds. *Queering Translations: Transcultural Communication and the Site of the "You"* takes a critical look at the intersection of translation practice and the construction of identities. On the premise that interlingual and intercultural communication does not equal an apolitical, uncomplicated

transfer of meaning from one dimension into another, Weißegger argues for a more aware and situated understanding of the translational process. In line with deconstructive theories of translation as text production, Weißegger uses feminist and queer approaches to further reconceptualise translation as a constructive and interpretative processing of realities. By adopting a novel system of gender-neutral pronouns ('oq') and suffixes, Weißegger illustrates *oqs* main arguments that anyone involved in communication and information processing may take up a subversive form of agency by not conforming to hegemonic discourses of identity. Using examples from one original and one translated book on gay lifestyles, Weißegger furthermore demonstrates how translation can work to expose the constructedness of social realities within differently contextualised frameworks. Thus, this edition ends with Weißegger's linguistically innovative and provocative contribution.

Final Words and Thanks

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Coarse offerings: Lessons from the Cambridge Women's School for today's radical education alternatives

Say Burgin

In 2009, a group of students and faculty from the University of Leeds created the Really Open University (ROU) in an effort to 'transform' the U.K. system of higher education; rather than 'reproduc[ing] the elite of society', the ROU believes higher education must be open and accessible to everyone. Their answer to the austerity: Transform the university. Create an educational system that is free and open to all. Forty years ago across the Atlantic, a group of women with a similar vision started the Cambridge Women's School (CWS) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The CWS turned out to be the longest-running US free school of its kind, and throughout its history, organizers strove to create a site for learning that reflected the interests and needs of a range of women. Wanting the School to provide a more inclusive and accessible education than the academe, the largely white, middle-class women who ran the CWS tried to attract local women of varying races, ages, sexualities, and education backgrounds. Despite this democratic vision, however, the CWS continuously struggled to attract a student body that was not largely white and middle-class. Why? What stunted the CWS's attempts at inclusivity? This paper explores these questions and asks how contemporary projects, such as the ROU, might learn from the 'coarse offerings' of the CWS, its uneven attempts to create inclusive educational experiences.

Keywords: Cambridge Women's School, inclusion, radical education alternatives, Really Open University, women's liberation movement

Introduction: what the past may teach

Since 2010, cuts made to the United Kingdom's higher education system have begun to bleed universities of funding, faculty and staff, particularly within the arts and humanities. It has become clear that the tuition increases, produced by

this climate of cuts, will work to impede access to university education, especially for working-class students, students of colour, and students who would be first-generation university educated (McLeod and Percival 2010). Aside from the usual obstacles (such as high tuition and accommodation costs), first-gen-

eration students – who are disproportionately working-class students and students of colour – will face the additional difficulty of competing for a decreased number of university placements (McLeod and Percival 2010). Moreover, as Williams and Vasagar reported in the UK-based newspaper the *Guardian* on 18 November 2010, increases in tuition fees will undoubtedly have a greater impact on poorer students, who will be less likely to enrol as the higher tuition fees climb. The resistance that students, lecturers and others have mounted against these cuts is also well-known, if somewhat fading in memory. Several campuses witnessed occupations, as students at universities like Edinburgh, Bristol and Kings College London took over buildings for days, sometimes weeks. The University and College Union, which represents higher education staff throughout the UK, organised strikes over proposed changes to pension schemes. Students and university employees marched into the streets of most major UK cities. Images from the massive December 2010 and March 2011 marches in London still linger in the public's memory: the thousands that took to the streets brandishing placards that decried both the return of Thatcherism and Liberal-Democrat Nick Clegg's betrayal of his promise not to support tuition increases.

Less public forms of resistance also cropped up: endeavours that

challenged the very culture of higher education. The Really Open University (ROU), with whom I share an academic home – the University of Leeds, represents one such effort. It was founded by a group of students and educators in Leeds, who had become frustrated with the increasing marketisation of higher education in the UK. They founded the ROU as a vehicle through which they might strive to transform this system. Rather than 'reproduc[ing] the elite of society', they envision a system of education that is open to all and does not bend to the whims of the market economy (Really Open University, undated). The ROU began amidst the threat of deep cuts at Leeds, as Vice-Chancellor Michael Arthur announced an initiative aimed at stripping £35 million from the university's budget over a two-year period. As the *Times Higher Education* reported on 29 October 2009, this 'economies exercise' meant the loss of hundreds of jobs at Leeds and coincided with similar austerity measures at other universities. The UCU at Leeds readied itself for strike action the following February and March, and the ROU, which fully backed strike action and tried to foster mass student support for it, became embroiled in anti-cuts debates and action. ROU activists wrote, in their newsletter '*The Sausage Factory*', that the 'economies exercise' indicated more than just a crisis in the system of higher education. It also indicat-

ed a larger crisis in the system of the market economy, one that was ‘international in its scope’ (ROU, 8 Feb 2010). Yet, it sees the problem at the heart of both the global crisis and the coinciding crisis in education as one and the same: ‘a system that exploits daily life in the name of “profit”’ (ROU, 8 Feb 2010). Rather than valuing the process of learning and the creation of critical knowledge, the university commodified knowledge and created customers out of students.

Through both the publication of *The Sausage Factory* and the various events it has hosted, the ROU has done much to challenge the very culture of the university – raising questions about who the university serves and benefits, the kinds of knowledge it (re)produces and privileges, and its privatisation. Its newsletter’s tag-line – ‘Strike, Occupy, Transform’ – makes explicit two kinds of actions (in order to ‘transform’ the university) that the ROU advocates in pursuit of education transformation. Aside from consistently supporting strike action and action short of striking by the UCU, the ROU urged students to occupy parts of Leeds University campus, and played a key supportive role in the days-long occupation of a lecture theatre in November and December of 2010 (Occupied Leeds 2010). Yet, the ROU has also promoted critical reflection of these tactics. In both its blog and *The Sausage Factory*, it has sought to stretch conceptions

of ‘occupation’ and ‘striking’ within university settings. ‘Occupying’, for instance, must include more than (brief) takeover of university spaces. In fact it begins, as the ROU have written, with the realization that the tools we need to transform our education system ‘are littered around us’, and it is up to those who would enact this transformation to re-think these tools and appropriate them to these ends (ROU 16 Feb 2010). A lecture theatre, for instance, may be reconstituted as a free school, as students strive to realise their vision of a free education for all.

Questions of accessibility to, and inclusivity within, education have been central to the work of the ROU since its inception. As ROU activist Daniel has said:

One of the earliest aims of the group was to definitely broaden it out so that it wasn’t just a student struggle and so that [the ROU] broke down the walls of the university so that education wasn’t just something that was applicable within those institutions and all within a certain...demographic.¹

Part of the project of the ROU was to extend the education that was happening inside universities to the communities beyond campus borders, and to link the struggle to create a more open education system to wider struggles happening outside the university. What connected these struggles, the ROU asserted, was exploitative, capital-

ist forces. The October 2010 issue of *The Sausage Factory* laid out the neo-liberal rationalisation of the cuts and concluded, 'within an already profoundly unequal education system, the privatisation of degrees and the raising of fees will mean that only the rich and a token handful of the disadvantaged will be granted the status of degree-holders.'

Amidst these very heartening efforts of the ROU, and in the interest of their continued impact, it is crucial to reflect on the challenges and successes of similar efforts. Radical education activism has a rich, international history that is ripe for the current moment. In an effort to think through how we all might continue to struggle against cuts to higher education and how the ROU (and the rest of us) might work to transform the university into a more inclusive place, I want to offer here the story of an alternative education project that also wrestled with questions of inclusivity. The Cambridge Women's School (CWS) opened in Cambridge, Massachusetts, near Boston, and like the ROU, it attempted to prefigure the kind of entity that it believed educational institutions should be. When the CWS was founded in 1972, it represented the vanguard of Boston feminism (Breines 2006). It was opened in order to offer an alternative – feminist – education for women in the area. Unlike the ROU, the CWS did not aim to directly change higher education systems. However, like the creators

of the ROU, those who started the CWS had grown disenchanted with traditional academia (Cambridge Women's School, undated-a, undated-c). The founding of the School was, moreover, a challenge to the very elitism that its feminist founders deplored in the academy; its establishment defied the notion that an education was something people, women in particular, could not create themselves and freely offer to one another. Despite its vision of democracy in education, the School perennially faltered in its attempts to attract a diversity of women.

Much like the CWS, the ROU's vision for wider access to education in the UK has not been signalled through a diversity of participation in the group itself. Recently, the ROU have reflected on their history, their current situation and hopes for the months ahead, and along with other concerns and aspirations, inclusivity within the project has remained central. As Adam, an ROU activist, claims wider participation in the ROU has been a 'constant...underlying anxiety that has run throughout the ROU since the beginning'. Despite its desire to go 'beyond' the university, it has yet to garner a mass of support or participation from communities outside of the university. Moreover, some ROU activists feel that the group's overall political stance and some of the activities they have planned (such as an occupation) have worked to bar participation in some ways.² More

than just an average ‘outreach’ problem, the demographics within the group seem to play a key part in the group’s frustrations around membership diversity and inclusivity. Daniel flags the dominance of ‘male voices’ in the group as a persistent issue, and claims that throughout its history, the ROU has intermittently wrestled with issues of class and gender privilege within the group. What’s more, he states, the ROU ‘is very, very white dominated’. Both of these radical projects – the CWS and the ROU – have thus struggled to create the kind of accessible education enterprise that they would like to see in existing education systems. Given these overlaps, my aim here is to highlight important and relevant insights from the history of the CWS and its struggle to become inclusive. Though the ROU does not currently operate as a free school (as the CWS did), members have considered developing such a project.³ Moreover, what I will offer here are insights that are applicable to radical education alternatives of all kinds.

Establishing the Cambridge Women’s School

On International Women’s Day in 1971, Boston feminists took over a disused Harvard building and converted it into a women’s centre. Women activists throughout the city had been discussing the need for such a site for some time, but their action was also motivated by a sense

of solidarity with the building’s adjacent low-income community, into which Harvard had been encroaching for years.⁴ The occupation lasted 10 days and, without support from the university, eventually resulted in the establishment of what would be the US’s longest-operating women’s centre, the Cambridge Women’s Centre (DeVries 2000). The year after its establishment, feminists at the Centre, (which moved off campus after the occupation), established an alternative education project called the Cambridge Women’s School. The CWS also turned out to be the longest-lasting free school of its kind. Operational for two decades – from 1972 to 1992 – the CWS ran hundreds of courses by, and for, thousands of women in the greater Boston area (Cambridge Women’s School 1972-1992). Course offerings changed over the years as the school gradually moved away from staunch socialist-feminism, and began to incorporate cultural feminist ideals. The CWS aimed to operate as a port of call for Boston’s feminist community – a place for women to come together to learn, away from both men and established learning institutions, and a place for women with little or no knowledge of feminism to learn about it and become involved in feminist projects (Breines 2006).

For some who were involved in the CWS, the School’s founding was linked to the decline of socialist-feminism in the Boston area (Breines

2006, 2002; Cambridge Women's School, undated-a). Organisations and projects that had begun at the end of the 1960s had died out or were losing steam, particularly the city's leading socialist-feminist organization, Bread and Roses. Mirroring the situation of largely white feminist organizations across the country, Bread and Roses divided over the different approaches to feminism developing all over the country (cultural versus socialist feminism, for example), as well as class and race tensions. Amidst this instability, some CWS organisers wrote that the Women's School:

[W]as seen as one means to plan the future direction of the women's movement in Boston, develop a better analysis of women's oppression and of the society we live in, involve new women in the movement, and help women gain some of the necessary skills (both intellectual and manual) to change their conditions in themselves. (Cambridge Women's School, undated-a)

Notwithstanding its remarkable tenure and the new life it breathed into Boston's white feminist movement in the early 70s, the School operated in ways that precluded participation from a range of women. It operated within a specific (perhaps cliquish) feminist enclave and continually struggled to garner participation from working-class white women and women of co-

lour (Cambridge Women's School, undated-b). However, as a project that withstood the test of time and provided feminist organizing experiences and education for numerous Boston women, the CWS did have a huge impact on the Boston feminist community.

Moreover, the School's creators had aims beyond the revival of Boston feminism (Cambridge Women's School, undated-c). Its founding represented a profound critique of the academic world that many of the (female) founders, who had been afforded college educations, had recently emerged from. Utterly disaffected with the academy, Women's School founders described their effort as the pursuit of 'our own *real* education' (Cambridge Women's School, undated-c). They felt that their own institutional education had not been 'real' in the sense that it had not taught them about themselves as women, and as it operated through the patriarchal values of competition, hierarchy, and the separation of thought and action. School organisers sought to challenge the conventions of the academy, as they perceived them, by creating a radical feminist-education alternative. Women, they believed, could strip largely male faculties of their teaching roles and take on this responsibility themselves. They could create courses that spoke to them and their needs, and teach in non-hierarchical ways. After a few years' experience, CWS

coordinators wrote of their hopes and experiences:

We want classes to be collective experiences which will lead to concrete analysis and projects, breaking down the gap between “students” and “teachers” and eliminating competition among students. We have found that most women want to learn in a non-authoritarian way, in a friendly and comfortable atmosphere, where a flexible structure allows them to talk about their own lives in relation to the material studied in the class. (Cambridge Women’s School undated-a, 16)

The CWS was thus an innovative response to the frustration and marginalization that many women felt in traditional education. Its founders believed that an education by and for women (a feminist education) could thrive outside of the academy, if there was not room for it within. At the same time, it is important to note the privileged position from which these white feminists were critiquing the higher education system. Their objections to that system were informed by their participation within it, not their exclusion from it.

Contexts of retrenchment

Of course it was not only Boston students who had reason to rail against the traditional education system. CWS founders were part of a generation of young people who participated in anti-racism, anti-

imperialism and anti-war struggles both in and out of university settings (DuPlessis and Snitnow 1998; Evans 1980; Carson 1981; Miller 1994). In the course of these struggles, the university was hit hard with criticism – for its role in the perpetuation of war, for clamping down on freedom of speech, for its outmoded teaching techniques and paternalistic policies (Evans 1980; Cohen and Zelnik 2002). In addition, the US’s system of public education – from grammar to high school – had been a key target of black freedom efforts for some time, even after the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision officially outlawed segregated schooling, as a result of the many ways schools were still failing black children (Knowles and Prewitt 1969). It was a time, as now, when students, parents and teachers everywhere were re-thinking education.

University systems, however, often proved unyielding, and they sometimes reacted to protests with violent defensiveness. In the spring of 1970, students on the campus of Kent State University in Ohio had been demonstrating against the US’s invasion of Cambodia, and protests took an incendiary turn when some of the demonstrators burned Kent State’s Reserve Officer Training Corps building. By May 4th, the Ohio National Guard had been called in to safeguard the campus, and they opened fire on students, killing four and paralyzing or other-

wise injuring nine others (Hariman and Lucaites 2001). The Kent State Killings sparked widespread protests on university and college campuses all over the country. Many federal and state government officials, however, showed no regard for these protests and little sympathy towards the protesters who had been at Kent State. Ohio's governor at the time, James Rhodes, had said he brought the Guard in to 'eradicate' the protestors, while President Nixon remarked that "this should remind us all once again that when dissent turns to violence, it invites tragedy" (quoted in Karnow 1983, 626).

To date, higher education protests in the UK have not been deadly. However, student protesters did endure physical attacks by the police, while a number of politicians maintained a similarly unsympathetic stance towards student protests. In the wake of the November 2010 protests in London, for instance, video footage emerged that showed officers in the Metropolitan Police (the Met) charged into crowds of protesters on horses, though they had previously denied such accusations. At the same protest, the Met engaged in the controversial police tactic of 'kettling' – forming a ring of police officers around protesters in an effort to 'contain' the protest. Aside from inciting further anger on the part of activists, younger participants in the demonstration have also filed a case against The Met, arguing that

their use of kettling had infringed on their safety and right to protest. The Met were eventually forced to admit their poor handling of the demonstration; Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson told *Guardian* reporters (Lewis and Dodd, 10 November 2010) that the police's conduct had been an "embarrassment". This statement was not an admission of wrongdoing, however. Rather, as Lewis and Dodd noted (*Guardian*, 10 November 2010), Stephenson stated the problems lay with, first, the fact that the National Union of Students had not anticipated such a high turnout at the march and, second, the 'thuggish, loutish behavior by criminals' at the protest. A number of politicians were also quick to defend the Met's forceful tactics and deny that they played a part in escalating the violence that took place. Prime Minister David Cameron, for example, stated in an interview with the BBC (11 November 2010), 'I could see a line, a thin blue line, of extremely brave police officers trying to hold back a bunch of people who were intent on violence and destruction.' The 'problem', in other words, according to public officials, in both Kent (Ohio) in 1970 and London in 2010, was with the students themselves – their lack of foresight and inclusion of violent individuals – and not with any provocative or violent tactics of the police.

Though the Kent State Massacre was certainly a more extreme reaction, counter-attacks by universities

and state officials verified that education systems would not change readily. Rather than heed the anger of student protesters, politicians quickly justified dangerous policing practices in both contemporary London and 1970s Ohio, and this only worked to further shield systems of higher education from the demands of those it supposedly existed to serve. A number of activists in the 1970s came to the conclusion that if education in the US was going to be different, entire systems would have to be upended and made anew. As radical education activist Jonathan Kozol (1972, 13) wrote that those who sought to transform the ways people in the US taught and learnt came to be mired 'above all, in the reconstruction of the metaphor and symbolism of the *school itself* as something other than a walled and formidable bunker of archaic data and depersonalised people in the midst of living truth'. Efforts across the nation aimed to revitalise education, to make it exciting and relevant to students (Kozol 1972). By the time the CWS had been set up, free schools and adult community education classes had been set up by grass-roots activists and social change organizations all over the country, including other women's schools in San Francisco, Chicago and elsewhere. Likewise, in the aftermath of attacks on student demonstrators in the UK, radical education projects and organisations (similar to the ROU) have

cropped up in every corner of the country. These include the Radical Education Forum in London and the Social Science Centre in Lincoln.⁵ The creation of projects that seek to fundamentally alter the character of higher education, therefore continue to serve as an important point of resistance for students and educators attempting to create more democratic and accessible institutions for learning, particularly when established institutions and governments exhibit clear unwillingness to meet or even listen to students' demands.

The CWS's struggle to include

In all of these endeavours, individuals attempted to reconcile their grievances with the traditional education system in various and localised ways. For the CWS, especially during its earliest years, the key to a meaningful and transformative feminist education lay, first with an emphasis on action and, second, by using education as a way of bringing more women into the women's liberation movement. The first of these principles hit at the assumption that education was a purely intellectual exercise, that it exercised only the mind, and was concerned only with abstract theory. At the CWS, organisers wrote that they strove 'to achieve a workable balance in transmitting knowledge and allowing space for personal discussion [in order] to break down the traditional barrier between these two aspects of learning' (Cambridge

Women's School, undated-a, 16). CWS students' personal experiences became part and parcel of class material. Many classes were structured like consciousness-raising groups, where individual women would become (further) politicised by discussing their personal experiences with sexism.⁶ Furthermore, School organisers encouraged the development of 'courses designed to stimulate concrete political action'. '[I]f the school is a means toward building the women's movement,' the founders wrote, 'then the things we are learning should lead to action. (We've all learned, anyway, that real education is more than just study and talk.)' (Cambridge Women's School 1973, 2). Some classes did indeed lead to specific projects, such as an abortion counselling service. A particularly successful and recurring course on 'Women and Their Bodies' led to the publication of the iconic, second-wave feminist text *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Breines 2006, 103). The School's orientation towards an active or experiential education, thus, often worked to link both the individual and the School to the larger feminist movement.

The CWS's efforts to create a diverse and inclusive feminist school proved much less successful than its attempts to create a politically engaged student body, despite the fact that it was founded in a deep understanding of the ways in which the women's liberation movement had

been undemocratic. The School's original organisers understood that, despite its frequent calls for universal 'sisterhood', the larger women's liberation movement was failing to reach working-class white women as well as women of colour. The assumption embedded within these critiques was that all women *should* gravitate towards the women's liberation movement, because the feminist agenda was not 'raced' or 'classed', but spoke to the needs of all women. In contrast to these assumptions, CWS founders seemed to recognise the ways in which the race and class background of most of women's liberationists influenced the movement: its membership, its agenda, its culture and principles. The founders were also cognizant of their (collective) race and class positioning. They often spoke quite self-consciously as white middle-class feminists, and they argued for a more spacious movement, saying for instance, 'We also have to find ways of opening the movement to many more women, of making women's liberation accessible to women whose needs and backgrounds are different from our own' (Cambridge Women's School 1973, 2).

Importantly, 'opening the movement up' in this way was envisioned as a two-way street. It involved creating a feminist agenda that resonated with different populations of women, but just as important, it meant creating a community of women who were conscious and en-

gaged with non-feminist struggles. To both of these aims, the School offered classes, (all of which were free or inexpensive), on 'Black History', 'Marxism' and 'Revolutionary Movements in Europe'. They also held workshops on class consciousness and racism awareness, and over the years the School came to offer other courses that they felt would engage various populations of women – courses such as 'Older Women's Lives', 'Native American Women: the Red Roots of White Feminism' and 'Black and White in Literature'. Several of these courses ran during the CWS's earlier years and re-appeared only intermittently from the late 1970s onwards, reflecting an overall shift in course offerings. Many of the founders had envisioned the School, (as organiser and steadfast anti-imperialist activist Laura Whitehorn has put it), as a place where women could, 'become more analytical and more able to articulate and create strategies... [for] a revolutionary anti-imperialist women's movement'.⁷ However, this original emphasis on developing a comprehensive political strategy that connected with other liberatory struggles faded. The School's earlier years were not marked by great racial and class diversity amongst School participants. They were, however, distinguished by race and class cognizance.

Despite these efforts, the CWS never garnered a critical mass of participation from the groups of women

it had hoped to attract (Cambridge Women's School 1973, 1981). School organisers often lamented the low enrolments of women of colour, particularly black women, and women who had not graduated from university.⁸ In 1981, after nearly a decade of existence and, importantly, after the racial separatist ideology of Black Power had begun to decline, women of colour made up less than 10 per cent of CWS students, while women who had no university education comprised a mere three per cent of enrolments (Cambridge Women's School 1981). In other words, the CWS's student body was not diverse in terms of race, class and education background.

Although the racial and class composition of the CWS undoubtedly impacted upon its ability to become the inclusive entity that it hoped, my interest here is not in guessing at why working-class white women and women of colour did not enrol in the School in greater numbers, or the role of feminist demographics in this. As I am a next-generation, white, middle-class feminist (from the US) who has not had the opportunity to talk with women who chose not to attend the School, I think this would be problematic. Besides, other scholars of US feminist movements have already provided in-depth analyses aimed at understanding why many women of colour and working-class white women did not participate in women's liberation (Combahee River

Collective 1982; Breines 2002, 2006; Roth 2004; Springer 2001, 2005; Thompson 2002). Winifred Breines, a retired feminist sociologist, was among the ranks of white, middle-class socialist-feminists in Boston in the early 1970s. Gaining class and race diversity within women's liberationist projects was fraught, she writes, because:

Women of color and white working-class feminists could not help but notice that the movement was composed primarily of middle- or upper-middle-class white women or women who were highly educated. Often higher education divided women, and college graduates frequently became the unofficial leaders, people whom the media anointed, or who seemed to gravitate to leadership positions. It was not uncommon for working-class and lower-middle-class women to feel uncomfortable or unacknowledged. (Breines 2006, 106)

Of course, the women who founded the CWS had hoped to circumvent this problem through their course offerings. However, it seems that this did not work. Breines (2002, 2006) has speculated that, because of racial tensions that had been building within several movements, black and white feminists organised separately during the early and mid 1970s, but began to create cross-race coalitions towards the end of that decade. With regard to racial exclusion within the feminist

movement, I have found Kimberly Springer's argument more convincing than that of Breines. Springer (2001, 2005) maintains that black women had to develop 'interstitial politics' because neither the black freedom, nor women's liberation movement, engaged their needs. This political organizing happened 'in the cracks' of these movements in ways that reflected the multiple oppressions black women faced (Springer 2001, 155). Like Springer, scholars Benita Roth (2004) and Jennifer Nelson (2003) have drawn attention to the ways in which key efforts within the white feminist movement – the fight to legalise abortion, for instance – alienated many women of colour because of their inherent white, middle-class perspective.⁹ While access to abortion might have been the driving reproductive concern of young white women, for many women of colour in the 1960s and 70s, widespread sterilisation abuse posed a far graver concern (Nelson 2003). Springer, Nelson and Roth thus argue that despite the democratic intentions of many white women's liberationists, the priorities of their organizations worked to push women of colour and working-class white women to the margins of the movement.

Without making claims on the motivations of the many women who never attended the CWS, what I aim to do here is to examine the ways in which the School hindered its own attempts to be inclusive of a

diversity of women. I want to do so while bearing in mind the important arguments of Springer, Roth and Nelson. What I offer below are brief observations about the actions of those who were running the School, about their attempts at inclusivity and the ways in which their understanding of inclusivity impeded their very efforts to be accessible.

First, it is significant that the only time the CWS seems to have been able to attract greater numbers of women of colour and white working-class women was when organisers deliberately set about building connections with local groups and black feminist organisations (Cambridge Women's School, undated-a). During this time, the CWS began to meet regularly with a black feminist group to discuss racism and exclusion within the women's liberation movement and, in response to critiques from this group over teaching techniques, the School changed its offerings to include a greater number of shorter workshops rather than longer classes. These measures, School organisers said, helped to garner 'a much greater age range and mix of class and race background among the women taking the classes' (Cambridge Women's School, undated-a, 8).

Importantly, these efforts came about during a period of overall restructuring at the CWS. At this point – the latter part of 1976 – organisers re-evaluated their outreach efforts, teaching methods, and the women's

movement in general because student numbers for the fall 1976 term had declined dramatically. Whereas the School typically ran between ten and fifteen classes, that autumn only five courses had sufficient numbers to proceed (Cambridge Women's School, undated-a, 7). Not coincidentally, this restructuring also occurred at a time when Boston's black feminist communities were taking their white counterparts to task (Cambridge Women's School, undated-a). Though feminists of colour had been calling attention to racist practices and patterns throughout the movement's history, in the mid-70s these voices reached a crescendo as black feminist organisations in the city and around the country proliferated. The Combahee River Collective, arguably the most famous US black feminist group of the 1970s, was established in Boston in 1974. In its now-famous *Combahee River Collective Statement* of 1977, collective members, which included Beverly and Barbara Smith, wrote about the barriers and goals of black feminism, highlighting the racism within the larger white feminist movement:

One issue that is of major concern to us and that we have begun to publicly address is racism in the white women's movement. As Black feminists we are made constantly and painfully aware of how little effort white women have made to understand and combat their racism, which re-

quires among other things that they have a more than superficial comprehension of race, color, and Black history and culture. Eliminating racism in the white women's movement is by definition work for white women to do, but we will continue to speak to and demand accountability on this issue. (Combahee River Collective 1982, 21)

Amidst these demands for accountability, the School began to act. Implying that the CWS had recently become disconnected from racial justice struggles, School organisers wrote that in 1976 they 'began internal discussions centered on the need of reaffirming the commitment to deal with the issue of racism within the women's movement' (Cambridge Women's School, undated-a, 7).

It is important to recognise that, despite the School's attempts to rectify its relationship to racial justice struggles, it was in fact reacting in something of a crisis mode and not pro-actively engaging with feminists of colour or working-class white women. Such a reactionary move meant that, once the feeling of crisis subsided and the sense of urgency waned, organising with feminists of colour and white working-class women took a lower priority. As mentioned previously, by 1981 enrolments of women of colour and women who had not been to university had plummeted again.

Coalition-building only worked to open up the CWS to a broader base of women for a short period of time, when it was implemented in an urgent, responsive manner. As Becky Thompson (2002, 349) has written, one of the lessons of multiracial feminism was that attention to race and a commitment to racial justice could not be 'added on' but must be 'initiated from the start'. I would argue that the same must be true for other kinds of commitments, to economic justice, for instance. Without such sustained and sincere engagement, the sort of broad-based coalitions that create inclusive projects cannot survive.

Second, and connected to this first point, these 'other struggles' that the CWS organisers tried to include in their courses seem to have been envisioned as precisely that; as 'other' or 'separate'. They were not seen as primary functions of the feminist movement itself. For instance, CWS founders wrote:

We believe the women's liberation movement, as an independent movement, will help to shape and to lead the struggle for revolution in this country, but we also think the revolution will be made by all oppressed groups of people. As women, we need to understand both the basis and the limits of our interests in common with other oppressed groups (poor and working people of both sexes, black and third world people in the U.S. and abroad). This is why

the school includes courses that do not deal exclusively with women. (Cambridge Women's School 1973, emphasis in original)

This sentiment rather perfectly captures both the CWS's intent to be inclusive, and the frustrations inherent within its attempts to include. In not insisting on the primacy of the feminist movement over other struggles, these women broke with a noxious pattern within the white women's liberation movement that worked to prohibit working-class white women and women of colour participating. Indeed, particularly in the movement's earlier years, in their zeal to promote 'sisterhood' a number of white women, such as Robin Morgan, editor of the foundational US second-wave text *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (1970, xxvi), sometimes expressed sentiments that worked to minimise any identity other than gender. 'We share a common root as *women*, much more natural to both [black *and* white women] than the very *machismo* style of male-dominated organizations, black, brown and white.' The CWS offered courses that did not 'deal exclusively with women' in an effort to distance themselves from this strain of feminist thinking.¹⁰ They recognised the need for feminists to learn about similar struggles against oppression. However they failed to recognise the connection between feminist and other struggles for liberation; to recognise that systems of oppres-

sion were actually, as Combahee (1982, 113) referred to them, 'interlocking'. Being inclusive – casting a wide feminist net – meant to CWS feminists that they just needed to be knowledgeable of 'other' oppressive systems and 'other' liberation-based struggles; that they should educate themselves on the history of slavery in the US or the struggles of contemporary Vietnamese women. Identification with these other struggles, in the sense of recognising shared history and stakes, would have required that these feminists understood these struggles as feminist struggles and this knowledge as *feminist knowledge*. Without doing this, the CWS organisers could never do what they had hoped: to create a feminist movement, and a women's alternative education project in particular, that was relevant and meaningful to a range of women.

Conclusion: coarse offerings

The CWS provided an important outlet for white feminists' energy throughout its tenure, and it offered a crucial critique of the higher education system in the US. It did so whilst universities, police and the state fought hard to maintain the status quo and suppress dissent. In the end, however, for the communities with which they meant to connect, the CWS had rather coarse offerings. Attempts to develop links with feminists of colour, in ways that would create sustained con-

nections and foster inclusion, were coarse in the sense that they were uneven. More ‘stop-start’ than ongoing, these efforts signaled a lack of commitment to the communities that CWS organisers hoped to reach. The CWS’s efforts were also coarse in terms of their understanding of the connections between feminist and other liberatory struggles. These struggles were not seen as connected or cohesive, as struggles that mutually benefited from each other, but rather as large and disparate entities. In failing to understand the feminist dimensions of racial and economic justice – and the racial and economic justice inherent in feminist knowledge – the School precluded the involvement of those for whom these ‘other’ struggles were crucial.

How might these lessons translate for today’s radical education alternatives, like the ROU? For one, it seems necessary that all of us involved with these projects must engage in sustained and proactive coalition-building from early on in our projects. Higher education has always been farther out of reach for working-class white students and students of colour than for white, middle-class folks, and current austerity measures only compound this reality. Greater inclusion must be measured along the lines of those who have traditionally been left out. Radical efforts that aim to transform higher education into a truly inclusive realm must work diligently to

build relationships with groups already working to gain greater access to higher education for people of colour and working-class people. Alongside this is the need for alternative education projects to recognise the multidimensional nature of educational justice. If those of us within these projects are committed to fighting for justice within higher education systems, this struggle must involve more than economic justice. It must also struggle against the university’s patterns of discrimination and injustice along other axes (particularly gender, race, nationality, and age) (Reay, Davies, David and Ball 2001; Fogelberg, Hearn, Husu, Mankkinnen 1999; Davies and Guppy 1997).

I offer these modest insights at this pivotal time in the world of education in the UK. As the ROU states, ‘a really open university is possible’ (Really Open University, undated). This possibility is exciting, and I maintain that its realisation is dependent on our understanding of the ways in which efforts to create inclusive and just education systems have been frustrated and unfulfilled in the past. For me, the ROU and other alternative education projects prove that, on the edge of cuts, resistance is thriving. In this climate of austerity, many students and educators are more than anti-cuts; they support educational justice. The trials of our predecessors teach us that we must understand this justice in the broadest and most

inclusive of terms.

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Endnotes

¹ Interview with author. 5 August 2011. Leeds, UK. Hereafter, all quotes from Daniel are from this source. Daniel is a pseudonym.

² Interview with author. 4 August 2011. Leeds, UK. Hereafter, all quotes from Adam are from this source. Adam is a pseudonym.

³ Interviews with Daniel (5 August 2011) and Adam (4 August 2011).

⁴ Laura Whitehorn. Interview with the author. 27 July 2011. Leeds, UK, and New York, USA.

⁵ On the Radical Education Forum, see Nabil Ahmed, 'Radical Education – Radical Education Forum' on He who says Zero / He who says one [Online program] (20 April 2011). Available at <http://www.no-w-here.org.uk/index.php?cat=1&subCat=docdetail&id=263>. On the Social Sciences Centre, see its website, Social Sciences Centre, Lincoln. Available at <http://socialsciencecentre.org.uk/>.

⁶ Laura Whitehorn. Interview with

the author. 27 July 2011.

⁷ Interview with the author. 27 July 2011.

⁸ Higher education often served as a primary indicator for enrollees' socio-economic status. See Cambridge Women's School 1973, 1981.

⁹ Breines does not entirely overlook these biases. Her overarching argument, however, does relegate them to a certain, finite period with the women's liberation movement, rather than understanding race and class biases as ongoing problems. See Breines 2006, chapters 3-5.

¹⁰ Laura Whitehorn. Interview with the author. 27 July 2011.

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Taking Care in Academia: The Critical Thinker, Ethics and Cuts

Julia Horncastle

This article raises philosophical and political questions we can ask about how we care for each other in a pernicious academic environment. The article draws upon a personal account of job loss in order to foreground a more theoretical and political discussion of care within an academic context. It is concerned also with ways in which Gender Studies in particular, and critical thinkers in the broader liberal arts context, are supported. Beyond relying on the assertion of market rationale, it may not always be clear how the axing of liberal arts programmes takes place in ethics-related ways. Thus the article addresses care parameters within which the critical practices of scholars takes place.

Keywords: Care, Ethics, Ghetto, Gender Studies, Academia

Whilst there are general assertions about a global crisis in liberal arts education, there are specific legislative, concrete and ideological grounds on which to build a well-reasoned argument that a crisis does indeed exist. This article does not make that argument; it has been and is still being made, as this and the previous issue of GJSS attest (for other examples see Welch 2002, Perloff 2004, Davies 2005, Felski 2008, Quinn 2003, Dean et al. 2009, Nussbaum 2010). However, this article is located within two related positions that rest consciously upon the crisis argument. One is defensive – the article argues for the disciplinary home/s in which gender studies sits (and by exten-

sion related studies). The other is not content to defend and justify the humanities and social sciences – apart from parrying the criticisms of liberal arts education, this second position adds to the groundswell of dissent that strikes unequivocally at a neoliberalist, higher education environment. In this article, that environment is considered specifically in terms of care practices.

In the lived reality of our academic “world/s” there are familial, collegial, mentored, and implicit or explicit kinship structures amongst and between us. This is a theme covered in the recent GLQ special issue called *Queer Bonds*, which I will come to later. The analysis below begins with a personal narrative

about job loss that I expose for two reasons – one, it is symptomatic of the anti liberal arts context. Two, and more importantly in this article, my personal narrative serves as the empirical, and political backdrop for a theoretical analysis of care. Mine is not a special story, it is one of many that should nonetheless be heard in the spirit of reflexive evaluation.

“Being Cut” and the Context of Care Ethics

I have recently returned the UK after being in Australia for the last eighteen years. My most recent position was acting chair of a gender and cultural studies programme at a university in Australia. That programme itself emerged out of the re-shaping and extending of what had previously been called Women’s Studies. In 2006 the conversion of Women’s Studies to Gender Studies ensued and it was hybridised with Cultural Studies to form Gender and Cultural Studies (known as GCS). The history of GCS, and its antecedent Women’s Studies, is complex and not yet written. This narrative scratches the barest of historical marks in that regard but, at least tangentially, it preserves the memory of more than one academic casualty.

Towards the end of 2010, GCS was discontinued. The managerial rationale for this programme closure was expressed in friendly and sympathetic, yet dry industrial terms. My

job loss was “managed” through the discourse of economic rationalism and university restructuring – it was explained through market rationale. But this explanation is partial, and thus insufficient, if heuristic evaluations are to be made.

Generally speaking, and given that universities are populated by human beings with diverse subjectivities, department closures cannot only happen as a result of rational, politically-neutral, market imperatives. The demise of critical, rhetorically creative, and interdisciplinary programmes like GCS may be impacted by such phenomena as political and gendered power relations, a stressed workforce, political ideology and management style. Factors such as higher workloads, increased bureaucracy, devolved corporate managerialism, and more competition, may have negative impacts on, for example, staff morale or ethics of care in academia. In the context of a liberal arts crisis, the study of “women” and “gender” and “culture” for example, may be considered outmoded, not valuable, or unnecessary in a market-driven, neo-liberal climate. This article considers why and how some study areas, such as Gender Studies, might come to be understood as not fitting market rationale.

Again speaking generally, if the specialised study (at once imaginative and rigorous) of women, men, and power, gender diversity, bodies and identities, epistemologies,

and philosophies of everyday life (amongst other study areas) becomes an “ideological misfit” in an institution such as a university, it follows that support becomes compromised. In the current political and economic climate, managerial support for the future of such study is predictably narrow as a consequence of policy, but academic support (collegial and interdepartmental), may also be bare or weakened. This is relevant in terms of how we might understand care practices in academia and how collegial care for example might be at risk of subtle erosion.

Many of my former colleagues have given me concrete reasons to believe in, and attest to, the existence of “care” as a traditional university value. This article suggests that the current crisis climate has insidious effects on care practices and that the possible manifestations of these effects need critique. It is not an easy critique to make because the existing crisis critique reifies market ideologies. An ethics of care, which is relevant to human care practices and lived human experience within the university, may be obscured by this reification.

I turn then, to the explanatory notion of “slippage”: the slippage between traditional university values and what I call funding-cut-logic. What I mean by traditional values (for the purposes of this article) are practices of care for the scholar-academic within the liberal arts con-

text. They are informed by my own experiences: more than a decade of receiving and giving care (within the teaching and research environments of Women’s Studies, Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, Trans Studies, Philosophy and Queer Theory), and engaging with written scholarship which has analysed and debated care in relation to scholars within the university system. Examples of these traditional care practices are: mentorship, critical feedback and review, flexible pedagogy, democratic management, and academic manoeuvrability. I discuss these as forms of care later on. In terms of what might be considered romantic or overly optimistic traditional university values, see Currie, Thiele and Harris (2002) who discuss a range of university values across historical critical perspectives.

As Currie et al. also point out, conflicts exist in ‘managed’ universities due to the tensions between ‘money and truth’, and ‘entrepreneurship and scholarship’ (ibid., 30). Put simply, university funders influence academic integrity and manoeuvrability and in this way traditional university care practices may be compromised. Adding complexity to this equation is the notion that a market-derived explanation for an impact on care is incomplete or superficial. Thus this article questions how and whether a care critique might extend the current crisis critique. A loss of any programme in

a university is enacted by people, not policies. Management directives too, are made by people, and the consequences are felt in lived human terms. In relation to care, the notions of loss and support should be considered. Later in the article I discuss loss; in this section I focus on value as a form of support.

We can ask how a sense of value for a dedicated gender studies programme might change, or be influenced. Lafferty and Fleming state that 'market-derived models of organisation result in the devaluing of activities that do not directly generate revenue' (2000, 265). This aspect of revenue-linked de-valuing could be considered as over-inflated. The fiscal logical is clear, but it is also dominant and partial. The liberal arts crisis is dominated by critiques of late-capitalism, market forces, neo-liberalism, consumer-driven corporatisation etc. I do not question whether these critiques are valuable. I question whether their dominance obscures other subtle reasons that might exist in relation to academic care practices and small programme closure.

Let us consider the notion of slippage between the reasonability of funding cut logic, the un-reasonability of that logic, and the attenuation or strengthening of care practices. How and why funding-cut-logic is considered reasonable, to the extent, for example, that care for liberal arts programmes and critical thinkers is undervalued, can be

viewed through theories of influence or power. This short article draws upon some of those theories here, as suggested heuristics for more extended analyses of care. It could be said that in the context of collegial support (for gender studies as an example), "a reality" determines or governs people's actions and their sense-making processes. In a Foucauldian vein, that reality can be understood as a diffuse power production that normalises the overriding funding-cut-logic; it is a putatively sense-making logic. Obvious consequences of this are cuts due to funding. Also, but less obviously, care practices in academia are influenced by perceived realities.

Because slippages between market-logic and ethics-driven-logic are complex and can be considered insidious, the notion of what Foucault called 'governmentality' (1991) is one way to understand how influence, care practices and power relations interplay. As Foucault scholars will appreciate, there are many forms of power that Foucault theorised, and the term "governmentality" is broad. However, the concept of governmentality particularly suits the analysis of care in the context of a "power-infused academia". Read in one way, governmentality illuminates 'the way in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed' (Foucault 1982, 219).

As Foucault also said, 'basically power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or the linking

of one to the other than a question of government. ... To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others' (ibid., 221 emphasis added). It is the way this structuring takes place that is relevant here. If not through a direct, linear, managed hierarchy, how else might we consider the field of action to be laid out for university actors? To my mind, governmentality is one relevant consideration, and psychoanalytic, philosophical, social, and education theories provide others. This article has not set out to analyse power, but excellent Foucauldian analyses of power within an academic context exist, see for example Broadhead and Howard (1998) and Butin (2001).

Recent nudge theory is also relevant to the idea of subtle government, which nudges (influences) people's behaviour and choices. Thaler and Sustein (2008) have introduced the term 'choice architecture' to describe a technique of governing people. In Thaler and Sustein's conceptual framework, a 'choice architect' may be a university manager who is 'responsible for organizing the context in which people make decisions' (2008, 3). This theoretical line is preceded by earlier experimental psychological theories such as Milgram's, on obedience (1974), and Asch's on conformativity (1951), which demonstrated the propensity people have to be led, and to defer to authority. In a psychoanalytic framework, the

lack of collegial support for a vulnerable program can be demonstrated as a sign of perverse pleasure. Power and sadism may be exerted in the workplace through the urge to actively assist in a programme's downfall. A pleasure spectrum for example, could contain the quietly complicit observer, the gossip, and the overt aggressor who may display blatant incivility and disrespect towards the "dying" program or its staff members. As Chancer states in her chapter on sadomasochism and the workplace:

How could the huge numbers of hours most people spend labouring in offices ... not deeply affect feelings toward self and others, both at the work site and after leaving it? ... That capitalism as a social system operates on sadomasochistic principles ... seems less than far-fetched when some of capitalism's fundamental premises are unearthed, even superficially. For wage earners, the vast majority of those under its aegis, capitalism has inextricably tied work to survival (Chancer 1992, 93-94).

As I show, there are multiple ways of critically viewing the ways in which collegial support exists, or might be eroded. There are still other viewpoints: Porath and Erez have conducted collaborative studies into workplace incivility and bad behaviour (2011), Lafferty and Fleming (2000) analyse gendered manage-

ment structure, and Marginson (1993) examines the managed behaviour of academics in his analysis of markets in education. In *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (which is an exemplary defence, as well as a “strike for” liberal arts education), Nussbaum critiques a lack of compassion (which we can read as an element of the ethics of care). Nussbaum says, ‘we may also withhold compassion for other bad reasons; for example, we might wrongly blame the suffering person for her misfortune’ (2010, 38). Here, the blame is on an individual, and much like Chancer’s view, it relates to workplace and social dysfunction. In a moment I will extend this notion of misplaced blame towards the misfortune of Women’s Studies and Gender Studies.

In questioning the ethics of care within academia, I am not suggesting that dominant market forces should be simplistically or impractically considered. As Chancer says, ‘work is tied to survival’ (1992, 94), so it is understandable and desirable that people protect themselves and their careers. I am questioning the responsibility to think critically about the ways that ethics, traditional university values, funding-cut logic and self-interest are balanced or coexist.

My return to the UK now includes the firsthand, transnational experience of impoverished support for the humanities. In the first few weeks of my arrival, three particu-

lar news items in the media struck my attention. I discuss them here for two reasons: one they are concrete indicators that shed light on what I call institutional “un-care” and two, they complexify the backdrop of potentially obscurantist neoliberal economics.

BCC radio aired a programme that discussed the demise of Women’s Studies. The impact of the UK government’s announcements on student fee increases, and its lack of funding for the humanities and social sciences, pervaded the media. One recent example stated that, ‘Oxford University’s governing body backed a motion condemning the government’s higher education policy by 283 votes to five. History professor Robert Gildea said the changes to university funding were ‘reckless, incoherent and incompetent’ (Coughlan 2011). In the House of Commons, seeking to substantiate the case for the government’s decision to cut funding to the humanities and social sciences, the Rt. Hon. Dennis MacShane MP attacked the course material of Professor Anne Phillips, a well-known feminist academic who works at the Gender Institute at the London School of Economics. MacShane stated:

My Hon. friend mentioned the London School of Economics. Is she aware of its feminist political theory course, taught by Professor Anne Phillips? In week 8 of the course, students study prostitution. The briefing says: “If we

consider it legitimate for women to hire themselves out as low-paid and often badly treated cleaners, why is it not also legitimate for them to hire themselves out as prostitutes?” If a professor at the London School of Economics cannot make the distinction between a cleaning woman and a prostituted woman, we are filling the minds of our young students with the most poisonous drivel (Parliament UK, 2011).

This explicit and extreme example of un-care produced an outcry that has exposed these anti-feminist, anti-intellectual, anti-gender studies views as symptomatic of the crisis in liberal arts higher education. This outcry is part of what I earlier referred to as a groundswell of dissent. Below I extend this critique of anti-liberal arts discourse in relation to another, more intellectual, media example.

Ghett(o)ver it! Gender Studies and Feminism Have Value

In terms of the concrete structural reality of marketised university systems and right-leaning government policies, there are two important issues I want to raise concerning the disciplinarity of Gender Studies. One is the notion of value: that a study area like Gender Studies is, or is not, valuable. And the second is the common reason that putatively causes this undervaluing: ghettoisation.

Ghettoisation is often touted as the cause for the demise of specialist programmes and study areas (for examples see McRobbie 1990 and Murphy 2001). The logic being that if the mainstream radar cannot pick something up, that thing will not have any potency. In other words, if Gender Studies or Women’s Studies, for example, exist outside mainstream disciplines, as disciplinary fringe-dwellers, they will not be seen or supported and therefore they will not flourish. This deployment of the ghettoisation argument is facile (I give an example in a moment), and when it is used to discriminate against Gender Studies say, therein lies its political cleverness. It is an argument that on the face of it sounds reasonable. Thus I understand “ghettoisation” (as it is used by detractors of programmes like gender studies) as a complex term.

The ghetto-blame-argument is used skilfully, but easily, by detractors of programmes such as Gender Studies to explain away (or attempt to dismantle) the mode in which these study areas operate. This blame-argument is effective and strategic; it manoeuvres and subjugates Gender Studies. As an example of facile deployment of the term ghetto, I refer to a recent discussion on Women’s Hour (a longstanding BBC Radio programme that focuses on women’s issues) that discussed the decline of Women’s Studies.

The radio programme followed a typical format: one presenter, and two invited experts: in this case, Dr Steve Davies, (Institute of Economic Affairs), and Professor Mary Evans (Gender Institute, London School of Economics). The programme segment was short, thus the analysis was informed and to the point but not extended. If there were listeners willing to understand, or be convinced that Women's Studies is valuable, there was a limited forum to act within. At the outset, Evans was asked to explain why Women's Studies was in decline. Evans was thus faced with explaining the reason for, or perception of, demise. To be concise, I focus here only on the ghettoisation argument, which was not challenged.

On the radio programme, historical and disciplinary distinctions were made between Women's Studies and Gender Studies but they were also conflated. As a result of this conflation, both "labels" for these interdisciplinary study areas were absorbed into the ghetto-blame-argument. Crucially, when making effective critical arguments in a short radio interview, one or two key phrases or words will stand out for the listeners. In this Women's Hour programme the word ghettoisation was used in such a way.

Davies said that ghettoisation was the reason why Women's Studies had, and Gender Studies would, fail.

The points of Davies' ghettoisa-

tion argument can be summarised as follows:

- 'Turning Women's Studies into a distinct separate subject, was a mistake in the longer run, because it led to ghettoisation.
- People think, oh those kind of issues are the things people do in the Women's Studies department, and everyone else gets on with the traditional way they've always done things in the main discipline.
- Its true you have these specialised departments but the danger is that the kind of work they are doing is seen to be something that's hived off in a special unit.
- Employers do not rate degrees with the word "studies" in the title. Which might be wrong but is a fact of life.
- The kind of thing to do is bring the Women's Studies or Gender Studies perspective to bear in the main academic disciplines.
- Women's Studies /Gender Studies should be done through the mainstream curriculum. I hope that that is happening, but I fear that we are reverting to just considering ourselves with men with power' (2011).

I do not argue against the likelihood that not being noticed (academically speaking) is gloomily fate-

ful. But I do argue that ghettoisation itself is not to blame. My response to the ghetto-blame-argument is to say that rather than the ghetto being seen as the reason for small programme decline, it is the lifeblood of it. Rather than think of ghettoisation in negative terms, it can be understood in positive terms. A ghetto is a very powerful place; it is a nucleus of energy. The problem is not that ghettoisation has occurred (it may be a necessary feature of marginalised existence); it is that the noise from the ghetto has become strategically weak.

If Gender Studies, for example, is siphoned off into the mainstream disciplinary areas, into small, broken-up pieces – a module here, a module there – the focus and drive and power of Gender Studies as an interdisciplinary field in its own right will be effaced. To assume that it won't, rests on the argument that Gender Studies departments would be gone, and in their wake the study of a multiply gendered and sexed world would be taken into account (developed and specialised) in mainstream disciplines. This has not been done well in the past, which is why Women's Studies as a distinct study area emerged so forcefully. When Davies says it was a mistake to turn Women's Studies into a distinct separate subject, this is to ignore the very reasons why it was and still is "distinctly" needed. MacShane's groundless comments in the UK Parliament for example,

not only support this need for distinct study programs like Women's or Gender Studies (they betray a great ignorance and wilful inattention to critical insight), but they highlight the lack of knowledge about, and care for, such realities as (and I list just a few as they are numerous):

poverty
hunger
globalisation
war
violence
homophobia
transphobia
racial hatred
patterns of labour
human rights
domestic work
sex work
sexuality and the media
migration
family structures
selfhood
corporeality
oppressive power relations
environmental degradation
consumerism
domestic abuse
care ethics

– *which are all gendered, contemporaneous and relevant to the future.* Why a university should not dedicate itself to the specialised study of such important gendered issues might be thought of as confounding – were the context of marketised education not so influential.

Davies seemed supportive of Women's Studies to the extent of acknowledging that women make up half the population and should not be ignored in such mainstream disciplines as History. To suggest that the entire Women's Studies and Gender Studies intellectual corpus (amassed over decades) can be replicated within, and titrated into other traditional disciplines as a politico-managerial "cure", is in my view a perverse form of care. This ghetto-blame-argument frames Women's Studies and Gender Studies as disease-like and certainly does not convey a strong sense of their value.

Davies' fear that 'we are reverting to just considering ourselves with men with power' (2011), is telling. Small specialist areas like Women's Studies are viewed as threats, not only to the marketised university but also to traditional androcentric or misogynistic disciplinary and management styles (Davies is actually fearful at the prospect of men and power being the focus of specialised analysis). Used in a facile way, the ghettoisation-blame-argument can influence academics and managers alike especially in the funding cut climate, where care practices in academia interplay within the structured reality of a governed university.

I suggest that Gender Studies, as one example, must continue to beat its drums. The "noise" (however articulated) needs to be heard at many levels of the academy and

in the wider community. This un-silenced voice can speak to middle and senior management such that they don't say, 'oh that's a ghetto, we don't really know what goes on in there', but to encourage them to say, 'oh yes that's the Gender Studies ghetto, a specialised area, and I know how to articulate and promote what they do. And I know that they do great work!'

A Vice Chancellor, who supports and recommends their gender department because they actually know what goes on in it, might be considered a novel idea. However, I suggest that it is not just the job of those outside the ghetto to look in, and find out what is going on. It is also the job of the ghetto-dwellers to speak out. I am not saying that ghetto-dwellers are unaware of this, many are crucially aware of energy-draining and tactical survivalist politics. I suggest that closures of departments and job losses within this contingent existence may be avoidable, especially when care practices are consistent, self-reflexive and politically conscious.

Arguments against the ghetto-blame standpoint should, in my view, stand up for the very strong character of a studies program: not to apologise for it, not to keep it quiet, and not to let it be absorbed into other mainstream subject areas. However, by standing up for gender studies programmes and departments I am not suggesting that the study of gender should not be ac-

cessed across the disciplines. On the contrary, many if not most university courses across disciplines would benefit from the study of gender – if human life is important, and human life is gendered, it follows that *gender is important*.

Gender studies programmes and institutes can demonstrate their expertise and specialist knowledges by being available to academics in seemingly disparate areas or mainstream disciplines, who wish for advice and feedback on their own teaching of gender-inclusive topics. Gender Studies departments can and should be resources for others. Given such spreading of urbane responsibility though, there is a risk of gender studies becoming institutionally diasporic. This is another reason to retain and promote distinct gender departments and their valuable work. Gender Studies needs a home (not a dispersal cure), such that it can strengthen its specialist outputs, its teaching, its research and, its powerful presence in the academy. The study of gender in singular, module-based forms, is not what I argue against. I argue that these forms of study should not (as a matter of remedial policy) replace whole departments, programmes, research centres and institutes.

The mystery of the ghetto is the thing that must be effaced, not the study that goes on in it. A Gender Studies ghetto cannot afford to become mysterious in its marginality. The ghettoisation argument (as I

have presented it here) falls two ways; only one of which incorporates the notion of a thriving, innovative academic “home”. In this next section I steer towards more philosophical questions of care.

Forms of Caring

A human rights discourse in the academic context brings us closer to a theoretical analysis of care; it is extended by the term ‘democratic collegiality’ which Currie, et al. cast as a fourth traditional university value alongside ‘professional autonomy and integrity’, ‘critical dissent’ and ‘academic freedom’ (2002, 29). In this section I focus on forms of care (that we extend to other scholars directly, as individuals, and indirectly as we support, for example, distinct study areas that are under threat).

Scholars contribute to the moments of success of other scholars (however they are calibrated, whether formal or not). Scholars’ successes are built on the backs of others. Each scholar begins as a student, a student who “takes” from those teachers who “give”. Each teacher was once a student who, by virtue of pedagogy, gives back. Each scholar who uses the texts of another is being cared for; is being “given” the benefit of another’s hard labour. Each written word is informed by the words of another. Even being cognisant of this, is a form of care; it affects behaviour and outlook, such as the support for

critical scholarship.

Conscientious peer reviewing also supports critical scholarship. It is one example of a highly regarded care practice in academia, and is one of the mainstays of academic care for the scholar. Formal, as well as informal peer reviewing are forms of care practice that are grist to the scholar's mill. However, forms of care that are precious and treasured, as I paint them here, are not just the inherent effects of remarkably generous collegiality. To "care for" requires energy and conscious awareness, and just like university management practices, care practices are implicated in political and biased or influenced environments. Ethics of care can be configured in terms of strategic connectivity.

One example of a care practice that relates to programme closure within what I have called a pernicious academic environment *and* that speaks to the huge energy expense involved in survivalist care, is the 2010 campaign to save the Philosophy Department at Middlesex University. In particular, Dr Stanford's transparent response to the Vice-Chancellor of Middlesex University is an example of how survivalist practices can be openly disseminated and potentially utilised in other similar campaigns. (See <http://savemdxphil.com/2010/06/02/stella-sandford-response-to-vice-chancellor-driscolls-update-1-june/>) Here then, is a care practice of sharing. As I say, it is on the backs of

others that we are connected (for example as individual writers), but it is through our institutions that we are connected structurally.

In terms of publication, teaching, and research, there needs to be a network of support structures that we climb (through, in and about, slipping, falling, making firm footholds and generally navigating), until we retire or stop for whatever reason. It would be a shame to lose scholars for the reason that they are not cared for. We rely on these support structures being available to us through the institutionalised world of academia, but it is a human world, and those structures should not be somehow separated from care.

Other examples of care (in this institutional context) are derived from broader critiques of university management in the current crisis climate. McInnis (1998, 1999, 2000) writes about work roles and working conditions of academics, Davis (1996) analyses funding and its effects on academic rights and freedoms, Madden (1999) exposes the psychological effects of directive leadership on academics, Shore and Roberts (1993) analyse the effects of quality audits on intellectual freedom, and Altorf (2011, n.p.) 'aims to create a philosophical response to the dominant image of the university as a business'. These examples are forms of care (for the threatened critical thinker, or endangered scholar) because they illuminate and expose techniques of

un-care which can have devastating effects on (to name some): creativity, confidence, output, collegiality, motivation, feelings of safety, cognition, morale, working conditions, pro-activity and general well-being. Besides drawing attention to the groundswell of work that critiques the current and broad liberal arts crisis climate, it is Butler's recent comments in *Queer Bonds* (2011) that I use to raise some final points about a contemporary, crisis-relevant ethics of care in academia.

It is the destructive aspect to un-care that illuminates the greater need for care. In the context of a precarious academic life we can lose things that connect us, things that are our bonds. We could say that Gender Studies programmes are destructible and losable. A concept that is logical to employ when we speak of things being destroyed or lost, is grief. When Gender Studies departments (for example) are closed down, there is something to grieve – there is a loss to experience and account for.

It is here that Butler's work on grievable life has parallels with academic life. The liberal arts crisis is termed, "a crisis" because of the threat to life – the life of a particular kind of education and scholarship. The neoliberal age, and market-driven uncaring policies, produce fatalities, which is why commentators like Lafferty and Fleming have called for 'a counter-rhetoric to economic rationalism and its ideological

siblings in the field of management' (2000, 265). It is why Nussbaum speaks of the 'silent crisis' through which 'values precious for the future of democracy are in danger of getting lost' (2010, 1-6). Her warning is already grief-ful.

Butler's short text, *Remarks on Queer Bonds* in GLQ is a transcription of her closing comments for the Queer Bonds Conference in 2009 in Berkeley. Much of what Butler says there is drawn from her book *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (2010), and she demonstrates that the analysis of grievable life can be lifted into the thematic arena of *scholarly* bonding, kinship and care.

Although there are many ways to understand what it means to be "bonded", there are three ontological points from Butler's remarks in *Queer Bonds* that I (briefly) discuss here in relation to how we can understand care. These points relate to bodies, risk, and precariousness, and I begin with the first two.

In relation to liberal-arts-crisis-risk, we can make analogies between human corporeality and Gender Studies departments. Butler makes the point that there are political formations of the generalised condition of precariousness but also unavoidable or accidental possibilities that we cannot control (2011, 382-383). In the sense of risks to university "homes" (like ghettos), it is the political formation of precariousness that is controllable (at least

we can politically participate in it). Unlike a fleshy body, which can be struck down unexpectedly with appendicitis for instance, the Gender Studies “body” (home/ department) cannot suddenly and “out of the blue” become incapacitated. The risks to Gender Studies’ survival come about through non-accidental risk-agents over time (legislative, ideological and politico-ethical). Yet, there is a more complex understanding of risk to be had. One way of understanding care in a time of crisis is to understand the ways in which we are bound up in precariousness *and with each other*. This implication of ourselves with one another is where Butler brings her remarks away from the political towards the theoretical.

In relation to the physical bodies of human beings, Butler says that bodies ‘depend on what is outside themselves’ to be sustained but that in a general situation of precariousness there are risks to which we ‘give ourselves over’ (ibid., 382). Giving ourselves over to a time of crisis, or giving oneself over to the moment one is experiencing career-wise (for example early career-ness), are forms of bonding in this Butlerian sense.

But bodies are always at risk. Butler makes this clear and it is an obvious point that she complexifies in terms of being, ‘[B]odies come into being and cease to be ... they are subject to incursions and illnesses that jeopardize the possibil-

ity of persisting at all’ (2011, 382). The risky body of the critical thinker is as risk-compromised as any body, but it has specific, located, political risks as part of its being to also consider. Thus, as Butler says, ‘understanding the condition of precariousness as something that binds us’ (ibid., 384) is relevant to being critical thinkers; we are oriented by conditionality, to give ourselves over to each other.

Butler makes a quick reference to Merleau-Ponty’s concept of intertwining, as a way of reflecting on embodied life. She says ‘[T]he body never fully belongs to itself’ and that our chances of survival are dependent on ‘ecstatic existence in sociality’ (ibid., 384). This way of thinking about our bonded-ness – that we respond to other bodies through transcendent perception (hence ecstatic) – allows us to notice what our sensuous (intersubjective, living bodies) come up against.

Butler uses the notion of ‘coming up against’ (ibid., 384), because of course, bodies necessarily come up against other bodies in multilayered social fields. The way I transpose this “coming up against”, to the academic context, is to remark that the non-sensuous “other” (corporatisation and rational business), is another facet of our bonded experience which sensitises us to risk and also the need for care. These are simplified inroads into chiasmic ontology, which of necessity, I only preface here. Crucially however, it

is the de-sensitisation to care, as it is influenced by the non-sensuous “neoliberal other”, that a phenomenology of care can elucidate.

In sum, “being” in a precarious situation, and critiquing its risks, is an ontological feature of the critical thinker’s life. We are implicated in each other’s lives not just because of the risk-bond and the effects of vulnerability or survival, but also because techniques of care bind us in a material and political sense.

The forms of care that this article has highlighted, allow us to question and aim to alter the dominant image of an at-risk-scholar, or the marketised university. Taking care of the humanities and social sciences scholar – the critical thinker – is not an easy task, and it falls to carers. The gender of carers is not irrelevant, nor are their positions within the hierarchical, authoritative, market-managed university. I would not say that the task of caring falls equally among scholars, because responsibility for care is ethics and experience-based, and certainly the ideals of care must be critically contextualised in terms of power and activism.

This article has argued that policy-driven decisions are not made in a social vacuum; they are made in managed workplaces, which are social spaces. It follows that there are social persuasions and influences. These involve both politics and the ethics of care. The article has also shown that taking care of the critical

thinker through scholarly kinship, which if embraced in a time of crisis, will hopefully provide emerging scholars (at least) with a reason to remain in academia.

Through questioning what can be learned from the losses and impending losses of Gender Studies departments, this article has validated a political question: For whom is the loss of Gender Studies ungrievable and why? The article has formulated a pro-ghetto argument, and brought attention to the many forms of care that apply to the protection of Gender Studies as one example. It is how Gender Studies is rationalised, when it is alive and thriving as much as it is when it is in a precarious position, or indeed, when it has been grievously cut, that we all as a bonded cohort must be concerned.

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Don't look back in anger: Possibilities and Problems of Trans Equalities

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Questioning the 'new age of austerity' relies on an (implicit) understanding of a previous era where something other than 'cuts' were occurring. During the early part of the 21st century in the United Kingdom, not only did lesbians and gay men gain significant rights including equalities in the provision of goods and services, civil partnerships and so on, by the end of the New Labour era in 2010, 'transsexual' had become a legally 'protected characteristic' under the Equalities Act.¹ Yet these new legislative gains were not uniformly experienced, practiced and deployed. This paper explores the ways in which initiatives played out 'on the ground', engaging with the possibilities, as well as the problems, of new equalities landscapes. Using the Count Me In Too research (see www.countmeintoo.co.uk), we examine progress in trans 'rights', whilst simultaneously identifying the ongoing harm trans people experienced through gaining these 'rights'. More specifically, we critically appraise 'treatment' pathways and public funding, arguing that whilst these are positive and welcomed, they are also flawed in their implementation, as well as their conceptual basis. Continuing from this, we contend that critical academics/academics need a spatially informed consideration of 'new normativities', while being wary of forgetting the positives while they are happening, and romanticising them when they are in the past.

Keywords: Cuts, Austerity, GP, Doctors, Health Services, Transgender/ Transsexual, Transition, Spatial, Homonormativity

'All the things that you have seen will slowly fade away'?²: Introduction

There can be little doubt that the political, social and cultural climate in the UK is undergoing significant change. Questioning this 'new age of austerity', relies on an (implicit) understanding of a previous era where something other than 'cuts' were occurring. Thus, challenging

the 'new era' requires an interrogation of the supposed 'golden era' that preceded it. This 'golden era' is examined here in terms of the massive legislative, and arguably, social shifts in the arena of gender and sexual identities. The early 21st century witnessed extra-ordinary legislative developments that altered the landscapes of many who were once 'sexual/gender deviants'. We saw in the UK, for example:

- The right to have gender surgery on the National Health Service;
- The development of legislation that enabled (some) trans people (under certain restrictions) to change their legal gender, birth certificate and so on, potentially questioning the fixity of born sex and the assumptions of bodily adherence to gender/sexual norms;
- -This culminated in the groundbreaking equalities Act of 2010, which contrasted starkly with discourses of the 'looney left' and 'section 28' in the 1980/90s.

However, throughout the first decade of the 21st century, legislative changes, particularly with regards to sexualities, were fraught with difficulties, exclusions, and 'new marginalisations'. Specifically, there are extensive discussions of 'new homonormativities', where some who were once sexual/gender dissidents have been celebrated and validated, creating new normativities, while others have been marginalised, othered and excluded (see, for example, Bryant, 2008; Duggan, 2003; Vidal-Ortiz, 2008). Classed, gendered and racial exclusions have been shown through intersectional analyses to (re)create new 'homonormativities' that value particular forms of gay (sic) identities, bodies and practices (e.g. Hines, 2007b; Miyake and Kuntsman, 2008; Taylor,

2007; 2009). These agendas are, of course, important, and indeed we will follow some of these critical engagements. However, alongside this, we call for recognition of what was made possible in particular places through eras of legislative acceptance, (forced?) dialogue/consultation, and considerations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans rights (that were undoubtedly contained with particular neo-liberal contexts). Currently the requirements of the Equalities Act are being questioned, and the 'teeth' of the Act are being eroded through the discarding of targets, reporting mechanisms and other forms of transparency and accountability, along with massive public sector cuts, and moves to 'restructure health services', under the guise of 'removing red tape' (The Red Tape Challenge, no date). In this context there is a pressing need to critically engage with what has come before. There is a danger that what we have questioningly termed the 'golden era of equalities' (and investment) may be (implicitly) glorified, without critically exploring continuing needs in these areas, as well as the learning created during this time in a place where there was hope that things might 'get better'.

Attention to the spatial specificities of everyday life is pressing, because the ways in which legislation, cuts and other state interventions are enacted will create uneven topographies that need consideration and critical attention, both spatially

and temporally. Taking account of political/economic time-spaces enables us to examine how political change/regime change plays a part in constituting (although not determining) everyday lives. This takes us to the realms of social policy, an arena which cannot be ignored when considering the legislative change and its effects, and yet could be augmented through an examination of the spatial topographies afforded by geographies. Within social policy, discussions have raged about the 'success' and failure of the New Labour era, particularly in terms of welfare reform. Here, we are interested in the 'social questions', in which, arguably, New Labour helped to educate the Conservatives (see Heffernan, 2011).³ In terms of the focus of this paper, in the early part of the decade, Munro argued that, 'New Labour allows considerably more space for the development of transgender politics than previous administrations because it emphasises the inclusion of marginalised communities' (2003: 441). Critically exploring this era through trans people's experiences 'on the ground', we argue that national and temporal legislative contexts cannot be ignored in examinations of social/sexual lives. Moreover, such accounting needs to attend to, not only the continuities of overarching metanarratives (such as neo-liberalism), but also to the positive, if flawed, social effects of national recognition and investment (see also Weeks, 2007).

Thus, this paper examines 'what went right', alongside critical investigations of what trans people wanted 'to be better'. It seeks to inform considerations of the 'new era', through examining the 'progress' made and the work that remained to be done after the 'old' one.

Rather than seeking overarching narratives around this question, we are interested in the specifics of one supposedly liberal, open and pleasurable place; Brighton, situated on the South Coast of England, sold as the 'gay capital of the UK'. Focusing on Brighton enables an examination of what went right and what could be done better, in part because there was a will during the first part of the decade to question what was good and what was not, to produce evidence and to address gaps through 'dialogue' between statutory bodies and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans 'communities'. In Brighton, one mechanism through which evidence was collected and dialogues were undertaken, was through Count Me In Too (CMIT), a research project where LGBT people worked with service providers and others to develop evidence and promote positive social change for LGBT people (see www.countmeintoo.co.uk). As these dialogues now close down and the political, social and economic 'climate' moves away from evidence based practice, there is a danger in valuing only the positive aspects of an era of investment and support, and neglecting what still

needed to be improved, particularly as the gains made are under threat.

The data created by, and about, trans people from the Count Me In Too (CMIT) research enables us to point to the importance of the gains made during the early 21st century, yet refuses a romanticisation of the 'golden era of equalities'.⁴ Following an exploration of trans identities and their complexities, this paper will examine the publicly funded 'treatment' pathways for 'transition', finishing with an investigation of health care and GP's. In this way, we clearly illustrate the positive aspects of trans 'rights', whilst simultaneously identifying the ongoing harm and everyday abuse experienced by trans people in the first decade of the 21st Century. We use this discussion to argue for both attending to the successes, or what we might want to keep of social change, as well as addressing that which we might want to improve and/or radically reformulate. The paper's title articulates that anger about contemporary and previous eras should not eclipse what could be learned from what went before.

Complexities and Fluidities of 'Trans' Identities

Trans identities and lives have been the subject of much gender theorizing and contestation. Most famously (and controversially), perhaps, Judith Butler's (1990, 1993) work on gender performativities used transvestites/drag queens to

illustrate the ways in which gender/sex is fluid, and gendered performances are not delimited to particular sexed bodies. In other writing, the 'transgressiveness' of gender expressions has been seen to call into question the naturalness of gender/sex social norms, and illustrate that gender is 'more complex and varied than can be accounted for by the currently dominant binary sex/gender ideology of Eurocentric modernity' (Stryker, 2006: 3). Theoretical work, such as Butler's, has been actively contested by some trans theorists who argue that certain gender theorists use trans people but do not speak to them, and thus negate the ways that trans people live and experience their gendered lives (see for example Namaste, 2000; Noble, 2006; Prosser, 1998). Perhaps questioning this division, Roen (2001) argues that the binaries between radical politics of gender transgression (the deconstruction of gender binaries) and liberal transsexual politics (seeking rights based on being a man/woman) are complexly interrelated and negotiated by trans people.

We follow what might be termed a 'liberal politics', focusing on legal protections, and the provision of services for trans people. In part this is because this terminology was wanted by the trans people in this participatory project who worked to create the research, in order to progress positive social change in Brighton. Thus these accounts

are different from queer examinations of subjectivities, which, whilst important, should not be the only ways in which LGBT lives are examined (see Brown et al., 2011).⁵ Furthermore, a focus on Brighton recognises the specificities of trans/LGBT political actions and the spatial deployment of gender terms and labels. Understanding these labels and identifications as spatially based and hybridised forms of global-national-local interconnections enables multiple political engagements with everyday lives that speak, but are not beholden, to North American based academic thinking.

Using the Count Me In Too research, we have shown elsewhere that identification within the category 'trans' in this research was complex and fractured (see Browne and Lim, 2010; Lim and Browne, 2009). We have noted how the range of trans identities calls into question the category itself (see also Munro, 2003; Johnson, 2007; Stryker, 2006; Valentine, 2007). Yet, we argue that this category is useful and important both in terms of recognition for trans people and also as a basis to make claims for services and provision (see Browne and Lim, 2010; Lim and Browne, 2009, West, 2004). Thus, recognising the internal heterogeneity of the category of trans (as with all gender and sexual identities including heterosexuality) might not encompass all who may be recognised through it; it is ac-

tively resisted by some, and is fluid and unstable (see Namaste, 2000; Johnson, 2007; Stryker, 2006; Valentine, 2007). We use it here and in our research because it enables a voice both within and outside of the broader category Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans.⁶ Thus, following Halberstam (1998), we mobilise this category for political purposes, whilst recognising the heterogeneity of how people defined themselves as 'trans' (see also Munro, 2005).

There can be little doubt that given the complexities of trans identifications, quantitatively categorising 'trans'/gender identities is also problematic.⁷ The question in the Count Me In Too survey read: 'Do you identify yourself as being trans or have you ever questioned your gender identity?' 5% of the sample identified as trans (n. 43, with 92% n. 739 saying no and 3% n. 23 unsure).⁸ Despite the complexities of defining trans identities, such quantitative categories can be useful for attending to key differences between those who identify with/are willing to tick the trans box and those who are not. Throughout the paper we will explore these differences to highlight key areas of need. In order to discuss the differences identified in the data we used the flawed, yet necessary, terms 'trans people', 'trans respondents' and, in contrast, cisgendered or non-trans respondents.

In spite of the complex ways in which trans people understand

themselves and negotiate liberal/deconstructionist (identity) politics and the multiplicities of trans identifications, categories may recognise you, even if you do not recognise the category. Such (mis)recognitions play a role in the reconstitution of identities, genders and lives (see Butler, 2007; Browne, 2005). This is not always negative, although it can reify particular characteristics. For example, identities are stabilised and congeal around specific attributes in legal landscapes, in order to be recognised as a 'protected characteristic' for equalities purposes, (see Herman, Didi-CN 1994; Nash, 2006). The category of those who are encompassed and thus 'protected' under the 'protected characteristics' of the 2010 UK Equalities legislation is 'transsexual', and defined:

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.⁹

The focus on 'reassignment' is important as a key aspect of provision that trans people nationally have lobbied for. However, 'change' is loosely defined as not only physiology but any 'attribute of sex'. Where sex is understood in part through gender roles, this Act could cover a multitude of gender/

sex positionings. However, as we move to discuss the provision of health services, this and other legal moves retain a binary of male/female and often (but not always) presume a permanent movement between these ('reassignment') to define trans, access services and receive 'treatment'. The limitations of these medical contexts are clear when examining how they are experienced by trans people.

Public Funding and Experiences of Transition

The right to have gender reassignment surgery using public funding has existed from 1999 in the UK. This followed legal battles fought in 1998 that resulted in health authorities being unable to bar funding for 'recognized, treatable medical disorders' (Green, 2010: 158). Since this time, it is reported that over 850 operations have taken place on the National Health Service. Currently the funding of these surgeries, hormones and other health services is far from secure and these are far from uncontroversial. They have recently been challenged by right wing newspapers because 'sex-change operations are a waste of valuable NHS resources when people are dying and suffering because of healthcare rationing. Opponents also cannot understand why people need a sex change for what they interpret as a psychological malaise' (Condron, 2009). There has also been opposition to those sur-

geons who undertake these interventions and a lack of respect within the medical profession afforded to them and the procedures they have developed and use (Combs et al, 2008). 'Press for Change', a trans advocacy group, argues that there is a 'postcode lottery' in the access to surgery and other health services for trans people, such that these may not be considered 'essential' in particular areas and can thus be indefinitely postponed or denied (see Cowen, 2009).¹⁰ Therefore, spatial differentiations were created through, and in turn recreated, an earlier backdrop of (uneven) investment and legal requirements, which devised 'treatment pathways' for transition. These pathways emphasise a medicalised and psychiatric (as a 'psychological malaise') route to deal with what is termed 'gender dysphoria'. Elsewhere, we have considered the implications of defining trans as a 'mental health' problem and pathologising people using these interventions. We found that the system itself causes harm to trans individuals, who seek 'help' (see Browne and Lim, 2010; Lim and Browne, 2009; West, 2004). Thus, whilst the need for the existence of publicly funded trans health care should not need to be debated, the ways 'treatment pathways' are implemented may not be desired/desirable. In this section, we develop this discussion, focusing on private/public health care and pointing to ongoing needs that should not be

forgotten in an era of austerity and potential retrenchment.

Table 1 illustrates that 48% (n. 20) of trans people say that a question regarding the quality of care delivered by NHS gender identity clinic is 'not applicable', indicating a use of private services and/or a disengagement from health services. Although 18% (n. 4) people said their experiences were good/very good, over 68% (n. 15) of trans people who have used NHS gender identity clinics say that the quality of care they received was poor or very poor. A distinction was made between publicly and privately funded care for trans people, which pertained to 'hoops' that needed to be 'jumped through' in the publicly funded care, that did not exist in the private sector (West, 2004). Such 'hoops' encourage the privatisation of care where it can be afforded, and illustrate variation of experiences based on economic capital. The desire for a better service for all was clear in the data:

Provision for better and local treatment via the NHS so we don't have to travel up to Charing Cross in London. Treatment there is appalling anyway. I was referred there after a consult at a Brighton hospital, and after the first appointment was motivated to go private as it was so crap (Questionnaire 142)

West (2004) found that trans people sought private treatment,

because of its speed and care, and because of the lasting detrimental effects of using NHS services. Trans people can move into and out of NHS 'care' pathways depending on their experiences with the NHS and their ability to pay for the services they seek. Although the 'result is the same', there are significant differences in the experiences trans people have between publicly funded and private health care (see West, 2004). In particular, these pertained to the time delays and 'the manner in which they were treated' (West, 2004: 9). The classed basis of gender transition is clear, affecting not only the speed of treatment but also the experiences of transition (see also Cowen, 2009; Hines, 2010; Roen, 2002):

Sally: Trans issues are generally associated with class, that you can't differentiate. That when people are middle class the issues are few. When people are, well not exactly working class, but on the lower social spectrum, that's when the trouble begins. Somebody that I know is a barrister. She's a real cool barrister in London, savage intelligence. She just negotiated the transition like she would a legal case. Done. Let's get on with work.

If you've got money, you're okay [laughs]. If you haven't got money, you can be in trouble.

(Individual Interview)

TABLE 1

In contrast to the US, where only

'economically empowered' people can receive surgery (Nataf, 1996; Green 2010), in the UK there is a more complex spatialisation of access. As Charing Cross is the sole NHS provider in the South of England, trans people in Brighton are restricted to using its services or else seeking private care. More than the 'postcode lottery', Count Me In Too found a complex spatiality, whereby the empowerment some people felt in Brighton through 'having a say' was eroded by the necessity of travel to London in order to access services (Browne and Lim, 2010). Thus, even though Brighton has not cut funding for trans people to engage in treatment pathways, Charing Cross is seen to have damaging effects on trans people, and there is also perceived lack of consistency between the treatment and advice offered by its different departments and professionals (see also West, 2004). Experiences of these services then, go beyond considerations of access and funding:

Joanne: For your entire course of treatment to be monitored by psychiatrists when I had my first psychiatric assessment with a well-known professor, he was absolutely insulting and 'do really think you're a woman? You're a 55, you're a 50 year old man you're not a woman' and it was that sort of attitude coming throughout. There are people who have broken down in tears at that first interview because it's been so hostile

and then, it's all throughout that. If you turn up to an assessment not wearing a skirt, you're wearing trousers, what are you wearing trousers for? The skirt was supplying their stereotype. You can point out that most women, I mean how many women here are actually wearing a skirt as opposed to trousers? [LAUGHTER & GENERAL NOISE] They expect us to follow the stereotype so it is absolutely humiliating and demeaning sometimes. (Speakers Corner, April 2009)

Johnson (2007: 67) notes that 'gender is more than anatomical difference' and trans people are 'engaged in the problematic task of becoming a different gendered being', a process that cannot be achieved 'only through the realignment of the physical body'. Joanne notes the ways that gender roles are judged as (un)fit by medical 'professionals' through bodily adornment (in this case dress). Not only does this reiterate simplistic dichotomies of sex/gender and associated gender roles, reiterating the ways gender 'should' be performed and enacted within particular (exaggerated) social norms, it also negates the import of accepting and playing with 'inconsistencies of our self-narratives' (Johnson 2007: 68). Moreover, it demands a performance of gender, which other women are not asked to do, and indeed the audience that Joanne addresses during this

speakers corner failed to perform. Although some may have had good/very good experiences, most trans people in this research said that they perceived Charing Cross as unhelpful, damaging and not actually dealing with 'the problem' (see Browne and Lim, 2010). The view at Charing Cross that 'transsexualism was a psychological disorder..., for which the most successful treatment was often hormonal or surgical therapy' (Whittle and Lewis, 2007: 3.13), has remained unchanged for over 40 years.

Kate: One of the really key factors that needs to be dealt with as to what needs to be changed is how the equivalent of the gender clinics, whether it be at Charing Cross or wherever else it is, in how they deal with our medical condition and not treating it as a psychiatric illness and not being this kind of gender dysphoria, but actually treating it as the condition that it is, because to me gender dysphoria is something wrong with the person's mind as to how they perceive them to be, rather than actually have them accepting the possibility that it could be an actual physical condition rather than a mental condition and how they and kind of in the service that they provide us at the gender clinic and they way they provide it. (Trans focus group 1)

The conflation of trans identities with mental health 'illness' by

medical professionals was a common complaint in *Count Me In Too*. Participants argued that their mental health difficulties were not necessarily related to their trans identities and that trans identities were not mental health difficulties (see also Browne and Lim, 2010; Johnson, 2007). The system itself was understood as damaging to mental health because of the way in which health service providers conflate trans issues with mental health issues. The *Count Me In Too* research showed that mental wellbeing was adversely affected for many who used NHS services in order to receive 'treatment':

Sally: How many people that break their legs go and have private treatment? Why would people go and have private treatment? Curious huh? So that means that's a measure of extreme dissatisfaction. Give us a break. It was a £1,000 or something for a blood test that costs £35. There's huge profit making in on this. It's one of the main cash cows for the West London Mental Health Trust. So they don't want to let go of that or their monopoly on treatment. This is the complications of what's going on behind all of this.
(Individual Interview)

Just after the creation of the public duty to 'treat' trans people, Munro (2003) argued that private treatment for gender reassignment put pressure on the NHS to improve services

in less stereotypical gendered, and 'more user-centered', ways. In contrast to this, Sally describes a (profitable) monopoly in the provision of publicly funded treatment pathways and dissatisfaction with the public health services. The possibility of change, whilst welcomed, was seen as limited. However Sally and other trans activists in Brighton nonetheless worked to 'wedge a little crack here in Brighton'. Yet, because Charing Cross is located outside of Brighton, it is also beyond trans activists reach, contrasting with the influence they felt they had in Brighton (see Browne and Lim, 2010). There were calls for a specialist local gender reassignment service, in order to improve the experiences of trans people (see also West, 2004). Key to this was the desire to see change in how trans people are treated, and a meaningful engagement with trans issues and the complexities of gendered lives, discriminations and vulnerabilities:

Brighton is quite obviously an open city in which many LGBT move to just to feel accepted, so why should we have to travel anywhere else (London) for treatment? (Questionnaire 284)

The calls for a local Gender Identity Clinic were based on the inclusion and empowerment that some trans people felt in Brighton, as well as the 'obviousness' of geographical imaginings of 'gay Brighton' that facilitates particular claims to

service provision (see Browne and Bakshi, forthcoming, Browne and Lim, 2010). Thus, Kate's argument (above) that 'wherever else it is', relates to the desire for trans people to be treated better, regardless of location. Nevertheless, due to the geographical imaginings of this city, trans activists argued that Brighton should be leading the way in these initiatives. These claims were set in a context where there was a legal imperative to consult with marginalised and minority groupings, (see Munro, 2003), and where activists groups in Brighton were working with service providers to inform their practice.¹¹ This led to targets that addressed key areas raised through research such as Count Me In Too and other forms of legally obliged consultation. In our reading, many services had an 'open door' and a (limited) amount of willingness and money to undertake meaningful engagements with trans people and work to deal with pressing health and other social issues. Thus, the rhetoric was being actioned through meetings with trans people. Although some change had occurred locally, by 2010 there was still much to be done, and not only in the area of gender transition 'treatments'.

Health Care beyond Transition

The dissonance between legislative support, compared to the experiences of trans people who received this 'care' in Brighton, meant that

rights-based claims were made, not only for transition, but also pertaining to ongoing health provision:

Local trans services - not just limited to achieving transition - e.g. ongoing counseling and support groups and social groups (Questionnaire 651)

Ongoing care for trans people relates to physical and mental health care. In the Count Me In Too research there were significant differences in terms of the general health of trans and non-trans people. Trans respondents were significantly more likely to consider themselves as having poor or very poor physical health (30%, n. 13) than those who are not trans (8%, n. 64). 77% (n. 581) of non-trans respondents say they have either good or very good physical health, compared to less than half (44%, n. 19) of those who identify as trans ($p < .0005$). Kate suggests that her trans embodiment is rarely accounted for, even where it may be relevant:

Kate: I've got a whole part of mind stream which is not heterosexual, part of it that's bisexual, but there's a bit of it that's trans. So unless the health providers understand that and they understand the issues around that, it's very hard for them to diagnose what the hell's wrong with me. Do they take into account in their diagnosis the fact that I'm trans-gendered and that fits other parts of my health system. They don't take that into ac-

count and even when I tell them it's important they still don't take it into account.

(Trans focus group 1)

Kate and other trans participants, however, did not reduce their physical and mental health difficulties to their trans status. Experiences of the health care system were often problematic, not because of issues related to transition, but rather because of the ways in which trans people were treated across the health service:

Sally: [I had a friend] who went to have a back operation in Haywards Heath, you know, that hospital in Haywards Heath, and the surgeon demanded to see on a genital check. This is so abusive and so has a little peek and says 'looks fine to me'. Oh that's okay! When there was a 'why', 'it's because of catheters, if we need to

use a catheter'. Which is a load of bullshit. They just felt nervous and had no idea that they should behave within certain boundaries. And my friend wasn't that sure of herself and so complied. I'd just tell them to piss off, 'bring me your superior now' [laughs]. But that's because I am who I am you see. I think there's quite a lot of trans people have had their sort of self-confidences been broken by the process.

15 years after surgery [another friend] had a prolapse, vaginal prolapse, and so needed medical attention. Went to her GP, not a good one, and the GP said 'transsexual, oh I don't know'. So she gets referred to a local psychiatrist. 'Oh yes I think you're transsexual, you can go to Charing Cross.' Gets sent to Charing Cross at £900 an hour.

I said 'what did they ask you?'

Table 1: Overall, how do you rate the quality of care delivered by your NHS Gender Identity Clinic?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	% without those who said N/A
Very good	2	4.7	4.8	9
Good	2	4.7	4.8	9
Neither good nor poor	3	7.0	7.1	13.6
Poor	5	11.6	11.9	22.7
Very Poor	10	23.3	23.8	45.4
Not Applicable	20	46.5	47.6	
Total	42	97.7	100	
Missing	1	2.3		

She said 'when did you first think you might be transsexual?'. She said '15 years post-op and they're asking me that'. So, in other words, the suggestion would be that she might be found to be not transsexual, therefore couldn't get treatment. Then months, and months, and months, and months go by and then the surgeon treats her. But he's the surgeon that works up the road in Brighton. He works at the hospital up in Brighton. She could have just nipped up the road and got it fixed. So this cost thousands of pounds and she was mightily abused by this process. It still goes on and people aren't that willing to look at these issues. They don't like them. They feel uncomfortable with it and don't want to do it.

(Individual Interview)

It's not uncommon for trans people to lose their jobs and incomes during and after transition. Where trans people could afford private healthcare in the past, they often lose this privilege (Whittle et al., 2007). Thus, even where transition may not have been traumatic, ongoing healthcare can be 'mightily' abusive and the option to 'buy better' is no longer available. Sally describes numerous examples of medical professionals feeling 'nervous', 'uncomfortable' with 'no idea that they should behave within certain boundaries', 'breaking' trans people in the process. As she also illustrates with

her last example, 'checks' are put in place for trans people that have no medical basis, but rely on understandings of discordant bodies, and can be unnecessarily costly. Such health experiences are also spatialised, and this spatiality of 'being sent' outside of Brighton (even when it is unnecessary) adds to the trauma of health 'care'.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the experiences recounted in this paper, almost the entire trans sample (88%, n. 37) have disclosed their sexuality and/or gender identity to their General Practitioners (Family Doctors), a significantly greater proportion than the rest of the sample (58%, n. 440) ($p = .0005$). Table 2 shows that the majority (62%) of trans people think that their current GP is good or very good, with 16% saying that their GP is poor or very poor. 7% said that the question was 'not applicable' suggesting a disengagement from these services. GPs can act as a very important initial point of contact for trans people seeking to transition or in need of support regarding their trans identities. They can be invaluable in supporting trans people in accessing appropriate services. Trans respondents noted that they often have to come out to their GPs, in part because, as Kate says this 'fits with other parts of my health system'. The 'choice' to remain 'closeted' is not possible, as it is for some gay men (who were the least likely to be out to their GP's, see Browne and

Table 2: Overall, how do you rate the quality of care delivered by your GP?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Very good	11	25.0	25.6
Good	16	36.4	37.2
Neither good nor poor	6	13.6	14.0
Poor	3	6.8	7.0
Very poor	4	9.1	9.3
Not applicable	3	6.8	7.0
Total	43	97.7	100
Missing	1	2.3	
Total	44	100	

Lim, 2008- General health)

Because of the imperative to come out, and the health needs of trans bodies, 'finding a good GP' was crucial in all of the stories told by trans people in the Count Me In Too research. Thus, the positive rating of GP services must be read in context of the journey to find a GP that trans people undertake. This journey was often described in terms of 'lucky' moments, as well as careful planning and the importance of social and support networks:

Heidi: I was very fortunate in that I got pointed to probably one of the best GPs in Brighton in terms of knowledge-ability on trans health issues so I pretty much fell on my feet there. But prior to moving to Brighton, my GP was very helpful and when I came out to her. It wasn't a negative, you know, it wasn't kind of "I can't deal with this patient any more". So I was fortunate there that in how smoothly

that went really. They were definitely, to me, LGBT friendly. Coming back to the present now – the NHS obvious always had me as male since birth really. But my current practice [they] put me down in their files as being female and so all the stuff they send out to me ensured that the title was appropriate and also asked me what did I want to be referred to as Miss, Ms, etc. which I think is kind of very taking into [account] sort of trans issues more. They had to kind of swiftly get things changed on my NHS card, which I was slightly surprised about but they were able to kind of help get things amended without you having to kind of write up loads and loads of letters or give any weird explanation there to help you through that.

(Trans focus group 1)

For Heidi, a reaction that 'wasn't negative' was considered 'LGBT

friendly' and 'fortunate'. Her positive experiences were both pleasing and surprising, as she expected to have to give a 'weird explanation'. In many ways this can be seen as an example of good practice. Yet, consistency of GP care for trans people was lacking, and finding 'safe' GPs is a key issue:

Sally: I was talking to people yesterday about this, that their GPs can't handle the trans thing. The training and understanding of trans issues is very low. In Brighton and Hove you have to go to the right GP. If you go to the wrong one, you're in trouble.

You go to the right one. I get excellent treatment. I get treated very, very well. I mean the only issues, medical issues I have to being trans are because I take hormones. I mean I take hormones and every year I go to see an endocrinologist. I get treated very well. And if I had issues going on? Not a problem, because I'm at the right GP. But also everybody knows who their GPs are and they go to them, so now she's stopped taking them because she just can't handle anymore.

(Individual Interview)

In *Count Me In Too* it was clear that information about health care was being passed through social groups and support networks in order to enable trans people to access non-discriminatory services that would adequately care

for their needs. 'Excellent' service was something that was sought, and found by some. However 'if you go to the wrong one, you are in trouble'. Once again the illusion of choice for trans people came to the fore. For many trans people, past experiences with their GPs can be alienating, with health professionals being unaware of how to deal with trans issues and acting in inappropriate ways. The choice of a trans friendly GP may not be an option for everyone, and even where GP's are friendly, other health professionals may not be. Moreover, the journey to find a friendly and safe GP is rarely an easy one:

Kate: [There] was a GP in this case, who I assume was a quite strong Roman Catholic who told me 'why couldn't I just be an ordinary gay man instead of wanting to be trans-gendered?' as if I had a choice about it. Another one who had to examine my legs and proceeded to cover my body with the white bit that we normally lie on because she couldn't actually look at my genital areas which, you know, my penis hadn't been removed at that stage, and then proceeded to tell me that I was a sinner, etc. Since I've been in Brighton most of the people I've related to either at the front desk or the GPs have actually been relaxed about me being trans-gendered on the service. My major concern is access. When I go to GP surgery I had absolutely no

choice at all of whether I can investigate, is this GP friendly to me or are they not friendly. It's rather like playing Russian Roulette and we've already explained, twice I got shot in the head and maybe an equal amount of times I got lucky. I was fortunate in that I could afford to pay for my transition privately, if I hadn't and I had to stay with one of my negative experiences then I think it would have been incredibly painful and very stressful and maybe damaging to my transition.

(Trans focus group 1)

Although Kate has been 'lucky' she is aware of the risks she takes by accessing services and points to the damage 'one of my negative experiences' could have inflicted if she couldn't afford to transition privately. When Kate says that 'it's rather like playing Russian Roulette', the impact of not identifying trans-friendly GPs becomes clear. Choosing an inappropriate and ill-informed GP can, for some trans people, be life threatening. In Count Me In Too, we found that trans people are more likely to experience mental health difficulties, suicidal distress and to have attempted suicide (see Browne and Lim, 2008).

These narratives paint a very particular picture of the 'inclusive' health services that were purported to exist in the legislative contexts of the first decade of the 21st Century. Whilst there can be little doubt of

the importance of access to transition pathways, the ways in which these are felt, experienced and enacted, reproduce particular gendered norms (within specific understandings of male/female boundaries) and remake normative gender orders in health and other everyday spaces. In Brighton, these demands were being addressed through a multi-agency trans strategy, lead by the Primary Care Trust (the local commissioning body of the NHS) and in 2008 discussions were underway regarding local provision for trans people. The Count Me In Too trans analysis group argued that training was a key issue in addressing negative experiences with GP's (see Browne and Lim, 2008- trans, Browne and Lim, 2008- health). As Sally (above) notes, this 'training and understanding of trans issues' is poor amongst GP's, leading to harmful experiences. However, during the course of the first decade of the 21st century, GP's were on independent contracts. This meant that any mandatory training/information/requirement was not locally possible/enforceable as part of GP contracts, and would have to be nationally instigated. Nonetheless, in Brighton there was training undertaken, and front line staff (such as receptionists) equipped as well as key people within the Primary Care Trusts who commissioned services, including Charing Cross. There were also discussions of changes to the NHS Direct telephone line to

make the questions more appropriate and clinically relevant for trans people. Following contemporary political changes, the time and energy spent undertaking LGBT training, and the upskilling key people in health services in trans and other LGBT issues, as well as the possibilities of local treatment, have been lost. Activists may see no benefit from much of the time and effort they put into individuals and committees (that have now disappeared, moved roles or been made redundant) to make the health service more trans friendly and catering better for trans people. Indeed the shifting ground has meant that many of the possibilities of even having these discussions have closed down; dispersed in ways that mean activist resources cannot access them. The skills, knowledge and spaces for dialogue that were so painfully fought for, and in, are now threatened. Given this data and our experiences of trying to inform GP's of trans people's needs and the changes that need to be instigated in their practices, the discussion of GP consortiums are then perhaps the most nerve-wracking of the proposed government reforms.

**'Today is gonna be the day when we're gonna throw it back to you
By now, you should have somehow realised what you got to do'¹²: Conclusion**

We wrote this paper with the aim of inspiring critical reflection on the 'golden era of equalities work'.

There can be little doubt that the sexual and gendered legislative landscape of the UK changed irrecoverably during the first decade of the 21st century. Whether the UK Conservatives' 'social education' will 'stick', has yet to be seen (Heffernan, 2011). Nonetheless, critical exploration of the changes of the first decade of the 21st Century for trans people, reveals that they are positive and welcomed, yet flawed in their implementation, as well as their conceptual basis. Whilst, there can be little doubt that those who want to be legally recognised as male/female should have this right, there is still a need to challenge this binary, seeking gender liberation beyond man/woman. Similarly, publicly funded trans health care should not need to be debated, and whilst the provision of publicly funded health services to trans people, including surgical options, is a positive development, its implementation requires significant reworking. What 'trans health care' means and how/whether the current 'treatment pathway' fulfills those needs should be open to question and change. This needs not only take into account data such as Count Me In Too, generated with the cooperation of trans communities, but also should arise from the empowerment of trans people in local, regional as well as national arenas.

The increasingly vocal politics of resentment are gaining further traction in the UK, with discourses

including; 'minorities' getting 'more than their fair share'; 'waste'; and the 'inappropriate' use of dwindling public funding. Contesting these discourses is an ongoing battle that we believe must be fought, while simultaneously considering how to improve the opportunities that we seek to defend, so that they are more 'fit for purpose' and perhaps 'less wasteful' of people's lives and energies, as well as public monies. The questions that we believe now faced by activists and academics are; should UK trans/LGBT politics be focused on not 'losing ground', rather than seeking to improve current provisions?; what are the possibilities for progressive considerations of gender in this new era? We hope for answers that are multiple, spatially sensitive and empowering for those directly affected by the outcomes.

So have we 'realised what you got to do?' For academics, it is much easier to 'find' and look for the critical, and it is important to point to what continues to be wrong in the hierarchised, power-laden experiences of trans people. Acting as a kill-joy (Ahmed, 2010) is important when it is productive; making space for difference, allowing for other ways of doing, knowing and working. Understanding social difference in shifting and geographical diverse legislative contexts, however, questions overarching critical narratives that lead to hopelessness (see Gibson-Graham, 2006; Sedgwick,

2003). It is necessary to make/allow space to reflect and comment on what is 'going/went well', even when what we see as socially progressive might be shifting and spatially specific, only partially known and nameable. This becomes even more apparent when perceived gains are 'taken away' or threatened, removed and retracted. In the UK context in 2011, we note the threat to the public funding for transition, when, it is argued, 'people are dying' [of course Trans people do not figure in this rhetoric], along with the devaluing of the equalities agendas (enacted in part through the removal of targets, accountability as well as commissioning bodies such as PCTs). Without doubt, that which is being threatened was flawed, inadequate and imperfect, yet many invested in and valued it.

Certain perspectives are often overlooked, including investment and work 'within' the state to change LGBT lives, possibilities and hopes of inclusion, and achievement of positive social change in places such as Brighton. Explicating neo-liberalism, critiquing capitalisms which create class and racial normativities, and pointing to the problems of identity categories and the rights claims and politics built on these, renders intellectually stimulating engagement with some of the literature. However this may neglect recent geographical writing that has questioned the monolithic readings of homonormative subjects (see for example,

Brown, 2009; Elder, 2002; Oswin, 2005, 2008). The events unfolding around us also need further nuanced engagements - engagements that refuse monolithic discourses, and reject the aspatial imposition of gender, sexual, class, raced normativities and the discourses that support them. Critical insights are of course essential for framing how we might work towards better worlds, and identifying 'the problem' is key (although see Sedgwick, 2003 on the dangers of strong theorising). Nevertheless, they are often undertaken without suggesting better worlds (however imperfect these positive social changes might be), that question the monoliths of capitalism, neo-liberalism and so on (see Sedgwick, 2003; Gibson-Graham, 2006). We might end up with scholarly interventions into social worlds that neglect possibilities, hopes, cracks and fissures in normativities. There is a risk that we forget to mention that the positives when they are happening, and romanticise them when they are lost. Perhaps this is in part about the processes of the academy that value critique above other forms of knowledge generation. It could be that what we 'have to do' is to look at our ways of working, reconsidering earlier feminist impulses that sought to move beyond cultures of 'trashing' (see Pratt, 1996; WGSG, 1997), inspiring care for selves and each other (see Heckert, 2011; Horncastle, in this edition of the

GJSS). In other words, work with each other to inspire critique with a purpose. The purpose not just being critique, but also creating/acknowledging (flawed, imperfect, critique-able) possibilities, actions and social change.

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Endnotes

¹ We deliberately exclude bi[sexual] people from this statement to recognise the ways in which it is often lesbian/gay or 'same sex' relationships that are legally recognised and 'protected'.

² Oasis, Song Lyric. 'Don't Look Back in Anger', copyright Noel Gallagher

³ This assertion supported by recent proclamations on foster ing, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) events in Downing Street. However, a full discussion of this is beyond the scope of this paper, but does require further critical interrogation. ⁴ For full details of the research see Browne, 2007 or www.countmeintoo.co.uk. Suffice to note here that this research was based on a large scale questionnaire (819 valid responses), 20 focus groups (69 people), a series of stakeholder meetings and key informant interviews. The research used participatory methods which sought to empower LGBT people to work with service providers and others to work for positive social change for LGBT people.

⁵ We are using queer here as a methodology for exploring gender and sexual (as well as other social) norms, rather than as an identity category (see Browne and Nash, 2010; Giffney, 2004; Oswin, 2008 for a further discussion of this distinction). See also the GJSS special issues that address Queer Methodologies (<http://www.gjss.org/index.php?Vol-5-Issue-2-December-2008-Queer-Methodologies.html>; <http://www.gjss.org/index.php?Vol-6-Issue-1-April-2009-Queer-Studies-Methodological-Approaches.-Follow-up.html>).

⁶ This is a contested point and one we address elsewhere (see Browne and Lim, 2010; Browne and Bakshi, forthcoming).

⁷ This should be read alongside the categorisation of sexual identities using quantitative tools, where these tools force/create categorisations and identities rather than simply reflecting them (see Browne, 2008; 2011).

⁸For further sample details see Browne, 2007. It is unclear who makes up the 'unsure' category and therefore this category was not used as a basis for analysis. Anecdotal responses after the questionnaire suggested that many people who 'played' with gender initially responded 'yes' to the question, 'Do you identify yourself as being trans or have you ever questioned your gender identity?'. When routed to 'trans' questions they returned to the question and clicked 'unsure'. In order to produce reliable data, a distinction between the categories of 'trans' and 'non-trans' was created and statistical tests ran with this binary category. Further research is needed to explore those who defined as 'unsure'.

⁹ For full details see the Equalities and Human Rights website: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/vision-and-mission/our-business-plan/transgender-equality/>

¹⁰ Despite being termed a 'National Health Service', this is broken down into a series of regional bodies who make funding decisions and define local priorities. These regions can act independently of each other.

¹¹ In Brighton & Hove the LGBT population is seen as the 'largest minority', with estimates placing the proportion between 15-20%, see Browne and Lim, 2010 for a discussion of how the

'large' LGBT population is used to legitimate trans issues and place them 'on the agenda' on the city.

¹² Oasis, Song Lyric. 'Don't Look Back in Anger', copyright Noel Gallagher

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Spiritualised Sexuality Discourse: Impacts on Value Judgements

Sarah Harper

The realm of consumption of the sexual has long been a heated battle-ground for feminists, with the realm of discourse most often centring on how work in the sex trade can be viewed as making women powerful or powerless. Sexuality has in either circumstance been viewed as something that has power in itself, and the inference is often that it has a place of deep importance on a very fundamental level in human nature. Books such as Pornography: Men Possessing Women had a strong effect in feminism and embodied the stance that sex is the channel through which power is most strongly wielded (Dworkin, 1981). More recently, Ariel Levy (2006) has critiqued the sex industry in the wake of the third-wave movement, suggesting that the sale of sex is merely a route towards further subjugation in the guise of liberation. Many theorists disputing these ideas do so from the stand-point of a spiritualised sexuality, which suggests that bringing the sexual more fully into lived experience as a whole can be a liberating and spiritually healthy experience (Sprinkle, 2001). Neither of these ideologies give a voice to women who may simply feel that their body can be used in many different ways to provide labour to generate an income. These means can range from stacking shelves, to providing sex for a paying customer – the ability to separate one's emotions concerning the sexual may not be a pathology in these circumstances, it may be a useful technique for making money.

Keywords: sexuality, sex work, sexualisation, discourse, media

There has been much heated debate in feminist communities concerning sexuality in mainstream society and the positive and negative impacts of what has been referred to as the 'pornification' of society. By only viewing the spiritual as something which is aligned with sacred texts, it can often be overlooked that spiritualised discourse can still be employed, albeit with relative subtlety. In this article, spiritualised

discourse refers to ideas circulating on the affect of lived experience on some internal spiritual life, leading to happiness, or dissatisfaction, and in some cases even psychological harm. Another defining factor of this spirituality is its essential nature, as something viewed as a fundamental part of all people and therefore taken for granted as a foundation for all further discussion. This pornification argument is thus often conflated with

notions of the sacred or the spiritual element of sexuality, something which in turn impacts the decisions made not just by academics, but by governments. I intend here to provide a brief overview of some of the predominant arguments and a critique of some of the notions underpinning them. Whilst critiques have previously been made of feminist engagement with morally conservative sentiments (see Hollibaugh and Moraga 2000; Vance 1992), I aim to illustrate the broader impact of spiritualised discourse on feminism, even in the 'sex positive' field. Reviewing the style of discourse, which often focuses on the danger or conversely the sacred and positive aspects of sexuality, I will evaluate the impact on women in society today - especially those who choose to engage in the sex industry as a means of income generation. If discussion of the sex industry and sexualisation in general is mired in 'common sense' notions of the essential or the spiritual, the real issues facing women in the industry could become obscured. I conclude by asking whether we are currently in a position to debate the impact of sexualisation in the media without first engaging in an analysis of the fundamental theories and habits of discourse we implement in these debates.

The Spiritual Dangers of Sex

The censorship of explicit material has generally been executed

with the aim of protecting those perceived as vulnerable to the morally corrupting influence of images and texts since the proliferation of medicalised sexual discourse in the Victorian period. There was discussion of the role of sexuality in society previously, but there was a shift in tone, moving more towards the protection of the social body as a medicalised entity whilst at the same time retaining the spiritual notions of previous ages (Foucault 1990). The rhetoric used will be familiar to those who are aware of the debates surrounding contemporary sexualised media: 'Why do people go to dances? Always to amuse themselves, to take part in the common pleasure, and contribute to it, and very frequently to expose themselves wilfully to dangers, and to give freedom to passions they have difficulty in taming even in solitude' (Hulot 1857, 15, original emphasis). These dangers being that 'it is impossible to go to dances and balls without exposing this virtue [of chastity] to the greatest dangers' (Hulot 1857, 28). The control of sexuality on the basis of religious reasoning is clearly described here whilst elsewhere in Hulot's book, the dangers are described as being particularly great to women as they are perceived as being morally weak, seeking the approval of men in the form of sexual advances. Dances are here perceived as being a gateway to the loss of chastity, providing a highly sexualised cultural arena in

which the impressionable upper-class white women would lose sight of the importance of God (Hulot 1857). In an arguably increasingly secularised society it can be noted that the language used still hinges on the assumption of sexuality to have a highly spiritual or at least morally driven element; a notion which shall be examined throughout this paper (Woodhead, 2007).

In more recent decades, Governments have also attempted to control access to materials perceived to be highly sexualised, and it is important to note the additional affect of the economic climate on the pervasiveness of moral conservatism. Ian Taylor (1987) described the rise in moralist rhetoric in the Thatcher years, a time remembered for the financial crisis enveloping Britain. Elliott and McCrone described Thatcherism as voicing ‘the misgivings of many working class people about the changes in sexual morality and in a rhetoric ringing with phrases long familiar in chapel religion’ (cited in Taylor 1987, 309). These misgivings were tapped into to garner support for sweeping legislative reforms, especially involving a huge increase in spending on law and order. This increase was defined as being imperative to solving Britain’s perceived social crisis triggered by Labour’s former ‘permissive’ agenda. Indeed in the wake of riots in 1981, Taylor describes Thatcher’s speeches as urging for a ‘return to “Victorian values”’ (Taylor

1987, 315). Other government members and prominent right-wing allies reinforced this rhetoric; especially the Minister for Social Security, Mr. Howell, who ‘spoke of the sanctity of family life’ and the importance of familial socialisation in maintaining moral order (Taylor 1987, 315). Furthermore, he suggested that the woman’s role of child-minder and domestic labourer was ‘a decision of God Himself’ (Taylor 1987, 315).

Moral Conservatism in an Era of Cuts

As described by Taylor (1987) and others besides, the Thatcher government heralded a period of increased rigidity of moral expectations, with a strong focus on ‘family values’ (Fox Harding 1999). A similar rhetoric can be seen in the often sensationalist coverage of ‘sexualisation’ from the Conservative section of the coalition government. In the current social situation, dealing with the impact of a recession, we once again find ourselves entering a period of increased moral and social conservatism. As in the Thatcher government, such conservatism can be seen embodied in legislation, reforms and reports spearheaded by the government. This reaction is not limited to the Conservative Party, during the Labour government, at a time of deepening concern about the economic state of the country, a report was commissioned by the Home Office into the sexualisation of children. The report recom-

mended that 'lad's mags' be moved above the eye level of young people to avoid potential harm to children due to their seeing images deemed to be inappropriate, and government 'encouragement' of corporate responsibility concerning the sale of sexualised merchandise following industry and parental consultation (Papadopoulos 2010). The report also recommends that gender studies be given a core place in the school curriculum, supported by specialised gender equality training for teachers – these suggestions appear to have been ignored by both the Labour and Conservative/Liberal Democrat governments (BBC News 2011; Papadopoulos 2010; Wintour 2011). In the Home Office report, it is clearly stated that there is no interest in discussing what sexualisation is, or what its proven effects are. Papadopoulos (2010, 3) describes the aim as being to conduct an examination of the impact of this sexualisation through the use of 'empirical data from peer reviewed journals, and evidence from professionals and clinicians'. In a review of the report, Clarissa Smith (2010) criticises this use of the concept of sexualisation, a nebulous term which is fast gaining currency in not just the media, but academic and government reports. She also notes that the bibliography used by Papadopoulos is restricted at best: a full critique of the theoretical underpinnings and methodology used in the research is absent, re-

placed by a complacent acceptance of their findings.

David Cameron has recently commissioned another report into the sexualisation of childhood, seen to be driven by increased commercialisation in this area (Bailey 2011; Wintour 2011). The Bailey Review (2011) echoes the findings of Papadopoulos, asking for compliance with sexualised materials guidelines, by industries involved. Compliance, according to the report, should involve 'modesty sleeves' for magazines featuring sexualised content on their front covers, retailers adhering to codes of conduct regarding clothing for people under the age of 16 regarding sexualised slogans and padded bras, and prohibiting sexualised advertising near schools. Mirroring the rhetoric of the Thatcher era, David Cameron taps into themes recurrent in the mainstream media at times of economic difficulty, encouraging a return to 'family values'. He is quoted in a BBC News article as describing reforms put forward in the wake of the Bailey Review as a 'giant step forward for protecting childhood and making Britain more family friendly' (2011). Such rhetoric glosses over issues not adequately covered in these documents, and the criticisms made by Smith (2010) against the Papadopoulos report are equally apt for the Bailey Review. The debate concerning the definition of 'sexualisation' has been brushed aside in favour of an uncritical acceptance

of the prevailing media view. Even viewing sexualisation as a genuine threat, the recommendations would be extremely difficult to enforce, relying on a subjective judgement on what is to be classified as a sexualised slogan or image. Historically, the definition of what is considered art and what is considered pornography is enough to highlight the problematic nature of such legislation (Andrews 1997; Grant 1975). Aside from the difficulties in enforcing such restrictions as suggested by the report, the question must be asked, how will this impact women working in the sex industry?

As explained by McNair (1996; 2002), the danger presented by even explicit pornographic images is questionable and appears driven by the political and religious right-wing (Fox Harding 1999; Grey 2010). As the arguments in such reports are supported by biased coverage of the sex industry and commercialisation, the result can be the increased stigmatisation of those who choose to engage in the sex industry as a means of earning an income. The results include limited support for workers' rights in the sex industry due to its status as a pariah, and the exclusion women can feel due to the stigma of being a 'sex worker' (Goffman 1968; Roach 2007). In the first page of his Foreword to the report, Bailey states that society 'seems to have become more openly sexualised; the rapidly changing technological environment has its

benefits in so many ways but has also made the seamier side of humanity inescapable' (2011, 2). One of Papadopoulos' recommendations is that 'the government overturns its decision to allow vacancies for jobs in the adult entertainment industry to be advertised by Jobcentre Plus' (Papadopoulos 2010, 16). Women who may have wished to engage in work in the sex industry are thus disallowed from searching for jobs in the same ways that other people do. The industry is being reported against in such a manner that it is accepted as a simple fact that jobs in this industry are harmful and not to be approached in a similar manner to other work. It is clear that the introduction of 'modesty sleeves' for magazines featuring sexualised imagery would adversely impact the sale of such magazines due to the lack of visual advertising.

Sex and sexualisation is pilloried as a dangerous assault on people's psyche and something which can extend to anti-social and sexually aggressive behaviour. This is in spite of evidence suggesting that pornography actually does not cause harm in the ways suggested (Smith 1999). It has been noted that erroneous results may have been caused by the questionable methodologies in the reports (Gauntlett 1998; McNair 2002). The impact of such legislation would not just be the direct restriction of the markets being legislated against, but to further entrench the view of sexuality

as being a dangerous impulse and force in society that needs to be controlled. The stigmatisation following such reforms would no doubt impact the lives of women working, or attempting to find work in the sex industry: there would likely be less job opportunities as people feel reluctant to use the industry, or the negative psychological effects of being stigmatised. These examples of the government report recommendations show without doubt a negative view of any woman wishing to earn money through the use of sexualisation of her body. Not only would work be more difficult to find in a market contracting in the wake of such reforms, women would be further stigmatised due to the work they undertake. Increasingly conservative social attitudes can therefore alienate those with different perspectives on their own sexuality, such as people who may feel at ease with selling sexual services and find this preferable as a source of income generation.

The example of the 'slut walks' which have been recently taking place all over the world exemplify the strength of opinion on the subject of freedom for women to be able to represent their sexuality in the way that they choose to (Pilkington 2011). Women engaging in the sale of the sexual will be presented with less opportunities to get employment of this sort, but it is to be expected that those who do pursue such work will be further demonised as the in-

creasingly conservative social mores espoused by the Conservative/ Liberal Democrat government in the wake of the recession become more deeply engrained. In work which already carries a stigma for those involved, the increase of this stigma could increase the burden on those women who have often made a well considered decision to enter the sex industry.

Radical and Second-Wave Discourse

It has been noted that the religious right have adopted feminist phraseology in attacking the sex industry (Grey 2011; Smith 1999). Whilst it has been argued that feminists may or may not be complicit in this joint attack, it often goes unnoticed that even when not openly religious, there is generally a spiritual element to the language used by anti-pornography campaigners (Grey 2010). Andrea Dworkin, whose work is well-known both in academia and feminist activist communities, has criticised the acceptance of the pornography industry in particular as an acceptance of the subjugation of women. In this sense, the language is predominantly one of the dangers of the sex industry. If we look also at the work of Sheila Jeffreys (1994), the emphasis here is also on the dangers of sexuality misdirected, suggesting that sex is a powerful part of life, something which must be carefully negotiated lest women be damaged in the process. Jeffreys

states that

In order for a lesbian sex industry to be profitable it was necessary to transform lesbian sexuality so that it would take the objectifying form necessary to construct lesbian sex consumers, consumers not just of mechanical products but of other women in pornography and prostitution ...

The result of this dramatic onslaught designed to reconstruct lesbian sexuality has been the partial incorporation of lesbians into the political structures of control of the heteropatriarchy. (1994, 20)

The inference here, one expanded upon throughout her book, *The Lesbian Heresy*, is that women are being forced to accept a patriarchal version of sexuality; one that is not suitable for radical lesbian feminists who are striving to equalise sexual relations.

Moving on to discuss the feminist magazine *On Our Backs*, Jeffreys notes the plethora of advertising spaces dedicated to the sex industry, both products and services: 'They are full of dildos. These dildos are clearly penis-shaped and they come with harnesses so that lesbians can imitate men fucking women' (Jeffreys 1994, 33). She goes on to proclaim that 'the dildos are commonly incorporated into sado-masochistic scenarios presumably because, like the penis, they symbolise male power and the ability to

violate women' (Jeffreys 1994, 33). The description of sadomasochism as something suggestive of a damaged psyche is something often repeated by critics of 'extreme pornography', and is another area in which we can see a spiritualised element to the connecting discourse (American Psychiatric Association 2000; House of Commons 2007; Jeffreys 1994). The real impact of sadomasochism and the reasons for partaking in such activities, or watching sadomasochistic porn, have been examined in other works, suggesting that the negative impacts described are usually done on the basis of limited or inaccurate information (Cross and Matheson 2006; Harper and Yar 2011). This is an example of the regulatory stance taken by not just the government, but feminists in the current era of moral regulation.

The quotes used to describe Jeffreys' (1994) position are selective, being located at the radical end of the feminist spectrum. However, even recently theoretical standpoints have been published which at first appear more mild and balanced, yet are still espousing some of the same value judgements as radical feminists. Unlike Jeffreys' (1994) work, some of this is highly credited in the current milieu. In *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, Ariel Levy (2006) also rails against the sex industry, claiming that feminist engagement in it is indicative of a naive assumption that feminism has

gone too far and has become anti-sex. One problematic area of Levy's analysis is the language she uses, conflating postfeminism, girlie feminism and third-wave feminism (Levy 2006; Showden 2009). Third-wave feminism is used to encompass all, and is more generally replaced by the derogatory pseudonym 'Female Chauvinist Pigs', or yet more concisely, FCPs. This relaxed use of language in a popular feminist text ignores the nuances of these different branches of feminism or post-feminism. Levy speaks in the same terms about groups such as CAKE, whose ideology is admittedly difficult to bracket into the above-mentioned feminisms, yet is instead grouped with discussion about Playboy and 'strippers'. Levy speaks little about the lived experience of workers in lap dancing venues, instead focusing on the idolisation of women working in the industry by those not working in them. However her views on the matter are made clear through the subtext of her book. During an interview for *The Guardian* shortly after the release of her book, Levy maintained that she was not arguing against the sex industry as a whole, rather that she was criticising the blind acceptance of 'porn star' imagery and the negative impact it could have on women striving to achieve equality (Cochrane 2006). Nonetheless, Levy's claim that porn stars are 'are giving up the most private part of their being for public consumption' is clearly sugges-

tive that she views the sexual part of oneself as something that should ideally be cherished and kept away from public view in much the same way that moral puritans of the past have suggested. Crucially, this view of sexuality as something sacred risks obfuscating the real issues often at the forefront of the minds of women working in the industry.

The New Feminisms

On the other end of the spectrum lies Annie Sprinkle, ex-porn star, now 'sexologist' and artist. Sprinkle shot to fame through her live art/sex/education shows, especially her 'Public Cervix Announcement', which involved her allowing members of the public to peer into her vagina with the aid of a tube and a torch to look at her cervix. In a conversation with Linda Montano, Barbara Carrellas, and Gabrielle Cody published on Sprinkle's (2001) website, her personal emphasis on the spiritual becomes clear. Referencing chakras and engaging more with her 'more spiritual, priestess personas', she says of her work that 'it's really been using sexuality as a theme to help us all grow and learn. In the workshops and performances we facilitated together for ten years we saw some incredible magic, beauty, truth, acceptance, transformations' (Sprinkle, 2001). As a primarily personal account, as opposed to one calling for wider change to the view of sex work, the book focusing on Sprinkle, edited by Gabrielle Cody

(2001), should perhaps be viewed in a different light. Yet Sprinkle has claimed to be working in part to allow people to experience the 'healing' effects of the sexual. In spite of the drastically different view of sexuality as a positive source of healing and personal growth, Sprinkle once again engages in the discourse claiming sexuality as something special and sacred to be cherished, but also to be used for personal and group benefit. Here we see a parallel between the morally conservative attitudes and 'sex positive' attitudes, appearing as mirror images yet using surprisingly similar concepts of deeply personal attitudes towards what sexuality entails.

In *Whores and Other Feminists*, Nina Hartley (1997) also expounds the use of sexuality for personal growth. Something that both Hartley (1997) and Sprinkle (2001) agree on is that sex work can be beneficial in nature for the worker and the client, providing a release from loneliness and access to sexual pleasure and gratification. However whilst Hartley declares that sex work has granted her a more positive body image and a space in which she can explore a wider range of erotic experiences, she does not avoid mentioning the material gain which is also a factor contributing to her happiness in her role. Furthermore, Hartley accepts that there are negatives attached to the industry, such as having to be aware that it can involve coming into contact with 'the seamier side of life'

(Hartley 1997, 58). This account is useful as instead of referring only to the internal reasons for and against working in the sex industry, Hartley also describes the material factors that can result in it being a reasonable choice for many people. All jobs have their negative aspects, it may simply be that for some people stripping has less than other jobs they may be qualified to do, for example. Although the account presented in *Whores and Other Feminists* is more balanced on the whole, it is still clear that Hartley does view her sexuality in the same spiritualised manner. She describes that she wants 'to teach people how to use erotic pleasure as a healing force [as a] fulfilling sex life makes all things more bearable' (Hartley 1997, 60). This view of sexuality as a healing force is in itself not necessarily problematic: the problem occurs – as I will discuss further below – when such value judgements are internalised by researchers, who may then impact the lives of women working in the sex industry or those with atypical sexual tastes.

Research

When looking at research into the sex industry it is apparent that there is a great need for reflexivity on the part of the researcher, which can often involve an examination of previous opinions on it. In Catherine Roach's (2007) book, *Stripping, Sex and Popular Culture*, she opens by describing her previous difficulties

in understanding why her friend, formerly an academic, left her job to pursue work as a lap dancer full time. Roach makes clear her initial preconceptions, allowing the reader to assess her views with full context. Roach illustrates the views of women in the industry, tying her theoretical work directly to the accounts of women working at strip clubs and information gleaned from being a non-participant observer watching the shifting fortunes of many of the women involved in her research. It is this sort of reflexive approach, based not just on engaging with theory already in existence, but also involving the generation of new theory when needed to gain further evidence of the lived experiences of women in their own terms. This, combined with triangulation with other research can allow for a space in academia where value judgements can be tested and the views of women's lived experiences to be taken into account.

In *Methods, Sex and Madness* Julia O'Connell Davidson discusses the way in which careful choice of methodological and reflexive techniques proved vital for her examination of prostitution work. As she explains, there are no easy answers or shortcuts for deciding on a methodological approach as there are inherent problems with providing a 'true' account of a person's life and the things influencing it. Pivotal in her research was noting a balance between respecting a person's own

account of their actions and the motivations behind them, whilst also noting external factors, both in terms of structural inequalities and even the impact of the researcher's class grouping (amongst other things) in garnering a very specific account of that 'truth'. As O'Connell Davidson explains, triangulation is important as it allows for a broader view of the same subject, which gives research the chance to be useful. Rather than being just one angle of one group's story, through using other research and carefully examining the methods of discourse, a picture of the various undercurrents affecting people's lives can be achieved.

A Theoretical Perspective

The examples described earlier illustrate the way in which the perceived threat of sexualisation is still linked with notions of the spiritual, in spite of the increasing use of medical and scientific phraseology to describe human experience. From a historical standpoint, the control of sexual urges has been a key point of discourse emanating from the church, suggesting that the sexual should be restricted to marriage, especially with the goal of procreation. As described by Foucault (1990), methods of discourse have shifted from being centred on the religious to scientific and medical discourses, with the state and state apparatus being used to issue the message that only constructive sexuality (procreative sex) is acceptable.

Although there has been a shift to the proliferation of scientific and medical terminology, my examples show that religious and spiritual appeals are still made. The understanding of what sexuality is and the way in which it affects humanity is still made on the basis of religious and spiritual ideals. Those not living and working within the framework of accepted sexuality often find themselves represented as non-productive and anti-social (Colosi 2010; Cross and Matheson 2006; Roach 2007).

The psychoanalytical tradition has long been the proponent of the view that sexuality defines a person on a very deep level, providing further support for those making an essentialist critique of sexuality. When assessing a person's goals and aims and the impact of their thinking on not just themselves but on the world around them, it is their sexuality which is examined and spoken of (Foucault 1990; Freud 1997[1900]; Gagnon and Simon 1974). People are defined by their sexual actions and desires. These definitions can have a profound impact on people's lives, as in the example of homosexuality, people can be considered intrinsically different on the basis of which gender they are sexually attracted to and/or engage in sexual activities with (Gagnon and Simon 1974). There is little doubt that this propensity to encourage discussion of the sexual using accepted definitions and categories is the driving

force behind the ubiquity of sexuality in discourse concerning selfhood (Foucault 1990; Gagnon and Simon 1974). It is the spiritualised element to those discourses which can create a polarising effect, with some people at least publicly corresponding to accepted sexual identities and others being aligned with maladjusted or immoral sexualities (Goffman 1968).

There have been criticisms of the negative appraisal of diffuse sexualities. When reviewing McNair's (2002) work on 'striptease culture', it at first appears that his notions on the 'democratisation of desire' radically challenge the former view of sexuality as something which needs to be controlled and validated. However, McNair places a heavy emphasis on the self-defining aspect of the sexual, referring to sexual cultures and sexuality themselves as categories with minimal questioning of their validity. His statement that 'sex matters' is qualified by the role sex plays in society, from the biological imperative to procreate, to its highly influential status in relation to culture. These are things that I would not argue against, yet I question the heavy emphasis on the self-revelatory role in people's lives that McNair places such emphasis on. As Foucault explains, these ideas are the rails upon which our discourse is currently set, steering us in very particular directions in the course of our investigations. McNair's focus seems in a sense

inevitable as it restricts itself in the same manner; instead of claiming that the proliferation of sexualised discourses (both in text and image) are negative, he claims that people who are defined through particular sexual proclivities are free in a way that they were not before. This sense of the inner self gaining acceptance is one which is common to most writings on this subject, without questioning the nature of sexual discourse on a more fundamental level. The spiritual may not be writ large upon the analysis, but it still remains in the subtext, replacing the 'wrong', with 'right'. Sex work purely as a means to make money is covered, but only briefly, and one senses that this is perceived as a minor note. This is understandable as few people engage in sex work on this level, or at least we know of few, but this is a discussion that would open up the range of exploration of the matter. Allowing discussion on a more theoretical level, for example examining essentialising tendencies in the language we use, would allow us to see beyond the view of sexuality as a deep and defining characteristic of human nature. As McNair notes in his opening discussion, sex is as important as food in many senses, especially when noting prerequisites for the continuation of the human race – yet we are rarely defined by our taste in food.

Summary

Even from the time of the Victorian's religious and medi-

calised judgements on sexuality, we can see a clear focus on particular groups and acts which are problematised. This discourse has continued largely unquestioned, and has been examined on some levels by Foucault (1990) in *The History of Sexuality*. Yet it is only with the examination of this discourse, unpicking and examining the assumptions underpinning it, that we are able to assess which ideas are founded in empirical data and which are the constructs of our culture. Without a broad understanding of the multifaceted nature of women's experiences in the sex industry, media coverage based upon a narrow view of social norms can be more deeply embedded, even in legislature, such as that controlling the production of 'extreme' pornography for example (House of Commons 2007).

In feminism, both in academia and in the media, we can see a spiritualisation of sexuality evidenced by the discourse used. Radical feminists have called for the criminalisation of pornography, representing it as the acceptance of women's subordinate position in society and the dominance of patriarchal violence. The description of the lower status of women has been linked to the expectation for her to give up something private, something deeply personal, as described by Levy (2006). In less radical accounts we can still see the sexual described as an intrinsically private part of the self; the baring of which means the

loss of self on the part of the women involved. The highly publicised nature of some of these accounts (for example that of Ariel Levy) has an effect on the wider public perception of sexuality, in spite of selective use of empirical and documentary evidence. Even moving to the political left of feminism, considering the perspective of women who see the sex industry as something with great potential for positive benefits, the sexual is viewed as a spiritual part of the self in many instances. I call into question the validity of these assumptions and whether they are excluding other voices from the discussion on sexuality and what it means. Some women may perhaps simply find prostitution or lap dancing a convenient and preferable alternative to other minimum wage work. What one person finds demeaning, and another empowering, may for some be a purely rational choice based on material gain. The value judgements made by commentators and researchers should be evaluated, and I call for more reflexive research, particularly that which provides the opportunity to generate new theory as opposed to merely replicating theory in a tick-box manner. The analysis of theory and discourse already in the academic and public domain is important, but so too is the continued generation of new theory, and gathering the accounts of more women working in the sex industry. Once this research enters the public domain

in the same manner as government reports and popular feminist texts, we may see more potential to challenge reckless legislation by governments attempting to pacify voters. The spirituality of sex may be important to some, indeed it may be important to most, however it is ultimately more important not to accept this as a common sense answer to all questions on sexuality.

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Peripher realities: Porous Bodies; Porous Borders

The “Crisis” of the Transient in a Borderland of Lost Ghosts

Liam Hilton

The aim of the paper is to investigate the position of the transient in its ill/legal immigrant, colonised, refugee forms, particularly through the mestiza. These porous bodies exist in a world that attempts to create borders, both physical, legal and geographical, which has led to an increasing number of spaces where states of exceptions preside and a borderland consciousness has emerged. These marginalised and liminal spaces deserve analytical attention not only for what they reveal of the people that exist within them but, also, what they expose of the people who exist outside of the liminal.

The human is clearly not conceived within human rights as these “rights” are not equally given over to all human beings. It would seem that one is only truly human if others recognise the individual as human; therefore, humanity is conditional and not guaranteed. Agamben’s notion of the homo sacer, Avery Gordon’s ghost and Achille Mbembe’s shadow are all theories explicated in this paper to define those marginalised, subjugated and cut off from a world of human recognition. Using Agamben’s state of exception and camp, Mbembe’s colony, Anzaldúa’s borderland and Coutin’s space of nonexistence, the spaces and states in which those without rights are situated are analysed and revealed to demonstrate the sheer number of those considered sub-human, non-human or homo sacer.

The paper concludes with a suggestion of how human rights and equality can be bolstered through a post-humanist feminism based upon Braidotti’s philosophical nomadism via feminist protest and Anzaldúa’s autohistorias.

Keywords: borderland, homo sacer, mestiza, state of exception, transient

Introduction

An entrenched apathy develops watching the countless lives, down-trodden or departed, seen through the looking-glass of a television or read in the small-print of a newspa-

per. Lives seem expendable, or at least, Global South lives become consumable. Pictures, like jailbait, tantalise with the life and death drama of the Cause or Event that happens *there* (but not *here*). As

Žižek states: 'the distance which separates Us from Them, from their reality, is maintained: the real horror happens there, not here' (2002:13). There is one thing at the centre of every inequality depicted in the West by numerous Cartesian dichotomies, men/women, white/black, heterosexual/homosexual, bourgeoisie/proletariat, Christian/Muslim; the locus of all these intersectional categorisations is the human body. The emphasis on each and every one of the multiplicity of identities and categorisations is through the ambiguous classification of 'human'. Therefore, it is crucial to analyse what exactly the human is. Who is human? Who is sub-human or non-human? As Dean writes: 'what is at issue here is not so much what human beings really are or have become but how they think about who they are, and the consequences of this' (1996:210).

In this paper, I wish to highlight the social precarity and subordination of the transient body by the State due to its destabilisation of hegemonic discourse surrounding prevalent notions of contamination, invasion and biopolitical control. I use examples such as Anzaldúa's gendered analysis of *mestizaje* from her seminal text entitled *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1999) to explicate the transient body in its colonised, immigrant and refugee forms. I conclude with how I feel that the field of gender is essential in its ability to offer theoretical viewpoints

such as philosophical nomadism that can transcend, destabilise and subvert the hegemonic and provide pragmatic alternatives to resisting social inequality. The study of society, be it Sociology, Cultural Studies or Gender Studies, is always at its best when it is transformative. The need to be transformative and societally self-analytical is particularly crucial as it appears we are entering the beginning of a generation of cuts which usually comes accompanied with a burgeoning socio-political conservatism. I would argue that it is with a post-humanist feminism, based upon Braidotti's (1994) philosophical nomadism alongside feminist protest and Anzaldúa's *autohistorias*, that we can develop a greater level of equality for those marginalised and excluded. Autohistoria here refers to the use of a variety of mediums to express oneself from personal narratives and poetry to testimonials and art. It is about finding alternative forms of expression that do not prevent those who have not been trained in an academic discursive tongue from expressing themselves and highlighting the intricate complexities they face to a wider audience. As Anzaldúa states: '[we are]...participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system...I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining' (1999:103). It is those that exist on the periphery of reality, in the marginal spaces of

society, in permanent or temporary liminality and precarity that are the focus of this paper. The analysis of porousness envisions the body as being less solid than it may appear, perhaps even less so than borders. The porousness of borders can be seen in both physical land borders as well as the borders of social marginality (e.g. the borders of the *camp*, the borders that demarcate territoriality, and the borders that delineate social categorisations).

Through a decidedly poststructuralist conceptual framework, the foundation of this paper is based on Giorgio Agamben's conceptualisations of *Homo sacer*, *state of exception* and the *camp* alongside Foucault's notions of *biopower* and *governmentality* to demonstrate what Agamben describes as the 'old trinity composed of the state, the nation (birth), and land' (1995;1998:176). Any understanding of the human body requires an understanding of its relationship with the State as citizen/non-citizen. Through the 'prototype' body of the transient, examples such as the Chicano will be offered to provide evidence of the particular relationship between the State and the human to help reveal what has occurred in the developing ideologies in the categorisation of human. The aim is not to construct an overarching discourse to elucidate a broader theory of humanity. Foucault (1989:251) once stated: 'one of the "most destructive habits of modern thought...

is that the moment of the present is considered in history as the break, the climax, the fulfilment"' (Barry et al 1996:4). Likewise, this paper is not trying to provide the argument for a modern 'crisis' or a sudden shift or change in the conception of humanity – even if it is often perceived as such. A 'history of the present' is a fallacy that attempts to disconnect the present 'postmodernity' from previous eras, implicating some fragility in the present, whilst ignoring the differences between cultures in a globalised world: 'There is rather a multiplicity of presents, a multiplicity of ways of experiencing those presents and a multiplicity of the "we" who are subjects of that experience' (Dean 1996:210). It is necessary to be reflexive and consider the relativism of the multiplicities of states of exceptions and types of *homo sacer* that can be identified across the world. Rose (1995) states, 'to speak of a critical ontology of ourselves requires...an immediate qualification. First, what is at issue is a history of localized and heterogeneous ontologies that do not add up to either a single form of human being or a single present' (cited by Dean 1996:210). Merely, it is a reflection of the myriad of juxtaposed socio-political situations that have led to a proliferation of contemporary prominent spaces of exceptionality. These spaces, and the life within them, have nuanced differences in their causes occurring in a globalised world of different geopolitical loca-

tions and socioeconomic circumstances. Globalisation has led to an increasing divergence in identity formation and a multiplicity of subjectivities that, while offering opportunities for self-actualisation, has led to identities becoming increasingly de-centred, dislocated, fragmented and placed in a sense of 'crisis' (Hall cited by Dean 1996:213). To investigate this, it is first necessary to look at recent historical developments and the State's role in facilitating this perceived 'crisis' in its biopoliticisation of the body and through its creation of states of exception.

Agamben and Foucault: The Biopoliticisation of the Human

The disparity in the conceptualisation of humanity has been gathering speed since at least the beginning of the 20th Century, but has its roots in developments much earlier. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (*'La déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen'*), written in 1789, is recognised as one of the first texts written in regards to human rights. Brought about by the socio-political upheaval of the French Revolution, it intended to set out human rights and the rights of the citizen. The document is ambiguous as to whether the rights of man and the rights of citizen are two separate distinctions or one and the same. Sieyès states, 'natural and civil rights are those rights for whose preservation society is formed, and political rights are those rights by

which society is formed...it would be best to call the first ones passive rights, and the second ones active rights...All inhabitants of a country must enjoy the rights of passive citizens...all are not active citizens' (cited by Agamben 1995/1998:130). Therefore, it would seem that there is a dichotomy between life as a physiological being and life as a political being, whereby the subject as bare life (*zoē*) becomes citizen and 'the bearer of sovereignty' (Agamben 1995/1998:128). Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality*, states that 'what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life' is *bio-power* (Foucault 1976/1979:143). Foucault summarised that the process of mechanisms and calculations of State power turns politics into *biopolitics*, 'for millennia...man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics calls his existence as a living being into question' (cited by Agamben 1995/1998:3).

Historically, sovereign powers wanted to invade and control other lands; contemporaneously, the attention has turned to invading and controlling other bodies. Capitalism's dominance would, arguably, have not been possible without the disciplinary control of biopower which, combined with new technologies, helped create

Foucault's 'docile bodies' that could be moulded, shaped and structured in a way better suited to the State's need (Agamben 1995/1998:3). The 'docile body' ushers forth the biopolitical analysis of power, whereby biological existence becomes reflected in political existence (Foucault 1976/1979:142). Foucault's analysis of power as being fluid and able to move in all directions marked a distinct split in the previous theorisations of power which usually only recognised vertical juridico-institutional power from the State to the people and vice versa. However, Foucault recognised the ability for power to move horizontally too. Power is exchanged in every interpersonal relationship and, through these experiences, power has the ability to mould as 'power penetrates subjects' very bodies and forms of life' (Agamben 1995/1998:5). With a Foucauldian approach to power, we can now look at Agamben's theorisations on the *homo sacer* and the power dynamics involved with the sovereign.

The figure of *Homo sacer* originates within an Ancient Roman law that dictated that, as the sentence to a crime, one could be reduced to bare life; unable to be sacrificed to the gods or murdered but equally free to be killed at will (Agamben 1995/1998:8). This may seem contradictory but it demonstrates that the individual who has bare life has been removed from political law as well as religious sanctity. Carl

Schmitt defines sovereignty as: 'he who decides on the state of exception' (Agamben 1995/1998:11). The state of exception is the space in which emergency powers are invoked and normal juridical rule is suspended. Therefore, the sovereign demarcates where *homo sacer* exists and, through the biopolitical power over bare life, distinguishes the state of exception by which bare life becomes included in the polis through its very exclusion (*Sovereign -> Biopower -> Homo sacer -> Exception -> Sovereign*). Paradoxically, the sovereign states that nothing is outside of the law whilst, simultaneously, demarcating the state of exception thereby placing himself outside of the law (that "nothing" is outside of): 'the sovereign...is "at the same time outside and inside the juridical order"' (Schmitt cited by Agamben 1995/1998:15). Therefore, within the concealed nucleus of Western biopolitics, bare life establishes the political in its exclusion but is included through its exclusion from the polis: 'The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintains itself in relation to an exteriority' (Agamben 1995/1998:18). Therefore, it is bare life (sacred life) which is exposed to death that constitutes the original political element as opposed to natural simple life (Agamben 1995/1998:88). Through a *relation of exception*, it can be demonstrat-

ed that sovereignty is founded upon a 'double exclusion' which takes the form of a 'zone of indistinction' (Agamben 1995/1998:83). I will now utilise analyses of transient bodies to provide examples of spaces of exception in which biopoliticisation and governmentality have led to the formulations of bare life.

Anzaldúa's Mestiza and Mbembe's Shadow: The Colonised Body

The transient body, in the confines of this paper, covers both bodies that are hybridised through colonisation and occupation (such as Anzaldúa's *mestizaje* (1999:27)) as well as those who are illegal immigrants, refugees and slaves. I would argue these figures are a form of bare life, also known as *homo sacer* (sacred man); the life 'who may be killed and yet not sacrificed' (Agamben 1995/1998:8). If the sovereign, or State, is intrinsically connected with those it relegates to bare life, then we must question the borderland that they exist within. The emphasis is on an analysis of the borderland, as a state of exception or space of nonexistence, and the effect it has on the life that exists in this interstitial locality. Anzaldúa defines the borderlands as: 'physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory' (1999:x) whilst Gupta and Ferguson (1997) define the borderland as not a: 'fixed top-

ographical site between two other fixed locales (nations, societies, cultures) but an interstitial zone of de-territorialization and hybridization' (Coutin 2003:171). The two definitions together recognise the geographical and socio-political aspects of the borderland space. The space can be a dangerous one to cross, as passing through any space of liminality is. Anzaldúa notes how President Reagan identified the border between Mexico and America as a frontline war zone (1999:33) which means that those who cross from Mexico into America end up living in a no-man's-borderland, caught between resistance and deportation (Anzaldúa 1999:34). There are various reasons why those who exist in transience would risk crossing, and existing, in such spaces.

Anzaldúa analyses the U.S.-Mexican border where the Global South meets the First World, in which the border '*es una herida abierta*' [is an open wound] that: 'grates...and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture' (my translation, 1999:25). This *mestizaje* border culture has been formed through the historical entanglements of the two States Mexico and America, whereby America essentially annexed parts of Northern Mexico and, in the process, split a people from their homeland. The *mestiza* are formed of the hybridisation between the Indians of Mexico

and Yucatán and the Spanish *conquistadors*. Later, after American acquisition and hybridisation, with Anglo-Saxon influence, the *mestiza* became Chicanos (Anzaldúa 1999:27). The border culture is in a constant 'state of transition' where the *mestiza* are seen as transgressors and alien. This identification not only leaves them in a land that does not want them but also without juridical recognition so that the land becomes a state of exception, yet shared alongside those who are recognised: the American citizens.

The space of illegality defines the space that is legal. Coutin argues that the space of illegality is necessary in its classification of the legal space. 'Defining that which is illegal simultaneously indicates what is legal, determining who is to be excluded also reveals the criteria for inclusion, and borders could not exist unless there was something to divide' (2003:173). Paradoxically, this binary division of the negated defining the legitimate, ties in with Agamben's conception of the state of exception as the space which defines that which it is not: the sovereign and juridical sphere of recognition (1995/1998:6). The borderland, where those considered 'alien' within a territory exist, are often involved in the inadvertent legitimisation of the State through engaging within the informal economy. The space of illegality is arguably necessary, though discursively destabilising for the State, as it requires the 'alien' to en-

gage in clandestine productivity that helps support the economy without a demand on welfare benefits. For example, Mexican border-crossers work in unregulated factories known as *maquiladoras* (Saldívar-Hull in *Borderlands* 1999:3). The *maquiladoras* export factories provide cheap labour for American industry. However, it is not just the First World State that benefits from the income; untaxed income can provide substantial remittances for the Global South countries, such as the Philippines and Mexico (Coutin 2003:192).

Many women from countries such as Mexico and the Philippines work as live-in maids for American citizens, whereby the American citizens themselves accept the 'alien' for their own labour purposes in opposition to official State acceptability. The maids earn as little as \$15 per week and experience social isolation, concern of being deported if caught, and suffer serious health problems. Ong considers the maids a form of *neoslavery*, living in 'zones of exception', wherein foreign domestic workers are 'sub-human' (2007:196). The Mexican women are typically at most risk, often having to pay a smuggler to help in getting across the border from Mexico to America. 'Often the *coyote* (smuggler) doesn't feed her for days or let her go to the bathroom. Often he rapes her or sells her into prostitution. She cannot call on... state health or economic resources

because she doesn't know English and she fears deportation. American employers are quick to take advantage of her helplessness' (Anzaldúa 1999:34). The absence of legal recognition leads to a lack of protection and encourages 'aliens to go further underground, into the shadows, whereby they may find themselves engaging in greater levels of illegality, e.g. drug-use or sex work, to earn money or to escape their situation. The industries that undocumented migrants can become involved in leave them open to being taken advantage of by informal employers in often low-income occupations which prevent upward social mobility and leave refugees and migrants vulnerable.

People-trafficking for the purposes of labour is not a new phenomenon. Forced migration has occurred for hundreds of years. The forced migration that arguably has had the most effect on a global scale was the movement of Africans to the Caribbean and North America which has shaped contemporary demographics. Mbembe describes the experiences of slaves from plantations and demonstrates how they were effectively 'shadows' suffering a triple loss: 'loss of a "home", loss of rights over his or her body, and loss of political status. This triple loss is identical with absolute domination, natal alienation, and social death (expulsion from humanity altogether)' (2003:21). The plantation slave, kept for labouring, is kept in

a '*state of injury*': 'a phantomlike world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity' (Mbembe 2003:21). Without any political engagement, the slave represents the bare life commodified through biopoliticised techniques of power that gives ownership of the slave as a possession for the plantation owner whilst the colony represents the site in which the sovereign exercises power exterior to the law (Mbembe 2003:22-3).

The power relations of the colony are particularly important given that the majority of the world was colonised by a handful of European states. If Africa was one of the major geopolitical sites of colonisation then Africans themselves were the body of colonisation – their commodification scarred upon their bodies. The globalised power relations and depictions of humanity given to decolonised nations still have a residue effect through the leftover set of written social and spatial relations. '*Colonial occupation* itself was a matter of seizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographical area – of writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations' (Mbembe 2003:25). This can be often seen in the media portrayal of Global South countries as 'backward' with the citizens 'repressed' and 'victims'. This victimisation is less about demonstrating the West as saviours and more about depicting the Global South as somehow less than human. The sovereignty involved in

colonising relegated the colonised to a third zone between subjecthood and objecthood (2003:26); the colonised who exist in this interstitial space are considered '*savage life*', equated to any other '*animal life*', and represented as: "natural" human beings who lack the specifically human character, the specifically human reality' (Mbembe 2003:24). This third zone can be seen as a borderland in which the slaves and the colonised are not quite human and not quite animal, not quite subjects but not quite objects. It is this dichotomy which becomes the root of violence in the colony through the separation of the coloniser, as human, and the colonised, as *savage*.

The Migrant and Refugee Body: The Ghost in the Borderland

Now I wish to briefly move on to another form of the transient body embodied in the 'illegal' migrant and refugee. In 2000, international migrants numbered 175 million, with 1 in every 35 people in the world constituting an international migrant, whilst there were 17 million refugees in the world (Jolly and Reeves 2005:6). These numbers are staggering when considering the invisibility of immigrants and refugees. There is almost no legal recognition of the illegal immigrant and refugee, who simply disappear into 'spaces of nonexistence'. Coutin, studying Salvadoran illegal immigrants in the US, stated her characterisation of the borderland as a: 'space of non-

existence...because it divides the legal and the illegal, the legitimate and the illegitimate, the overt and the clandestine. Legality is spatialized in that those who do not exist legally are imagined to be "outside," in an "underground," or "not there" (2003:172). This absence can be seen as the invisibility of *homo sacer*. When the legality of citizenship is removed, it is as if the physical body disappears with it. Illegal immigrants and refugees can become exiled from their home by the threat of death and encamped in detention centres in the new State they find themselves in demonstrating how the space of nonexistence is also a space of violence. The undocumented immigrants are denied legal rights, restricted in movement and identification without full personhood, excluded from the original State and rejected from the new State creating a double-bind of ostracism.

This absence, arguably, leaves an apparition of the originating culture. Utilising Gordon's conception of the 'ghost' as a sociological haunting, one can see how these transient bodies are also ghosts; 'ghosts are characteristically attached to the events, things, and places that produced them in the first place' (2008:xix). Thus, it is difficult for illegal immigrants to move past the loss of their former selves creating an apparition of what was lost leaving their identities torn, split in two, and severed. This is not just

the case for those who have been forced into transience through migration or State occupation. Gordon's theory of the haunting of loss which creates the ghost also aptly reflects Mbembe's shadow plantation slave. It also can be seen in those who experienced the *camp*; they will never have forgotten the effect of being the subject of biopoliticisation and instigated into bare life, even after redemption, legal recognition and citizenship resumed. However, it is not just what is left behind that becomes an apparition; it is also the subject themselves. The illegal immigrant, often banned from returning home and rejected from the new State, becomes a ghost in themselves. As Gordon states, 'the ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure' (2008:8), and, 'to be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects' (2008:190). Illegal immigrants become intrinsically tied to their past through their exclusion from the present; the exclusion both spatial as well as temporal. Anzaldúa argues that 'a borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary' (Anzaldúa 1999:25). It is this very emotional residue that leaves a void in the subject that haunts. In this effect, the *homo sacer* is both the apparition and the haunted. If the undocumented are ghosts, then the space of nonexistence is the graveyard; the place where juridical rights are buried. The muted graveyard is pro-

liferate with ghosts who demand attention; the documented ignorant or wilfully blind to the *homo sacer* around them.

Refusal and Dissent: The Language of Resistance

A key aspect of the 'alien' existing in the 'muted graveyard' is that, without any legal recognition or social rights, they are unable to speak or, more importantly, be listened to. If one considers the millions of refugees and migrants, abovementioned, the silence is deafening. Of *Mexicana* and Chicana women, Anzaldúa writes, '*en boca cerrada no entran moscas*' ("Flies don't enter a closed mouth") (1999:76). This poetic statement refers to the expectation for women to be quiet and respectful, as the individual exists first as kin and last as self (Anzaldúa 1999:40). The denigration by the hegemonic sovereign culture leads to the emasculation of *Mexicano* and Chicano males, which encourages hypermasculinity and the redirection of unreleased frustrations on Chicana and *Mexicana* women. This interestingly demonstrates how the sovereign culture degrades the individual through its treatment of the wider minority group, whereas the minority group denigrate individuals within their own minority, targeting women, homosexuals and transgendered people. This flow of negation from the sovereign down to the marginalised of the minority group creates fractures that

produce tensions in the traditional gendered relations and strict condemnation of those who dissent. One example of this fracture can be seen in how many Latinos consider the border language created through the Chicanos as a bastardisation of Spanish (Anzaldúa 1999:80). However, it is crucial to recognise border languages as a living language which emerges from a border identity within a border reality. It is effectively a personality produced through border living. Anzaldúa's refusal to apologise for her language or to bow to demands for silence (1999:81) is testament to the resistance of border people, from Chicanos to Palestinians. As Coutin states, 'because they defy categorization, borderlands have been seen as sites of resistance, as sources of alternatives to the status quo, as places where a *modus vivendi* that redefines the social order can be devised' (2003:171).

It is important to attempt to recognise the language of resistance so as not to ignore the agency that an actor can have in counteracting an oppressive environment. Resistance can come through polyglots who, being between languages, have an advantageous position for deconstructing identity (Braidotti 1994:12). Resistance can also emerge through verbal protest in the form of a refusal, or physical protest in the form of self-immolation, aggression, or martyrdom. Paul Gilroy advises that we must recognise 'the

anti-discursive and extralinguistic ramifications of power at work in shaping communicative acts' (cited by Mbembe 2003:21). Refugees and immigrants may be ignored and forced into invisibility but they do still have memories and a history that does not disappear even when they themselves often seem to. It is through this that a rooting, or grounding, point of reference can be found from which the 'alien' can attempt to reinforce their own identity free of the negation of the sovereign. Those who are placed in a state of exception and therefore positioned 'outside' the law are, in a manner of speaking, free (Coutin 2003:190).

The 'freedom' of those in states of exception can be found in the ability to influence the sovereign through their mutual inclusion/exclusion. However, rather than thinking of inclusion and exclusion in dichotomous terms, it is more useful to see this positioning as a 'folded force'. Gilles Deleuze (1988:100-1) coined the term 'folded force' to refer to the bending of the outside through a series of practical exercises where interiority is nothing other than the fold and the folding of 'peristaltic' movement of the outside. As Dean explains, 'one might speak of a folding of exterior relations of authority to sculpt a domain that can act on and of itself but which, at the same time, is simply the inside marked out by that folding, an Inside of the folding of an Outside...the establishment of an interior domain is thus

dependent on the enfolding of external authority' (1996:222). Thus, one can see how states of exceptions are by no means separate or external to the sovereign *polis*. They are one and the same, folds of the same body, which appear external only because they are exterior to an interior rather than being removed. Marginality of minority groups and their existences in liminal spaces can be seen as an effect of their being on the outside of the interior as opposed to excluded into a separate sphere linked through its propping up of the sovereign sphere.

Agamben's theorisation of the state of exception is dystopic inasmuch as it insinuates that states of exception are continuous and multiplying. However, Deleuze's 'folded force' emphasises a more optimistic conclusion to the state of exception. If the state of exception is merely located on the exterior of the interior then the exterior exception is included in the sovereign interior through its exclusion on the exterior. This nuanced difference of exterior exception as opposed to exclusive inclusion allows for the realisation that those in a state of exception, the bare life, can regain inclusion through repoliticisation. One can see then how there are, in fact, 'gradations of existence' (or exception) with a multiplicity of non-existences and not just a binary of existence and nonexistence (Coutin 2003:173). This fits aptly within Deleuze's conception of a *folded force*, as op-

posed to Agamben's binary spheres of sovereign and exception; the gradations of existence merely refer to the locality within the fold. The further from the centre, which could be seen as being 'mainstreamed', the closer to the exterior, or being 'marginalised'. Therefore, it makes more sense to think of the 'alien' as moving in and out of existence, existing simultaneously in multiple ways depending on the 'frame of reality' being used (Coutin 2003:173).

Philosophy of the Desert: Towards a Modern Nomadism

In recognising the reality of 'gradations of existence' within a 'folded force', one could argue that it is not just the transient body that is alienated from our geopolitical environment to varying degrees, as Braidotti recognises, we all are. 'The truth of the matter is that, from the moment you were born, you have lost your "origin"' (1994:14). It is important to recognise the level to which one is alienated varies greatly upon a number of intersecting categorisations, privileges and prejudices which constitutes one's positioning within the gradation. This difference in position within the 'folded force' creates different barriers that can prevent or hinder individuals from attaining equality or inclusion. The question of how to counteract the biopoliticisation of the state, objectification of the marginalised and the re-inclusion of states of exception as the norm can be found in the no-

tion of a philosophical nomadism. As Braidotti states, 'philosophical nomadism is a creative process... nomadic becomings are rather the affirmation of the unalterably positive structure of difference, meant as a multiple and complex process of transformation, a flux of multiple becomings, the play of complexity, or the principle of not-One' (2006:145). The space in-between, the exceptions and areas of transit, can be described as a *desert* (Braidotti 1994:20); a place of alienating solitude but also one freed of roads and preconceived routes of consciousness to which one can add their own disruptive and unexpected directions of identity. The location is both geographical and a space defined by language and socio-political relations. It can be found historically in the colonised nation-states and in the plantation slave; it can be found contemporaneously in the neoslaves of global cities (Ong 2007), in the airports as transit zone camps (Braidotti 1994:20), and it can be seen and felt in the multiculturalism *within* the same culture (as well as *between* cultures) (Braidotti 1994:12-13).

Conceptual nomadism is a way to help realise the nonfixity of borders within the state of exception and to transgress those divisions through the transmigration of intellectual academic concepts and the multiplicity of real-life interconnections. Philosophical nomadism, as a term, may be the language of

academia and the privilege of those who exist within such a sphere to debate and discuss. However, the oppressed, the marginalised and excluded still desire freedom and strive for it, regardless of whether they use the same language to word their thoughts and actions as the scholarly tongue might. Without failing to recognise that many immigrants and refugees' movements are directly or indirectly dictated by socioeconomic and political forces outside of their control, the first emphasis here is on a discursive nomadism that helps break down the exclusivity of academic intellectualism and seeks to highlight states of exceptions, creating coalitions of protest and resistance with the bare life that exists within it, which then ultimately works to subvert socio-political borders. As Deleuze wrote: 'the point of being an intellectual nomad is about crossing boundaries, about the act of going, regardless of the destination. "The life of the nomad is the intermezzo...a vector of deterritorialization."' (cited by Braidotti 1994:23). Therefore, the nomad becomes a way of actualising the international dispersion and dissemination of ideas (Braidotti 1994:24). This does not mean that a nomad is unable or unwilling to create stable bases of identity; merely, subjectivity is not taken as a fixed identity. The nomad is metaphysical with a transgressive identity that is based upon a transitory nature that allows for coalitions, interconnec-

tions and resistance to hegemony and repression (Braidotti 1994:33-36).

*'Life is a bridge. Cross over it,
but build no house on it'*

Indian Proverb (Chatwin
2005:181)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the position of humanity is a complicated and nuanced concept to identify. The human is clearly not conceived within human rights as this definition cannot be said to apply to all human beings. It would seem that one is only truly human if others recognise the individual as human; therefore, humanity is conditional and not guaranteed. Agamben's notion of the *homo sacer*, Avery Gordon's *ghost* and Achille Mbembe's *shadow* are all terms used to define those marginalised, subjugated and cut off from a world of human recognition. Using Agamben's *state of exception* and *camp*, Mbembe's *colony*, Anzaldúa's *borderland* and Coutin's *space of nonexistence*, the spaces and states in which those without rights are situated within have been analysed and revealed to demonstrate the sheer number of those considered sub-human, non-human or *homo sacer*. It would appear that we are all exposed to degrees of the camp.

The best way to interrupt this sovereign/exception arrangement, and possibly offer the opportunity

to create a fairer structure in which all humans are truly recognised as equally such, seems to be through the empowerment of those who live in the borderland and the states of exceptionality. If the state of exception defines the sovereign sphere then that would imbue the excluded with a subversive power to redefine the polis. The bodies that exist within *periphrealities*, may not have the support and recognition of the law, but they are nonetheless 'steeped in power' (Butler and Spivak 2007:9). It would seem necessary to use protest if one hopes to repoliticise the *homo sacer* and to create one's own space. Protest could be found in the use of one's experience of oppression as a source of power to overcome it, to turn the negation back on itself; by sharing *autohistorias*, we can help build social communities and collectives with any number of variously subjugated peoples: 'The polylingual voices of the multi-located subjects of the global nomadic, diasporic, hybrid diversity are producing concretely grounded micro-narratives that call for a joyful kind of dissonance' (Braidotti 2006:93). These dissonant micro-narratives can be seen in Anzaldúa's belief that a *borderland consciousness* is emerging from the mixture of races, the hybridity of cultures, cross-pollinating in both a biological, racial, ideological and cultural sense (1999:108). This can be seen as a recentralising of the periphery identity. Through this hybridised collec-

tive, one could synthesise a world more free and accepting, tolerant through experiences of being oppressed and repressed, of being *homo sacer*. As Anzaldúa writes, 'I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face...to fashion my own gods out of my entrails. And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture – *una cultura mestiza* – with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture' (1999:44).

It is not merely those who exist in the borderlands and the states of exceptionality that can endeavour to produce change in the structure of the State. It is also the challenge for the politically-engaged intellectual to stand up for those who exist in the state of exception. I believe this is where Gender Studies offers an unrivalled critical lens and provides an essential destabilising discourse. There has been a prevalence of pessimism recently regarding the economic cuts and the 'crisis' of a return to a socio-political conservatism for the field of Gender Studies. However, this is arguably not a 'crisis' at all. Gender Studies has invariably worked from the periphery and never entirely accepted by mainstream discourse, even during apparent periods of social liberalisation. This epoch is merely an occasion to regroup, to refuel the 'fire in our bellies' and reach out over the walls of academia to offer support in protest and resis-

tance to non-academic and marginalised groups. This is not to speak in their place but to help in attaining recognition for those who are dehumanised beyond recognition; to help the ghosts reclaim their space. As Gordon agrees, we should, 'side with the excluded and the repressed: to develop insights gained in confrontation with injustice, to nourish cultures of resistance, and to help define the means with which society can be rendered adequate to the full breadth of its human potentialities' (Gordon xix. See also: Braidotti 1994:21). Those who are not academics and do not live in the borderland can, too, live *sin fronteras* (without borders) and exist in a 'crossroads' through activism and philosophical nomadism (Anzaldúa cited by Saldívar-Hull 1999:12). The intention is not to create a metanarrative to explicate some grander theory of humanity but to help construct the lens through which to recognise the multiplicities of states of exceptions and types of *homo sacer* that can be identified across the world. By using a post-humanist feminism based upon nomadic ethics, one could live aware of the fluidity of borders and become a modern form of nomad, existing in sedentary cities and towns, but free to traverse across lands and cultures without paranoiac possessiveness of territoriality or of rigid cultural reclusiveness. Nomadic consciousness could help the political resistance against hegemonic and exclusionary forms

of subjectivity (Braidotti 1994:23). A nomadic philosophy would loosen the obsession for geopolitical control over territory and rejects the need for normalisation of the population through discipline and control. A nomadism based upon contingency and not fixity could envision identities outside of narrow, exclusionary binaries, free of dualistic oppositions, with territories as circumstantial and difference as the norm; this would release the need to control anomalies, to try and solidify porous bodies with their trickling fluids and penetrable orifices, and to cut lines in the land and create artificial barriers in an otherwise open expanse.

'I am a turtle, wherever I go I carry "home" on my back'

Gloria Anzaldúa (1999:43)

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Intersectionality and the study of lived citizenship: a case study on migrant women's experiences in Andalusia

Daniela Cherubini

Two critical perspectives have arisen in the contemporary debate on citizenship. The first applies feminist and intersectional theory to the study of citizenship; the second focuses on the relationship between citizenship and everyday life, therefore developing a micro-sociological perspective on 'lived citizenship' (Lister et al. 2003; Lister 2005). Drawing on a theoretical framework which encompasses these two innovative directions in citizenship studies, the paper presents the main results of ethnographic research on migrant women's everyday lived experiences of citizenship in the Spanish region of Andalusia. The analysis focuses on the experiences of these subjects in relation to intimate and family life, thus providing an example of an analysis of what has been called 'intimate citizenship' (Plummer 2003). The research, carried out between 2007 and 2010, involved 40 activists from 27 migrant women's groups based in Andalusia, from both Third Countries and EU-27 Countries.

Keywords: Intersectional theory; Lived citizenship; Migrant women; Ethnography; Citizenship studies; Feminist research

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to discuss two innovative research directions that have developed in the field of gender and feminist studies that help to analyze the transformations of citizenship in contemporary societies, especially in contexts of international immigration.

The first direction applies the concept of intersectionality to the study of citizenship (Choo and Ferree 2010; Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991; McCall 2005; Nash 2008; Walby 2007). It therefore conceives

of citizenship as a gendered, racialised and classed construction, grounded on a system of stratified rights and opportunities which differentiates subjects according to their ethnicity and racialisation, gender and class position. The second is the micro-sociological perspective of 'lived citizenship' (Lister 2005; Lister et al. 2003; Lister et al. 2007), which focuses on the relationship between citizenship and everyday life, and deals with the different ways in which social actors give meaning to and practice the three key ele-

ments of citizenship (namely: rights, belonging and participation).

In the first part of the paper, these two lines of research are presented and placed in the broader context of the contemporary citizenship debate. In the second part, the paper provides an example of an empirical application, drawn from research on migrant women's experiences of citizenship, carried out as part of my PhD studies between 2007 and 2010. The example developed in this paper explores the experiences of migrants in relation to family relationships and intimacy. It shows how the granting or denial of rights, linked to the different immigration statuses of these women, lead to unequal opportunities in terms of self-determination in the field of intimacy.

New trends in citizenship studies

Since the end of the 1980s a wide debate on transformations in citizenship in contemporary societies has unfolded in the field of social and political science (Isin and Turner 2007; Kymlicka and Norman 1994). Over the last three decades, the concept of citizenship has changed, passing through a process of 'semantic expansion' (Costa 1999, VII). The contemporary debate, therefore, conceives of citizenship as a condition linked to legal status, but which also encompasses other social and cultural dimensions. It involves a set of rights and duties, but also a set of social practices through which peo-

ple express their ties with the social and political community in which they live (namely, the dimension of participation) and, lastly, it deals with a collective identity, a sense of belonging to a community (Bellamy 2008; Bellamy, Castiglione and Santoro 2004; Lister et al. 2007, 8-9). I believe that an important contribution to the development of these 'new theories' on citizenship came from the feminist thought (Plummer 2003, 60-61). In fact, since the end of the 1980s, a large body of studies have applied the theoretical and political tools of gender and feminist research to the analysis of citizenship.¹

In the following sections I present two critical perspectives which have arisen within the framework of feminist citizenship studies, discussing what, in my opinion, seem to be their main innovative points and contributions.

'Lived citizenship': a micro-sociological view of citizenship

The first perspective on which I focus pays attention to the subjective and micro-sociological dimensions of citizenship. It focuses on the ways in which social actors live, act and practice citizenship in their everyday lives. It is developed from a core of empirical works that analyse the experiences of citizenship of different categories of social actors in different contexts. In outlining the main features of this literature, it is worth mentioning that one privileged

field of research concerns representations of citizenship and forms of active citizenship among younger generations.² A growing interest is also becoming evident in relation to perceptions and practices of citizenship among migrants.³ Other studies are not limited to specific sectors of the population, but focus on representative samples.⁴ Finally, it is worth noting the collection of international studies by Naila Kabeer (2005), on the construction of citizenship 'from below' in various contexts in the global South and North.

Ruth Lister proposed the notion of 'lived citizenship' to refer to this new field of analysis (2005; Lister et al. 2003; Lister et al. 2007). Following this author, the concept 'is about how individuals understand and negotiate the three key elements of citizenship: rights and responsibilities, belonging and participation' (Lister et al. 2007, 168). In other words, the notion refers to 'the meanings that citizenship actually has in people's lives and the ways in which people's social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens' (Hall and Williamson 1999, 2; quot. in Lister et al. 2007, 167). Therefore, this perspective is interested in citizens' understandings of the meanings of citizenship, and in subjective representations of their position within the social and political community in which they live (e.g., do people perceive themselves as 'marginal citizens' or 'good citizens', 'active'

or 'passive citizens', to what extent do they wish to hold a more central position in society and politics, and so on).⁵ This line of research also focuses on the concrete practices through which people assert themselves as full citizens (e.g. by defending or expanding acquired rights, claiming new rights, attempting to access resources that make their rights substantive, participating in the social and political life where they live, and so on).

In my view, the perspective presented above has two particularly innovative aspects. First, it builds a bridge between two areas of study hitherto separate: the study of citizenship and the sociology of everyday life. The works mentioned above are an attempt to fill a clear empirical gap. In the contemporary citizenship debate, in comparison to the great proliferation of theories and normative models, the points of view of social actors are little investigated. Second, this perspective conceives of citizenship as a condition of inclusion and effective participation in a variety of spheres – the economic and labour sphere, the political sphere, the sphere of social relations, the family, the intimate sphere – paying attention to their daily facets. Following this view, individuals' experiences and representations of citizenship are shaped not only in relation to the administrative apparatus of the state or institutional politics, but also in relation to the labour market, civil society

organizations, welfare services, family relationships, and friendships and other intimate relationships. In other words, the lived citizenship perspective extends the analysis to aspects of everyday life that are usually excluded in the mainstream debate on citizenship, since they are considered to be outside the 'public' sphere and relating to the 'private' sphere. In my opinion, the genealogy with feminist thought is clear: as Lister also points out, 'understanding lived citizenship involves a challenge to the public-private dichotomy that underpinned the traditional association of citizenship with the public sphere' (Lister 2007, 55).

Dominant models of citizenship are based on a particular ideological construct: the division between 'public' and 'private' as two separate and opposite spheres of individual and collective life. The feminist critique, as it is known, has undermined this conceptual construction (Lister 1997; Sánchez Muñoz 2000; Saraceno 1988; 2008; Voet 1998; Vogel 1998; Walby 1994). First, the feminist critique demonstrates the interconnection between these two spheres, emphasizing that the resources produced and distributed in the 'private' or domestic domain affect access to and position in the 'public' sphere.⁶ Second, the feminist critique challenges the view of private, domestic and intimate spheres as non-political by definition. Equality is measured not only within politics, the labour market,

education, and in relation to welfare, but also within the family, in intimate partnerships, in social and affective relations.

Therefore, new issues acquire political relevance; relationships between genders, family relationships, forms of living together, and self-determination in sexual and reproductive life. It makes sense to think about sexual and reproductive rights and to study lived citizenship in relation to the family, sexual life and intimacy (Evans 1993; Richardson 1998; 2000; Weeks 1998). The field is thus opened to the investigation of what Ken Plummer theorizes as 'intimate citizenship' (Plummer 1995; 2003). By this term, the author means:

To suggest a cluster of emerging concerns over the rights to choose what we do with our bodies, our feelings, our identities, our relationships, our genders, our eroticisms and our representations. (Plummer 1995, 17)

Following Plummer's definition, intimacy refers to individuals' ethical stands and choices about the 'appropriate ways of living life with others' (Plummer 2003, 84). This wide-ranging 'arena of intimacies' encompasses the choices and self-determination of individuals in intimate, sexual, and family life, and the opportunity to decline relations within these fields according to their own cultural orientations and individual preferences (Plummer 2003,

13-15).

Intersectional theory and citizenship

The second innovative strand of research regards an emerging body of works that apply intersectional theory to the analysis of contemporary citizenship (Choo and Ferree 2010; Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991; McCall 2005; Nash 2008; Walby 2007). This research shows how dimensions of gender, age, class, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation and so on, shape both a person's legal status (e.g., formal citizenship, immigration status, and so on) and associated civic, social and political rights.⁷ The perspective developed in these contributions:

Recognises that the specific location of people in society – their group membership and categorical definition by gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity, 'race', ability, age or life cycle stage – mediates the construction of their citizenship as 'different' and thus determines their access to entitlements and their capacity to exercise independent agency. (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999, 5)

This perspective provides a fundamental contribution towards understanding the increasing complexity of contemporary citizenship structure, especially in destinations of international migration.

Indeed, one of the elements that has contributed to the growth of

this complexity is the political management of international migration flows (by states and international and supranational organizations), and the presence of large numbers of residents of migrant origin within a population. Different national laws not only continue to establish a fundamental legal distinction between aliens and nationals, but also introduce differences between migrant people by defining the legal forms of entry and leave to remain in a country, the requirements for the acquisition and maintenance of a regular status, the rules for family reunification, receiving welfare benefits, access to nationality, and so on. In this way, laws and politics on migration create different 'categories' of migrants, who are differentiated in terms of legal status. For instance, legal and illegal immigrants, temporary or permanent residents, European Union or Third-Country citizens, political refugees and asylum seekers, and so on.⁸ These statuses are associated with different sets of rights and duties, and also to different levels of security and the irreversibility of rights.

Lydia Morris (2002; 2003; 2009) proposes the concept of 'civic stratification' to describe this layered structure of differentiated rights and statuses; this continuum of hierarchical positions ranging from full citizenship (formal and substantive) to positions with no recognition nor enjoyment of basic rights.⁹ First developed by David Lockwood (1996),

the concept has been reformulated by Morris to denote:

A system of inequality based on the relationship between different categories of individuals and the state, and the rights thereby granted or denied. Central to such a system are the formal inclusions and exclusions which operate with respect to eligibility for rights and the informal gains and deficits that shape delivery. (Morris 2002, 144-145)

The concept forms a device that produces different 'gradations' of citizenship from two types of processes. On the one hand, the differential granting of rights by the state ('civic inclusion or exclusion'), and on the other, informal mechanisms of discrimination that hinder the enjoyment of rights ('civic gain or deficit') (Morris 2002, 7). These dynamics of discrimination are the result of interplay between different patterns of political regulation in the economic, social and cultural domains: namely, the welfare regime, the gender and care regime, the labour regime and the migration regime that characterize a particular context (Lister et al. 2007, 2-4).

In my opinion, Morris' model and, more generally, the development of an intersectional perspective introduces significant innovation to research that analyzes the links between international migration processes and changes in citizenship. This line of research, however

highly developed, suffers from two specific shortcomings that this perspective can overcome.¹⁰

The first shortcoming regards the gender blindness of research on migration and citizenship. While these studies often recognize the influence of national origins, ethnic and cultural differences or class position in migration policies, gender and sexual orientation are rarely taken into account. Moreover, these analyses tend to focus on just one or a few dimensions in isolation. In contrast, the specificity of the intersectional view lies in its call to develop an integrated analysis of all these axes of inequality, paying attention to how they intertwine and to mutual construction. In this sense, the intersectional perspective is useful to analyse how the classificatory system present in European and national immigration policies is imbued with gendered and sexualised, as well as ethnic, cultural, and class-based distinctions.

The second contribution of intersectional accounts of citizenship stems from the fact they encompass the dimension of substantial citizenship rather than simply focusing on the formal level. The mainstream tendency within research on citizenship and migration is to focus the analysis on aspects of legal status and entitlements to rights, as based on the legal structure. By contrast, the intersectional perspective on citizenship, in addition to these formal and legal aspects, considers actual

access to rights, analyzing the extent to which people are able to exercise their social, civil, and political rights. It also analyzes the different embodiments of rights, in correspondence to different locations on the continuum between citizens and non-citizens and different social positions, marked by gender, ethnicity, age, ability, and so on.

Intersectionality and the study of lived citizenship

In my view, the two key feminist perspectives discussed can complement each other and be integrated in a common research framework. Such a framework lies at the core of the research I present in the next part of the article.

This framework connects the macro and structural analysis of civic stratification with the micro-sociological analysis of the individuals' 'lived experiences of citizenship'. It pursues:

A more holistic study of citizenship, which combines analysis of citizenship regimes 'from above' with study of the cultural, social and political practices that constitute lived citizenship 'from below' (Lister et al. 2007, 168).

It is a powerful analytical tool, capable of grasping the increasingly stratified and unequal dynamic of contemporary citizenship.

Case study and methodology

In this second part of the paper,

I provide an example of an application of the research framework outlined above.

The example is drawn from ethnographic research on everyday and active citizenship among a group of migrant women, all involved in self-organized groups and voluntary associations based in Andalusia (in southern Spain). The research, carried out between 2007 and 2010, integrated two qualitative techniques: participant observation and discursive interviews. Forty migrant women from 27 associations were interviewed. The interviewees came from Third Countries¹¹ and new EU-27 Countries.¹² They hold different legal statuses¹³ and, at the time of the interview, had lived in Spain for between 2 and 25 years.¹⁴

The research explored the subjective and everyday experiences of these women, their paths towards inclusion in the receiving context, the consequences that the conference or limitation of rights had in their lives, their possibilities for action, their ability to pursue and realize their migration and life projects. It explored the self-representations of migrant women as 'citizens', 'non-citizens' or 'partial citizens' in reaction to these processes of inclusion or exclusion from the benefits and privileges linked to citizenship. The experiences of migrant women were analyzed in relation to various spheres of daily life, namely, the labour market and family work, the relationship with the administrative

system of the Spanish state, relationship with institutional politics, forms of participation in public spaces and civil society, family relations and the sphere of intimate life.

In the next section, I present some key findings related to the last field of analysis. The women's narratives are analysed with a focus on the organisation and reorganisation of their family lives and affective ties within the immigration context, as well as on their strategies for living these relationships in accordance with their wishes. The core analytical question deals with the consequences that inclusion and exclusion from rights has on the family and intimate lives of these women: in their personal experiences, self-representations and self-determination in the intimate sphere. A second objective of the analysis is to underline the similarities and differences among these experiences, connecting them the different positions the women occupy within the stratified structure of statuses and rights that characterises the Spanish context.

Migrant women's experiences of intimate citizenship

As already mentioned, the concept of intimate citizenship has been proposed to account for a transformation in the contents and meanings of citizenship in contemporary societies. It highlights how life choices and issues related to the intimate dimension of existence – questions commonly regarded as

private – are increasingly subject to public regulation: through state policies, but also through the production of discourses and public narratives on identities and other 'moral struggles' and their circulation in the spheres of the media, civil society, and politics (Plummer 2003, 95-116). The power of this public regulation, and especially state regulation, is stronger and more evident for migrants and migrant women. The stories collected show how migrant women are obliged to negotiate their projects and expectations related to family life and their relationships with partners and children within a field of possibilities whose borders are limited by law. This frame of 'institutional discrimination' (Cachón Rodríguez 1995; 2009), resulting from immigration laws and policies, constrains their ability to self-determination in relation to intimate aspects of their lives.

The Spanish rules governing family reunification place restrictions on the right to family unity, limiting enjoyment of this right to those who fulfil certain requirements.¹⁵ According to Spanish law, the non-EU citizen who wants to apply for family reunification must have resided legally in Spain for at least one year and be in possession of an independent residence permit of at least another year.¹⁶ He or she must also demonstrate to have sufficient financial resources and adequate housing. In addition, in cases of reunification of spouses, Spanish law gives the

reunited person a residence permit, but not a work permit.¹⁷ In this way, it tends to produce a state of economic and legal dependency among these people and implicitly assumes that most are women (Gil Araújo 2010; Mestre i Mestre 1999; 2005). These norms seem to shape roles and relationships within the family (in particular, relations between spouses) in line with the model of the single-income nuclear family, based on the rigid division between roles related to production (male) and reproduction (female). In my view, this tendency provides a glimpse of the extent to which Spanish immigration policies are rooted in and reflect the gendered divide between the public and private spheres. However, Spain is not an isolated case: different contributions have pointed out the gendered dimension of immigration management in EU countries (Lister et al. 2007; Kofman 2004; Kraler and Bonizzoni 2010). In this view, migrant men and women are cast in different roles and charged with different tasks and responsibilities, linked to productive and reproductive work. They are thus placed in different locations within the stratified system of statuses, rights and duties which constitute the space of citizenship.

In this frame, migrant women's choices concerning intimate life (for instance, the choice to divorce a spouse who facilitated their entry into Spain) appear to be bound to advantages and disadvantages per-

taining to residence documents, as well as chances of economic independence outside the family. For example, Juana recounts how concern over losing her regular status made it more difficult for her to decide to leave her husband:¹⁸

Yes, things weren't going that well but... I put up with it a bit, I tried... well, at the beginning, you know... Apart from... what would I have done alone? Why create problems for myself [I told myself] that I didn't even have a job. And then that I wasn't so smart! [...] I was afraid of losing my permit.

[Int. 21, 45 year old from Equatorial Guinea, lives alone, has three children]

While concerns over economic independence can be seen as a widespread experience linked to the women's structural disadvantage in the Spanish labour market, the concern for 'documents' is something that marks a distance between the experiences of migrant women (especially from Third Countries) and native women.¹⁹

Aside from cases of family reunification, more general rules governing the entry and residence of non-EU people also seek to steer family and intimate choices when taking into account administrative constraints. In a context of restrictive rules, marriage with a Spanish or EU citizen is one of the easiest ways to access residence and, later, nationality. The choice to marry may thus be

made not only to follow a personal project or desire (for instance, giving the relationship a socially recognized form, promising eternal love or whatever else leads people to marry), but to acquire a more secure and beneficial legal status. For instance, Bibiana is a woman from a Latin American country who moved to Spain some years ago to move in with her partner (the man who was her husband at the time of the interview). In her narrative of her early time in Spain, the way in which she accounts for the decision to get married, despite wishing simply to live together, stands out:

In April, I met this man. [...] And we carried on, as boyfriend and girlfriend, for a year and a half. [...] And then we decided that ... either we end it or I would come here [to Spain]. [...] So we decided that I would come, that we would live together, so we could see how things went. And... we got married. Obviously, because otherwise how could I manage with the documents? [...] My idea, of course, was not to sit around with my arms folded, it was to find a job and do something. But since I was not really young, it was '96 I was ... if I'm 43 now ... well, in short, there was no other way.

[Int. 16, 43 year old, from Colombia, lives with partner and one child]

These excerpts from the interviews suggest that Spanish migra-

tion politics can drive non-EU migrant women to build and maintain family forms and arrangements that approximate the model of a nuclear family, that is based on marriage (in the 'traditional' form, i.e. heterosexual marriage) and on the gendered division of productive and reproductive work between the partners. A condition of dependency is created - a dependency that, as we have seen, is not just economic, but also legal. This element marks a strong inequality between migrants (at least until naturalization) and native people. Yet, it also introduces differences and inequalities among migrants themselves, since the power of these constraints and the extent of the limitation of rights differs according to the socio-economic and migratory profile of the woman. In particular, it depends on her national origin and the economic and professional position she occupies in Spain. First, most restrictions of rights concern non-EU migrants, distinguishing their condition from that of EU migrants. Then, among Third Countries, women from former colonies (Equatorial Guinea, the Philippines and Latin American countries) can to some extent escape the condition of forced dependency and avoid the 'problem' of documents with regard to their intimate and family choices. Spanish law facilitates the acquisition of Spanish nationality for these women, who can apply for naturalization after two years of legal residence in

the country.²⁰ This means that, at a relatively 'early' stage of their life in Spain, they have a possible way out of rights limitation. This is a concrete consequence of a 'preference for origin' clause in the Spanish legislation (Agrela Romero and Gil Araújo 2005).²¹ However, this strategy for escaping family dependency and rights restrictions is only available for women who enter the country legally and have resided in Spain for the whole required period (two years). A norm that entails an 'ethnic preference' is thus revealed to exclude some categories of people as a result of their immigration status and, although not directly, their economic and professional position. Indeed, the analysis of women's narratives also revealed elements of heterogeneity in the women's experiences linked to their different social and immigration profiles. The constraints and opportunities that migrant women meet with in their efforts to build relationships and families according to their wishes are of varied types and strengths.

The narratives of women in relation to intimate citizenship seem to be organized around two main issues. In a first group of stories, the experience of migration is seen as providing opportunities for self-development and realization in intimate and family life. In another set of interviews, the central feature is the experience of living far from children and partner. The narratives in the first group reveal women who,

in the context of immigration, have been able to build a kind of family, to live a life with their partners, removed from the dominant models of their original countries. Women who have decided to postpone children, who have built a family with a same-sex partner, or who have been able to establish a relationship based on equality with a partner who shares the same gender values and 'makes her happier' [int 10]. For instance Latifa has chosen to wait and have children only after her postgraduate studies. In this case, being far away from her family reduces the social pressure for her (and her husband) to have children sooner, and helps them maintain a choice that is an unconventional one in terms of her social background:

And I'm sorry, when I meet them [her former classmates, also Moroccan], to see that they haven't finished their studies and have a life ... that is not what they wanted. Okay, for them it's different, they live a different life, because they got married, have children... well, I'm married too! [laughs] but for now ... I prefer to wait [to have children]. And sometimes, yes, on holiday, when you go on holiday [to Morocco] and there's the aunt who says: 'When do you think you'll have children?' But for now, okay, we're fine, here we're fine. [Int. 18, 35 year old, from Morocco, lives with her partner, no children]

The women who express these kinds of narratives are mostly young, or came to Spain at a young age with the intention of living their lives in a foreign country, in an unfamiliar context. For many of these women, leaving their country of origin coincided with their exit from the family of origin: their migration was linked to the transition from youth to adulthood. For others, the migration project seems to be related to other points of transition: for instance, the end of a relationship or marriage, the search for 'independence', the desire to 'start a new life'. As far as their immigrant status is concerned, it is worth pointing out that most are regular residents (with a residence permit for family, work or study reasons).

In the second group of narratives, distance from the family has a negative connotation, since more space is dedicated to the experience of distance or transnational motherhood and the difficulties in obtaining reunification with children. In these stories, a sense of injustice emerges in relation to what is perceived as the 'removal' of an important part of their lives: the deprivation of affection, the impossibility to share daily life with their family, not seeing their children grow. For instance, talking about her first years in Spain, when she was an irregular live-in domestic worker, Mara said:

And then I'll tell you something, thinking of my daughter... whom I left in my country for three and

a half years, with my husband... and I woke up, looked at the clock hoping that the hours and days would pass: another day has passed, and another... And so I waited to be able to see my family ... [...] I missed my family very much, my daughter, my husband, my family [...] Do you understand? It was like that for three years, and I realized that nothing in this world, nothing at all, money... nothing is worth that. The years of my daughter's life that I lost... I can never get them back. [Int. 11, 35 year old, from Romania, lives with partner and one child]

These experiences show to what extent immigration laws can undermine self-determination in the intimate fields of life. Strong constraints are imposed on these women, as they are unable to maintain the closeness of their affective ties, to restore the family unit in the context of immigration, to positively combine economic needs and affective needs, their need to find a job abroad and their wish to live a full family life. These difficulties are exacerbated for women with irregular status, irregular workers, or women who are employed in domestic service cohabiting with their employers, since they cannot usually meet the legal requirements for child (or partner) reunification (conditions related to income and housing, and regarding the possession of a regular and

independent residence permit). The greater restrictions on family rights that these categories of migrant women experience are the consequences of discrimination on the basis of class and economic position encapsulated in Spanish migration laws and politics. Indeed, Spanish laws (in this example, the rules for family unification) create different categories of migrants on the basis of class, economic and professional condition and buying power, and select those who are entitled to enjoy the civil right to a family (those who have regular employment, an income sufficient for the maintenance of dependents and so on) and those who are not (Gil Araújo 2010).

On one hand, the selection of incoming migrants (e.g. the reunited family members of existing resident migrants) on the basis of their economic status aims to guarantee that the family unit will not 'weigh' on the Spanish welfare system. In this sense, these processes of selection draw on a protectionist and 'chauvinistic' discourse on welfare (Habermas 1998:636). On the other hand, this form of rights restriction also reveals a utilitarian logic, since it seems to respond to the structural demand for a flexible labour force for the care and domestic work sector, typical of the Spanish welfare system. This 'mediterranean' and 'familistic' welfare system is marked by an imbalance in the distribution of care responsibilities between the State, the family and the market.

Within these fields, care tasks are also unequally distributed between genders, generations, different socio-economic layers and, more recently, different ethnic/national origins (native and migrant people, migrants from different countries). In this frame, these migrant women represent a valuable 'resource' for the Spanish labour market and, more specifically, for the niche of care and domestic work: a sector that demands workers with particular availability, among other qualities. The live-in domestic worker symbolises the 'ideal' profile required by this sector: a person (usually a woman) who is temporarily forced to free herself from daily care tasks for her own family, and who does not need any work-family balance.

Therefore, although I have shown that restrictive Spanish migration laws often drive migrant women to reproduce family and couple relationships in ways that seem to adhere to 'traditional' models (as long as they are based on marriage, and on the gendered division of productive and reproductive work), I also wish to point out that this is no longer the case for women who produce this second group of narratives. When the family as a space of affection, love and care conflicts with the logics and requirements of Spanish welfare, labour and care regimes, migrant women can be forced to live a disjunction between physical proximity, love and care.

They must rearticulate care outside the context of shared daily life, and rely on alternative care providers for their children (e.g.: a relative or a childcare institution). These are arrangements that are far from normal in the 'traditional' model of the nuclear family.

In this frame, the infringement of the right to family unity expressed by this second group of women becomes the measure of their partial citizenship status in Spanish society. At the same time, the experience of 'transnational motherhood' testifies both to their ability to strategically rearticulate care and family life in a context of restrictive rules, and to the disadvantaged position they occupy in 'survival circuits' (Sassen 2003a; 2003b) and global care chains (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Parreñas 2001).

Conclusion

In this analysis of the experiences of intimate citizenship, we have seen that immigration policies strongly constrain migrant women's self-determination in family and intimate life, and limit some civil freedoms and intimate rights (e.g., family rights). This marks a strong element of inequality between migrants and native people, since the power of public regulation is greater for the formers than for the latter, even in the intimate field. However, it also introduces inequalities between migrant women, and leads to different experiences. In this vein,

we have seen that the women's accounts and narratives vary greatly depending on social and immigration profile, and their position in the structure we have called 'civic stratification'. As explained, this term refers to the stratified structure of legal status, rights and opportunities, in which the material and symbolic resources necessary for full citizenship are unevenly distributed (Melucci 2000).

For some women, the immigration context seems to open up new opportunities and freedoms: the focal points of their narratives are the empowering outcomes of migration and their increased capacity for self-determination in the new context. In other words, we can say that these women experience the inclusive side of citizenship. Other women, however, experience the power of exclusion of contemporary citizenship, prevented from enjoying the right to family life and forced to choose between their economic needs and their affective needs. We can say that state laws strongly limit their possibilities to choose and live 'the life they want' [int. 5].

The analysis presented in the second part of the paper shows how the theoretical framework elaborated in my research allows the implications of inclusion or exclusion from full citizenship rights for different subjects to be grasped, particularly by linking their structural position (the macro level of analysis) to their everyday practices and lived experi-

ences (the micro level). Moreover, the theoretical and empirical analysis discussed in this paper is based on a definition of citizenship seen not only as a matter of legal status and formal rights, but also as a condition related to people's everyday experiences in multiple domains: social, political, work, family and the intimate sphere. From this point of view, empirical studies of citizenship should pay attention to substantive rights within each of these areas, as well as to the dimension of self-determination. A feminist-oriented analysis of citizenship should consider how far people have 'the ability to exercise control over their own lives' and bodies, what level of access they have to the material and symbolic resources necessary for their well-being, and how far they are able to choose between different life options (Kabeer 2005:11).

In addition, the perspective proposed in this work conceives of citizenship as a construction in which different subjects cooperate: people who enjoy the legal and symbolic recognition of their belonging to the community and have full citizenship rights (formal 'citizens'), but also those who aspire to such recognition and who are partially or entirely excluded from citizenship benefits ('marginal citizens', non-citizens, and so on). Placing the analysis within this framework, it is possible to address citizenship in relation to subjectivities and dimensions of individual and collective life conven-

tionally excluded from mainstream definitions of the concept.

Therefore, in the research presented in this paper, it was possible to investigate citizenship in relation to migrant women's personal and intimate experiences. It was possible to question the conditions and perceptions of citizenship among subjects who, in most of cases, were not – or not yet – formal citizens, and who were located at the margins or in 'borderline' positions (insiders/outside) within the gendered, ethnicised and classed structure of citizenship of Spain.

Endnotes

¹ For an overview, see: Bonacchi and Groppi (1993); Lister (1997); Lister et al. (2007); Voet (1998); Vogel (1998); Walby (1994); Zincone (1992).

² See: with reference to the British context: France, Meredith and Sandu (2007); Hall and Coffey (2007); Hall, Coffey and Williamson (1998); Lister (2005); Lister et al. (2003); Smith et al. (2005). For the Spanish context: Morán Calvo Sotelo and Benedicto (2003). For Italy: Colombo (2009); Colombo, Domaneschi and Marchetti (2009).

³ With special regard to migrant women, see the comparative analysis by Erel (2009) on migrant women in Great Britain and Germany, by Lister et al. (2007, 137-165) on migrant care and domestic workers in Sweden, Great Britain and Spain; the study of migrant domestic workers in Canada by Stasiulis and Bakan (2005).

⁴ For the British context see Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2004); Dwyer (2000; 2002); see also the comparative study on Great Britain and the United States by Conover, Crewe and Searing (1991).

⁵ And also 'non-citizens' understandings, as I will explain in the next paragraph.

⁶ Essential resources for the presence and participation of women and men in politics, civil society, the labour market, and education are, for instance: time (Leccardi 2009), and psychological and physical wellbeing. Both entail a particular need for self-determination in reproductive choices.

⁷ For an overview, see: Abraham et al. (2010); Kambouri and Zavos (2010); Kofman (1995; 2002); Kraler (2010); Lister et al. (2007); Lutz (1997); Lutz, Phoenix and Yuval-Davis (1995); Morris (2002); Rottmann and Ferree (2008); Yuval-Davis and Werbner (1999).

⁸ The term 'denizen' has been proposed to indicate the legal figure of the permanent resident who enjoys extensive civil, social and economic rights, but who is denied full political rights (Brubaker 1989; Hammar 1990; Heisler and Heisler 1986; Layton-Henry 1990).

⁹ Marco Martiniello (1994, 42-44) proposes the term 'margizens'; Alessandro Dal Lago (1999) speaks of 'non-persons'.

¹⁰ For an overview, see: Aleinikoff and Klusmeyer (2000a; 2000b); Bauböck (1994; 2006); Castles and Davidson (2000); Giraudon and Lahav (2000); Joppke (1998; 1999); Koopmans et al. (2005); Martiniello (1995); Soysal (1994).

¹¹ More specifically, 15 interviewees came from Latin American countries (Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic and Brazil), 13 women came from Morocco, 3 from Equatorial Guinea and 1 from Nigeria, and 1 woman came from Eastern Europe (Ukraine).

¹² Countries that became members of the European Union in 2007, including Romania, from where 7 of the interviewees came.

¹³ At the time of the interview, most of the women held different kinds of residence permits (first residence and work permit, which lasts 2 years; renewed residence and work permit – another 2 years; residence permit without authorization to work; permanent residence permit; EU citizen's permit; permission to stay as a student); some had Spanish nationality or double nationality; a few were illegal immigrants without documents.

¹⁴ In more detail: at the time of the interview, 6 women had lived in Spain for two years or less; 9 for between three and five years; 15 between six and nine years; 8 from ten to twenty years and 2 women for more than twenty years.

¹⁵ Ley Orgánica 4/2000 (sections from 16 to 18) and Real Decreto 2393/2004 (sections from 38 to 44).

¹⁶ An authorization that does not depend on the residence permit of a relative.

¹⁷ The work permit can be requested later in the presence of a job offer. This arrangement pushes to enter into the irregular or informal occupational market, or to stay out of the labour market.

¹⁸ All names are fictional.

¹⁹ However, some differences can still be seen between non-EU migrant women and others. The first are subject to many legal restrictions in terms of their entry and mobility in the labour market. They also occupy a more disadvantaged position in the Spanish labour market than native women (Cachón Rodríguez 2007; Perjures, Paella, and Cavalcanti 2008; Solé and Parella Rubio 2003).

²⁰ The requirement for other non-EU citizens is ten years; four years for EU citizens, five for refugees and asylum seekers.

²¹ This is an example of the creation of migrant categories on the basis of cultural similarity or distance. Many states facilitate entry and settlement for people considered similar to their own population from a linguistic and religious point of view, or in terms of ethnic and 'racial' criteria. Many states also seek to facilitate the acquisition or recovery of formal citizenship for those who can demonstrate descent from one of their nationals (Joppke 2005; Thränhardt 2000).

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The Matrifocal Household: Santería religious practice and gender relations explored

Carin Tunåker

This paper highlights gender relations within households in Cuba, with specific focus on 'matrifocality' and its intrinsic link to the Cuban religion Santería. I propose that 'matrifocality' in this case is not only a response to state controlled efforts to induce gender equality, or historical influences as derived from movements of people in space and time as previously suggested; but it is also directly influenced by Santería, which serves as the main contributor to female empowerment in Afro-Cuban households. It is important to consider the inference of Santería religious practice when discussing gender relations in Afro-Cuban households, not only because of its omnipresence in such families, but also because Santería is considered to be a female normative religion. 'Matrifocality' in anthropology has classically been described as household formations recurrent in 'poor' neighbourhoods, mainly in North American slums, that are female-headed simply because of the lack of a dominant male presence. In contrast to this view, I argue that 'matrifocality' in Afro-Cuban households can be defined as female-headed, where husbands are present and active in decision-making, yet ultimately economic and social power resides with women. This, as I will argue, is a structure that is directly linked to the everyday practices of the female-centered religion Santería.

Keywords: Cuba, Matrifocality, Santería, Afro-Cuban households, Gender relations.

'Oshún: Keeper of femininity and of the river. She is symbolic of flirtatiousness, grace and female sexuality. She always accompanies Yemayá. She lives in the river and she helps pregnant and

birthing women. She represented as a beautiful 'mulata', who is kind, a dancer, a party girl and who is eternally happy, with her bells always tinkling. She is as good at resolving things as she is

at creating fights between the Orishas and between men (Bolivar-Aróstegui 1994, 177).¹

Yemayá: Mother of life, she is considered the mother of all Orishas. She is the keeper of the waters and she represents the sea – the infinite well of life (Bolivar-Aróstegui 1994, 153).²

The two deities described above are the pinnacles of femininity in Cuba, they represent ultimate female qualities and they constantly figure in symbolic representations in both public and private life. They are a part of how Santería religious practice influences and shapes daily constructions of gender relations and, as I argue, they also form a part of the reasons for the occurrence of matrifocal households and the empowerment of women. In this paper, I will explain the meaning of matrifocality in Cuba, followed by a description of Santería and gender roles in the religion. I will then be presenting how these two concepts can be used to generate an understanding of gender roles in contemporary Cuban society, and finally the importance of investigating 'the house' and household structure in order to understand gender relations in Cuba. In a time when governments are no longer investing in gender-focussed issues, it is my hope that this research emphasises the importance of understanding gender relations in different social

and political settings.

According to classic kinship theory (e.g. Radcliffe-Brown 1952), the family is the core of kinship institutions. Structuralist approaches such as that of Lévi-Strauss (1969) predicate that women's role is reproduction; to fulfil their child-bearing potential. Men must marry women to ensure this, which makes the conjugal bond the core of the notion of 'family', according to this approach. 'Matrifocal' families, however, have a tendency to be based on the enduring bond between the mother and children of the household. This, as Blackwood (2005) argues, is what constitutes the basis for 'heteronormative' thinking in anthropological writings of kinship and family, which is what ultimately has led to the discussions revolving 'matrifocality' having a distinctive male bias; 'matrifocality' has been discussed by policy makers as a problem that needs to be solved, rather than a distinct family structure. "The consequence of masculine heterosexuality is that marriage, by definition, becomes the prerogative of men", Blackwood argues (2005, 6), leading to the conclusion that "the dominant heterosexual man became the central trope of kinship theory. It was the Patriarchal Man who was envisaged as activating and controlling kinship and family. It is his shadow that continues to trouble debates about kinship and marriage" (ibid.). The aim of my research is to draw from the critique

set out by Blackwood and find a nuanced way of thinking about and analysing ‘matrifocal households’ in Cuba.

Traditionally, matrifocality has been discussed as a form of household that arose due to a lack of presence of men; for example where men have moved away due to labour migration or war, and as a common family structure in poor areas (See Stack 1975, Ekern 1987). The ‘traditional’ view of the reasons behind matrifocality usually includes an idea of the matrifocal family structure being the result of a situation where men are unstable and fluctuating in the household. Drawing on research in the Anglophone Caribbean, Raymond T. Smith argued that matrifocality is “intended to convey that it is women *in their role as mothers* who come to be the *focus* of relationships, rather than head of the household as such” (1996, 42 – italics in original). Smith argues that the matrifocal complex consists of three basic elements: domestic relations (men are excluded from domestic chores), familial relations (women have multiple relations with men to assure survival and mother-child relations are prevalent) and lastly stratification and economic factors (poverty, racism and status are all stated as ‘reasons’ for the development of matrifocal families) (1996, 54-56; see also Smith 1956, 1957, 1963). Cuba provides an important counterpoint, in part because it is em-

blematic of a pattern distinctive to the Hispanic Caribbean. However, in regards to households in contemporary Cuba, I suggest that *both* men and women have active roles within the household; men are present and participate in daily activities, but women are key decision makers, which provides an alternative perspective on Cuban ‘matrifocality’. As argued by early anthropologists such as Herskovits (1958), matrifocality stems from the legacy of Spanish colonialism and African slavery (see also Ortiz [1916] 1987). One of the aspects of colonialism traced specifically to Hispanic culture, is the patriarchal dichotomy of *casa/calle* [house/street also commonly referred to as private/public] (e.g. Rosaldo 1974, Piña-Cabral 1986, Collier and Yanagisako 1987: 18, Rosendahl 1997, 169), which dictates the role of women as intrinsically linked to the household, i.e. not taking part in any public activities or the labour force, which was the case in Cuba prior to the revolution (See Stoner 1991 and Safa 1995, 49 and 2009, 43). The influx of African slaves during the Spanish colonisation also had (and still has) its impact upon social organization, especially in terms of family structure, as many African households were matrifocal, and the tradition of matrifocality has remained until modern day Cuba.

Prior to the revolution, Afro-Cuban matrifocal households were said to be a response to high rates

of marriage dissolution and the unreliability of a stable male breadwinner (de la Fuente 1995). Today, however, matrifocality is a family form that should not be described in terms of 'missing men' (a debate initiated by Blackwood in 2005). Even though this could be the case, it is not necessarily the principal reason for matrifocality. As Helen Safa explains, "matrifocality is spread along a continuum in which the degree of female economic autonomy and male marginalisation varies. Men may be resident in the matrifocal household, but become economically marginalized as women are required to assume more economic autonomy" (2005, 315). In other words, the familial relations are not completely straightforward, but rather work as a continuum where men and women have varying responsibilities, yet the head of the household, as such, is the mother.

Stener Ekern (1987) did an ethnographic study on Nicaraguan neighbourhoods, which serves as a useful parallel to my research. Nicaragua's revolution also served to emancipate women in its society and, in fact, Fidel Castro encouraged Cuban women to see Nicaraguan women as an example of progress since the results of their revolution – in terms of women's rights – were quicker, seeing more than half of the workforce made up by women (Stone 1981, 29). In other words, this aspect of ideological change is similar to the aims of the

Cuban revolution in terms of gender equality. Ekern also discusses the centrality of mothers in Nicaraguan households, noting that, "even though the father is supposed to be the head of a family, the supreme head of the household tends to be the oldest mother living there, even when grandfather is alive and well. People will always refer to a house as 'that of *la señora* N.N', even in the few cases where the man is the actual owner" (1987, 64; see also p. 97).³ This is certainly the case in Cuba as well. Furthermore, Ekern discusses the fleeting nature of men in the households, in accordance with earlier theories of matrifocality and 'missing men', as well as men's association with the street and women with the house. The definition of matrifocality that he works from is that of Hannerz (1969, 76): "[Matrifocality] ... may be loosely defined as a de facto leadership by the woman (or women) in the household, with the man taking a more marginal role in domestic activities, eventually absenting himself altogether", although Ekern explains that in Nicaragua, majority of couples pool resources, which is a deviation from this definition. Nevertheless, he sticks to the core of the argument by maintaining that the zones of responsibility for men and women are those of the productive and reproductive sphere respectively (aligning himself neatly with the Structuralist feminist approach of the seventies).

Ekern's study informs my research, by asserting the prominence of the household to all social and political life; "The distinctive feature of Nicaragua lies in the importance of the household sphere which seems to be the only institution that provides the country with an enduring structure" (1987, 100 bold in original). For me, this quotation encapsulates that we ought to consider the household in Cuba as a pinnacle for social and economic life, which is reflected or reflects the country as a whole. Ekern illustrates his point with the nation's most important socio-religious event, 'la Purisma', in which ritual exchange takes place between households, with the Mother as giver of food (and symbolically the giver of life). This not only locates the mother (or women) at the centre of the household, but also "...epitomizes how life in Nicaragua's barrios revolves around this institution [...], the household is where the stream of life starts, is sustained and eventually also ends" (1987, 103). This ritual celebration is honouring the Catholic Virgin Mary, who is the most important symbolic national figure. Thus, in Ekern's study, religion does have an impact upon gender roles and, what is more, it centralizes 'Mother' as a vital and omnipresent figure in Nicaraguan society, where the core of social activity lies in the household. I will argue that this also reflects the situation in Cuba.

This leads me to the critical point in this paper; that the Cuban religion Santería, which is a syncretism of Yoruba religion and Catholicism resulting directly from the slave/master relations of colonialism, has a major impact on the ways in which gender roles play themselves out in daily life in Cuba. As Santería has been seen as a female-normative religious system (Clark 2005), it inevitably influences both external and internal processes and narratives of quotidian life. The impact upon daily gender relations of a female-centred religion, practiced entirely within the house, is an aspect that to my knowledge has not been highlighted in any previous analyses of matrifocality in Cuba.

The house is a space that can combine both public and private, in particular with regards to religious activities, when a house converts from 'profane' to 'sacred' (Waterson 1990, 71-72). This is the case in Afro-Cuban houses where Santería is practiced entirely within the houses of its followers, due to the lack of presence of a formal church. It is therefore crucial to note that people's houses are the only regulatory units that can control individual practitioners within a Santería religious kinship system, as this is where all religious activity occurs, unlike religions where there are churches or other exterior places of worship (see Velez 2000, Brandon 2002, Brown 2003). Keep in mind also, that Cuban houses are mostly re-

ferred to as belonging to the oldest woman in the household. It could be of interest to further investigate the meaning of a woman essentially being the perceived 'owner' of a space where sacred rituals take place.

The most prominent work regarding gender in Santería is Clark's book, named 'Where Men are Wives and Women Rule' (2005). Clark proposes that in most philosophical thinking, gods and humans are implied or presumed to be male, unless stated otherwise, which in other words makes such thinking 'male-normative'. She backs this statement up by quoting Rita M. Gross, who along the same lines argued that it is "probably due in part to religious symbol systems that contain deeply misogynist elements and personify the most valued and ultimate symbols as masculine" (Gross 2003 quoted in Clark 2005, 2). In Santería, however, the female forms take precedence in religious symbolism, which in essence makes it female-normative;

My analysis of the beliefs and practices of the devotees of the Orisha suggest that, unlike the mainstream religions Gross alludes to, they exist within a female-normative system in which all practitioners, regardless of their own understandings of their sex or gender or sexual orientation, are expected to take up female gender roles in the practice of the religion (Clark 2005, 3).

To summarize the argument, Clark puts forward that "our analysis of initiation, possession, and Santería religious practices will finally lead us to the suggestion that just as the 'manly woman' formed the ideal of Christian female saintliness, qualities associated with being female form the ideal of Santería religious practice for both men and women" (ibid, 22). In agreement with Clark, I would argue that not only does the female form appear to be preferred or idealised in Santería practice, women are constantly celebrated precisely for their very feminine aspects. For example, during a ritual or in even in daily mundane situations where the *Orishas* are talked about, *Ochún* (mentioned in the extract at the beginning of this paper) will be celebrated for her feminine characteristics and is depicted as forming the 'ideal woman'. Although there may be female characters in the so-called male normative religions, these females do not appear to 'empower' women or celebrate femininity and the female form to the extent that Santería does.

Originally, the various Afro-Cuban syncretic religions were practiced in *cabildos* [councils] in Cuba, where each *cabildo* worshipped its own separate Orisha. In the *cabildos*, women held powerful positions as *matronas* [matrons], with religious and ceremonial responsibilities (Howard 1998). However, at the onset of the revolution in 1959, the socialist government discouraged

religious practice and removed religious education from schools, as it was considered counterproductive to the socialist agenda in terms of ideological change (Castro & Bretto 1985, 208-215). This resulted in a decrease of religious practitioners from about 80% of the population to a mere 30%, according to official figures (Sigler 2005, 207). The Afro-Cuban religions' followers stopped practicing their beliefs in *cabildos*, and any type of religious practice became a reserved activity behind closed doors. Although this policy was changed in the 1990's after the Soviet Union collapse - when people sought more spiritual support to cope in the 'Special Period' - Santería practices are still kept within the walls of one's home.

Despite the fact that most religious practice today occurs within the houses of worshippers, Santería today is far from marginalized. In fact, it is very widespread on the island (it is estimated that the religion comprises 70% of the population), and openly talked about in daily life. Even the government has started using Santería as a way of strengthening Cuban 'culture', referring to it as important roots of Cuba's legacy (Sigler 2005, 212; Holbraad 2008, 646). The omnipresence of Santería and other similar religious practice deriving from the African legacy has a direct impact upon what one would refer to as 'Cuban culture', as the whole population, including the non-believers of these traditions, is

constantly surrounded by religious symbolism, in all types of media and quotidian practices in general.

In Cuba, Santería permeates most aspects of daily living, both in the public and the private spheres. In individual houses, there are spaces that serve as constant religious spaces, such as rooms or parts of rooms with shrines dedicated to deities, glasses of water for the spirits and various other religious items, but there are also times when mundane space will be transformed into sacred space, such as during rituals or ceremonies. For example, if a spiritual consultation is to take place, a small table with a white cloth is placed at the end of the sitting room, with a candle, flowers, rum, perfume, a bowl of flowers and water and a cigar. Chairs are placed in a half-circle, facing the table. The *espiritista* (medium) will sit next to the table and the participants surrounding her, with feet firmly on the ground, as it is believed the spirits come from the ground. The space is now sacred and spiritual power can enter the room and make spiritual possession possible. In other rituals, mirrors are covered, white cloth is put on the ground to cover the floor, or various other ornaments are placed in a specific manner, in order to transform the space into a house for the gods/spirits. Another important aspect of Santería practice is performance. Each *Orisha* is represented by different types of dance and music patterns, as well

as personal traits, ways of conduct, mannerisms and specific clothing. It is common for Santería practitioners to organise *tambores* [lit. 'drums', but refers to a drum/dance party dedicated to an *Orisha*], where the religious kin-system gathers to dance and sing, aspiring to the ultimate connection with your *Orisha*, which is spirit possession. It is here that Clark's allusion that both genders are expected to take up female forms is evident. *Tambores* and performances, as any party, can take place in both public and private spaces, but usually this is kept at practitioners' houses. Taking into account that Santería comprises such a large part of daily life, it is inevitable that it will influence the construct of gender relations, and the underlying female-centred mind-set could subsequently follow suit. In other words, practicing a Santería ritual or ceremony, which has a particular focus on the female form, is likely to influence the thoughts and feelings of the participants/practitioners in the space where it takes place.

Due to the socialist stance of Cuba, the construct of practical gender relations in both the public and private sphere is under constant scrutiny. As noted in a quite recent research project conducted in Santiago de Cuba;

The decreasing value of Soviet-era wages, an overall decline in infrastructure to support women in the formal workforce, increased

possibilities of home-based income generation and the social and economic opportunities offered by emigrant remittances and transnational relationships, have converged in such a way that the household has been revived as the major basis for social and economic status among Cuban women (Pertierra 2008, 767).

In the current political and economic climate, 'the house' has become even more of a central space for Cuban social, economic and even political life – a space where arguably women have more 'power' than men. People's households are spaces within which daily life takes shape, incorporating the material and spiritual life of many 'families' or 'household units' throughout its lifetime; a space where essentially majority of quotidian life takes place. Cubans see the house as a safe and clean place, in comparison to the street, which is dirty and dangerous (Brown 2003, 174).

Gender roles are at the frontline of a quotidian paradox of traditional and revolutionary values in Cuba. "The traditional Spanish culture with its focus on men's superiority and women's inferiority has met a revolutionary culture where equality between the sexes and equal opportunities for men and women is underlined." (Rosendahl 1997, 185). In the post-revolution era in Cuba, the *casa/calle* (house/street) gender stratification eroded (e.g. Rosaldo 1974; Piña-Cabral 1986; Collier and

Yanagisako 1987; 18, Rosendahl 1997, 169), much due to the revolutionary efforts of agencies such as FMC (Federation of Cuban Women) and state polices such as The Family Code. "Cuba experienced radical changes in all aspects of life after the revolution in 1959. The equality of women was a core principle of the revolution, and policies to achieve this goal have eroded, although not eliminated, patriarchy" (Pahl et al. 2004, 154). The FMC also had a resource at their hands that made the ideological change more efficient, which was the element of state control over media and education. Lewis et.al. referred to this as "the great symbol-making machinery of the state" (1977, xii). 'The Family Code', which was introduced in 1975, insists that men participate in the household chores and are involved with child rearing and supporting the family, to an equal extent as women are. The previous idealistic concept of machismo, that had kept men in a powerful position over women, decreased in its vigour in the revolutionary era, resulting also in a decrease in domestic violence; a subsequent blurring of the boundaries between the private and public sphere. One could suggest that there is an aspect not only of symbols being produced and utilised by the state to induce gender equality, but also of an internalised and subconscious 'symbol-making machinery' of Santería that is even more compelling in fe-

male empowerment. Yemayá, the penultimate mother and bringer of life and Oshún, Cuba's patron saint celebrated for her femininity, play their part in symbolically positioning women in Cuban society.

To conclude, a number of factors influence, nuance, and impact how daily gender relations play themselves out in Afro-Cuban households. The socialist state's efforts towards creating gender equality historical factors that predicate matrifocal household structure, and economic factors, have served as the core for explaining women's position in Cuba. In this paper, I have tried to suggest that Santería also plays a major part in the empowerment of women, in its symbolic appearances in daily life and its constant presence in households. This in turn calls for further ethnographic research and questioning of previous concepts of the 'private/public' dichotomy and its current position in Cuba, as well as the contemporary responses to socialist ideologies and their interplay with religion in relation to actual daily life. It is important to consider Santería religious practice when discussing gender relations in Afro-Cuban households, not only because of its omnipresence in such families, but also, as Clark's research suggests, because Santería is considered to be a female normative religion. The religion is practiced almost entirely in the houses of its followers, as a result of its previous condemnation by the

Cuban socialist state, in turn inevitably influences quotidian practices. Through examining transformations in daily life, we can get a thorough understanding of the Afro-Cuban household and of gender dynamics in the broader context of Cuban culture. 'Matrifocality' in anthropology has classically been described as household formations where men are missing; where households are female-headed simply because of the lack of a dominant male presence. In contrast to this view, I argue that 'matrifocality' in the Afro-Cuban communities can be defined as female-headed households where husbands are present and active in decision-making, yet ultimately power resides with the women, be they mothers or wives. As the household is currently the most vital hub of social, political, economic and spiritual life and as women are the focus of domestic relations, it can therefore be argued that women are, significantly, influential in the workings of Cuban life.

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Endnotes

¹ *Oshún: Dueña de la femineidad y del río. Es el símbolo de la coquetería,*

la gracia y la sexualidad femeninas. Siempre acompaña a Yemayá. Vive en el río y asiste a las gestantes y parturientas. Se le representa como una mulata bella, simpática, buena bailadora, fiestera y eternamente alegre, con el persistente tintineo de sus campanillas. Es capaz de resolver tanto, como de provocar riñas entre orishas y hombres.

² *Yemayá: Madre de la vida, es considerada como madre de todos los orishas. Es la dueña de las aguas y representa el mar, fuente fundamental de la vida.*

³ Please take note of Ekern's own bias when stating that the father "is supposed to be the head of family"! (1987, 64)

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Interrupting Research: ethnography of a research encounter with the Bororo people in Central Brazil¹

Flávia Kremer

This essay dialogues with feminist debates around ethics, epistemology and methodology. It analyzes the 'failure' of my research encounter with the Bororo people in Central Brazil. The essay uses the Brechtian theatrical concept of 'interruption' to scrutinize the empathic assumptions which inform feminist methodologies. It also demonstrates how ethical research opens a fruitful space for dialogue between researcher and researched. The relationship between researcher and researched is discussed in relation to the implicit hierarchies inherent in the global/local dichotomy. Using the insights of feminist epistemology, the essay ascertains the significance of feminist scholarship to the advancement of a more dialogical epistemology.

Keywords: feminist methodology, hierarchies of global and local, researcher and researched positionalities

Introduction

The conference *Thriving in the Edge of Cuts* was a platform for debate which poignantly responded to current governmental cuts to university funding. Through a variety of contributions, the conference event affirmed the enduring relevance and social impact of gender research. This essay is one of these contributions. Building on feminist epistemologies' insights and its emphasis on the politics of location, the essay demonstrates the significance of feminist scholarship's contribution

to the development of a more dialogical epistemology. It represents only one of the many cases in which gender research has enabled innovative readings in social research.

The theoretical engagements of this essay are the outcome of 'failure'. 'Failure signals a project that may no longer be attempted, or at least not on the same terms' (Visweswaran, 1994:100). This essay is an ethnographic account of my 'failed' research encounter with the Bororo people in their indigenous reserve in Brazil. My initial

research plans were to investigate a 'cultural revitalization project' that the Bororo are currently implementing, which involved the construction of a new Bororo village. Informed by the anti-essentialist epistemology of theories of performativity (Butler 1990, 1993), I wished to analyse Bororo identity discourses and their uses of cultural essentialism to serve their own political purposes (Ramos 2000). Because my time at the village was limited, it seemed appropriate to focus my analyses on an interview I planned to conduct with one Bororo individual, who for ethical reasons I shall call X. However, after learning he was going to be interviewed for the purposes of research, X refused to proceed. His refusal functioned as an 'interruption' of the research process. Bertold Brecht's (1975) concept of 'interruption' is a useful metaphor to explain the redirection of the present research process. 'Interruption' is a theatrical technique with which the actor breaks the 'fourth wall' and invites the spectator to consider critically the situation being presented on stage (Brecht 1975:45). In classical theatre, the 'fourth wall' separates the characters' dramas from the spectators'; in Brechtian theatre actors and spectators share the awareness of being in the theatre and examine the social critique performed on stage. X's refusal to give me the interview forced me to continue my inquiry in different terms. After my negotiation of the terms of

research with him, I realized that prior to studying Bororo individual's responses to cultural essentialism (or exoticism), I would have to engage with a closely related issue in the Bororo community; that of research itself.

By analysing my research encounter with X, this essay seeks to make a small contribution to discussions of feminist methodologies. It focuses in particular on the relationship between researcher and researched. This relationship is a central concern for the feminist epistemological project of overcoming oppressive hierarchies in knowledge production. Aiming to move away from an epistemology of detachment, feminists have encouraged close, intimate and dialogical relationships between researcher and researched (Stacey 1988, Hill Collins 2000). They have also been attentive to the ethical dilemmas involved in such relationships (Stacey, 1988) and to the biases of researcher positionality (Lewin 2006). There has also been much criticism regarding the representational objectification of research participants and the power of the *researcher* over the research process (Mohanty 1996; Minh-ha 1989; Narayan 1997; Chow 1996). However, the power and influence of *research participants* in the research process remains an underexplored issue.

Feminist methodological literature has adopted a monolithic conceptualization of power which

underplays the interests and manipulative strategies of research participants in research processes (Thapar-Bjorkert and Henry 2004). Moreover, the analyses that explore the role of research participants tend to maintain a 'fourth wall' separating researchers from research participants. The maintenance of a 'fourth wall' characterizes a colonial epistemology, which places researchers as spectators and research participants as actors and prevents a dialogical relationship between them (Rosaldo 1989; Canevacci 2007). The preservation of the 'fourth wall' depicts research participants as active agents manipulating researchers to serve their own 'local' businesses. Building on X's 'interruption' (cf. Brecht 1975) of the present research process, I argue that research participants are actively engaged in research processes in relation to their own business and in relation to our business: the business of research.

To support this argument the essay will provide an ethnographic² analysis of my research encounter with the Bororo. Alongside Brecht's concept of interruption, my theoretical framework is informed by Turner's (1982, 1986) and Schechner's (1985) conceptualisation of processual analysis and the ethical dilemmas of feminist ethnography (Stacey 1988; Abu-Lughod 1990; Visweswaran 1994). The research process itself became the object of inquiry of this essay.

Therefore the sections that follow will engage with research as a point of inflection.

Analysing my Research Encounter with X

When I crafted my initial research project in 2009, I had already visited the Bororo reserve twice. At that time I took for granted the global knowledge politics and the impact of research practices among indigenous peoples. Instead, my visits to the reserve had guided my interest into studying the Bororo's 'cultural revitalization' project in relation to current trends of 'commodification of culture' (Moore 2004; Ramos 2000). I wanted to investigate how the Bororo, and especially X, used stereotypical discourses to serve their own political purposes. Following Sylvain (2002), I understood that a 'cultural revitalization project' would have to come to terms with the cultural image which corresponds to the expectations of state and international donors: the image of 'primitives'. Furthermore, drawing on Ahmed (2002) and Tate (2005) my aim was to explore the significance of essentialism to Bororo individuals. I was aware that my time in the Bororo village would be limited and certainly not enough to fully explore these issues. My visit to the Bororo village would last only a week and I was unable to stay longer at that time. For this reason, I planned to record an interview with X when we would discuss the discursive

processes of marginalization of the Bororo and the problem of essentialism in relation to indigenous identity in the Brazilian context (Ramos 2000; 2001). Once I arrived in the Bororo reserve, however, things turned out to be very different from what I had planned. As I already expected, people in the villages were curious about who I was and about the purposes of my visit. What I did not expect is that people would associate me with research.

'Is she here to do research?'

During my first day in the village, I did not manage to negotiate with X the possibility of carrying out research. He spent most of his time speaking to other people and busy with the organization of a cultural event. In the morning of the second day, I was very anxious because I had not yet talked to him about my intention to do research. I woke up and started looking for X in order to speak to him and negotiate the terms of research as well as informed consent. I found him at the village centre speaking to a Bororo man from a neighbouring village. Upon seeing us, the man asked X who I was. X said I was his friend and I was there to visit him. The man angrily enquired: 'Is she here to do research?' As X defended me by saying I was his friend and that I was there to visit, I felt an increased necessity to talk to him about research as soon as possible. I felt like I was betraying him by pretending I was there only

to visit. Still, due to his various commitments at the local school, I could not speak to him until the evening. Nonetheless, it was clear to me that Linda Tuhiwai Smith's assertion that 'the word ... 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary' had proved to be true (Smith 1999:1).

'I am very careful with what I say'

Aware of the negative perception of research practices amongst the Bororo, I was very concerned about revealing to X my intention to do research. I knew I had to tell him and I even had to ask his permission to record our interview. In the evening of the second day, I was already very concerned about revealing my research intentions due to my previous interactions with Bororo people. Nonetheless, I knew it was time to speak to him about research and so I did.

I started by telling him that I had seen the new village and by encouraging him to continue working in the 'cultural revitalization' project. Driven by my anxiety, I started telling X all the things I could do to contribute with the project. I said I could help the community by writing proposals in English to potential international donors. That I could teach English, Italian or give alphabetization classes in Portuguese in the new school. Whatever they felt it would be necessary to help the community, I would do my best to pursue. While I said all these things,

I was worried about one unbearable thought: how could I possibly justify that I was there to do research? X and his family had been very kind during my stay. Would I play the role of the imperialist researcher who would use them for research purposes and give nothing in return? It was too late. I was there to do research and I wanted it to be ethical. So I needed to tell him. At once I asked:

X, do you authorize me to do research about the 'cultural revitalization' project? Can I write my dissertation about it?

He was smiling but his smile gave way to a thoughtful expression. He said:

Yes. If it is for a good purpose, you can.

I also needed to ask him about the interview. So I did:

...and can I register an interview with you about the project?

He was again hesitant and thoughtful.

I am going to think about it. I am very careful with what I say.

As our conversation followed he said that 'Bororo people are tired of being used and betrayed'. He said that he and the whole community needed to trust researchers in order to allow them to work there. I stayed in the village for another three days and I had decided not to be insistent with X about the interview. I was unsure if I would indeed be able to return to the community and help

with all the things I said I would. I knew that in research a fully ethical engagement with others is not possible but I feared to leave the village with a debt that was unclear whether I would be able to pay (Stacey 1988; Spivak 1988; Hinterberger 2007). This was, in my view, a good ethical decision. I left the village without the interview, but with an invitation from X's family to come back.

The reconfiguration of my research illustrates the importance of an 'ethically conscious methodology' (Fluehr-Lobban 2003). It also illustrates how the ethical negotiation of informed consent opened a fruitful space for discussion which demanded that I reconfigured my research into a more dialogical epistemology. If, in the first stages of this process, I preserved the 'fourth wall' separating me as a spectator and the Bororo as actors, my subsequent negotiation of the terms of research with X opened up the possibility for his 'interruption' of the research process (cf. Brecht 1975).

Bertold Brecht's concept of 'interruption' is a useful tool to explain the redirection of the present research process. If, in the beginning of the process, I assumed a comfortable spectator position seeking to empathise with X's character as a Bororo performing an exotic culture, during our conversation he ultimately interrupted this empathy. As in Brecht's (1975) 'interruption' he left aside the character I expected him to play and directed his gaze to me.

He broke the 'fourth wall' and invited me to consider critically how unethical research practices have been harmful to the Bororo. He directed my attention to the geo-politics of research and to the subject positions that he and I were assigned to play. He also refused to play the role I was assigning to him and sent me back home to figure out how I could be critical toward my role as a researcher. This interruption led me to think retrospectively about all stages of this research process and to identify, in my inherited colonizing epistemology, the assumption that research participants are not aware of the wider political implications of research practice.

Such an assumption informs much of social science practices, and feminist scholarship has eminently contributed to its acknowledgement as well as other research biases which animate the production of knowledge.

Gender, Globalization and Ethnography: theorizing the hierarchies of 'global' and 'local'

The analysis of my research encounter with X through a feminist approach brings into view the hierarchical dynamics of the global knowledge politics. Globalization is a theme of intense debate in contemporary social sciences and it is most often conceptualized as a gender-neutral phenomenon (Chow 2003). In order to invert this tendency and to bring into light the

explanatory power of the gender dimension of globalization, feminist scholars have stressed the value of framing globalization through multiple scales of analysis (Nagar et al. 2002). The commitment to gender in the analysis of globalization proves its explanatory power in at least two different epistemological orientations. As V. Spike Peterson (2005) notes, attention to gender reconfigures the questions asked in positivistic, as well as in more constructivist and poststructuralist oriented epistemologies. Although she acknowledges the epistemic significance of 'adding women' to positivistic accounts, which equate gender to 'women' as an empirical category, she places much stronger emphasis on the explanatory potential of what she calls 'analytical gender' (Peterson, 2005:500). Analytical gender, as a 'signifying code', stresses the hierarchical symbolic organization of thought that privileges what is masculine and devalues what is feminine. As a result, the explanatory potential of analytical gender not only enlightens the workings of social hierarchies, but also reveals itself as the organizing code which underpins the valuing and devaluing of analytical scales and perspectives. X's refusal to give me the interview (much more related to my position as a 'researcher' than to my position as a 'white' 'woman') illustrated his awareness of such hierarchies and his refusal to accept the researcher's depreciation (or objec-

tification) of his perspective.

Feminist scholarship has also been attentive to the hierarchies which animate knowledge production. Feminists have criticized the androcentrism of dominant epistemology (Harding 1986) and examined its legitimizing criteria, which privileges the perspectives of 'men in the dominant races and classes' (Harding 1991:3). They questioned the possibility of a general theory of knowledge by placing emphasis in the context of knowledge claims (Alcoff and Potter, 1993), on the perspective of marginalized subjects (hooks 2004; Hartsock 1983), and on dialogue and lived experience as legitimizing criteria (Hill Collins 2000). Such epistemological engagements with context, marginalized perspectives and dialogue encouraged a close link between feminist and ethnographic analyses.

Feminist scholarship and ethnographic analysis share a theoretical engagement with gendered hierarchies intrinsic to the global/local, modernity/tradition dichotomies which reveal analytical gender as the 'primary way of signifying relationships of power' (Scott, 1999 :66). Narratives of global and local resemble colonial narratives that reproduce gendered hierarchies and associate 'progress' and 'development' with masculine ideals which conquer the feminized 'Other', 'primitive', 'traditional' (McClintock, 1994; Hodgson, 2001), or 'local'. These narratives, and the problematic of

scale they entail, raise methodological questions for anthropologists about the possibility of studying the global ethnographically.

Henrietta Moore (2004) takes this challenge by comparing the concepts of 'gender', 'global' and 'local'. According to her, these are concepts with no empirical referent. They create a space of 'ambiguity and a productive tension between universal claims and specific historical contexts' (Moore 2004:71). These concepts open spaces of ambiguity and debate which are not occupied exclusively by academics. Moore takes the concept of 'gender' to exemplify how the space for discussion it opened has been, and continues to be, a source of heated debates both inside and outside of academia. The 'global' has opened a similar space and globalization or the 'global' is a theme of ordinary conversation in a variety of social settings. Moore questions the association global/abstract and local/concrete and identifies in these associations a pre-theoretical commitment with 'wholism', in which the 'local' is a part of a 'whole', 'the global'. This association also implies a hierarchical organizing of scales and perspectives which privileges the macro-economic 'global' and the social analyst's expert perspective over 'local' analyses and perspectives. Moore's suggestion for the ethnographic study of the global is a reconfiguration of the conception of the 'local'.

Following Moore (2004) I attempted to stretch my analysis to acknowledge the 'global' reach of X's perspective. Allowing his critique of the knowledge politics to go beyond the 'local', 'concrete' level, I took it seriously and realised the necessity of taking research itself as an object of analysis. Adopting Tsing's (2005) reconceptualised idea of the 'local', I take this research encounter to be a form of global connection, enabled by my encounter with X and our diverging projects. X's refusal to give me the interview required a more sustained connection between my academic world in the UK and the Bororo village. He required a concrete, material involvement with the community from my part. He knows my knowledge can be useful to help the Bororo community to gain access to national and international development aid. In our encounter in 'friction' (Tsing 2005), X made clear not only what he expects from me as a researcher but also the necessity of examining *the political implications of research practice*.

Tsing's concept of 'friction' is a useful tool to move from the generic and celebratory theorization of global mobile subjects, to an understanding of global connections which account for contrasting subject positions (cf. Song 2006). My research encounter with X brings into view the power differentials which organize bodies in the global economy. With Aihwa Ong (1999:11) X and I can ask:

What are the mechanisms of power that enable the mobility, as well as the localization and disciplining, of diverse populations within (...) transnationalized systems?

Building on Ong, our research encounter leads us to ask: what are the power mechanisms which enable the mobility of 'global' researchers and localize indigenous peoples as 'local', 'primitives' to be researched? With his 'interruption' of this research process, X questioned the assumptions which positioned us in the global knowledge politics. When refusing to give me the interview, X drew my attention to the history of unethical research practices among the Bororo and affirmed his position against such tendency. He taught me that 'Bororo people are tired of being used and betrayed' and that research in his village would have to come to terms with the community's requirements. The outcomes of research, X told me, will have to contribute materially to the welfare of the community. And if research itself does not result in a tangible contribution to the welfare of his community, then the researcher would have to find a way to contribute materially to community projects. Perhaps X would agree with Moore, Tsing and Ong and their critique of the global/local dichotomy. He was very keen to demonstrate to me his power to influence our research encounter. His refusal to participate in my research

as an interviewee questioned the configurations of global inequality, at least in the production of knowledge. X showed me that the implicit assumption of my research practice that I was a 'global' researcher and he was a 'local' participant would have to be questioned.

X's 'interruption' addresses the relevance of the space for discussion, opened by Moore, to rethink the 'global' and the 'local'. In this space of debate, the hierarchical relationship between academics and ordinary people is questioned. Moore (2004) questions the hierarchies which place academics in a dominant position in the discussion around the 'global' and the 'local' and she notes that academics and non-academics are knowing subjects who think about global connections. Aihwa Ong (1999) also critiques theoretical explanations of globalization that re-establish prevalent hierarchies of scale and perspective. She rightly notes that cultural flows and images are 'conditioned and shaped within ... new relations of global inequalities' (1999:11). These new relations of inequality cannot be analyzed through abstract and homogenizing lenses. These lenses tend too easily to emphasize abstract macro-explanations and gendered, racialized and economically privileged perspectives. X's interruption of the research process questioned the validity of these perspectives. By refusing to give me the interview and

explaining to me his reasons for doing so, X questioned the unequal relationships that inform research practices. His 'interruption' of my research process drew my attention to the hierarchies that organize the perspectives of 'global' researchers and 'local' participants in the global knowledge politics.

Overcoming the 'global' researchers/ 'local' participants divide

The theoretical effort that is needed to reach beyond the hierarchies implicit within the global/local dichotomy is valid as long as it also reconfigures the relationship between researcher and researched. Research processes also reproduce hierarchies of 'global' knowing subjects who study 'local' research participants. The feminist principle of overcoming oppressive hierarchies in knowledge production places the relationship between researcher and researched as a central methodological issue. Feminist and ethnographic methodological debates have scrutinized the position of the researcher and warned scholars about issues of 'discursive colonization' (Mohanty 2003) and objectification of research participants (Mohanty 1996; Chow 1996; Fabian 1983; Minh-ha 1989; Clifford and Marcus 1986). 'Strong Reflexivity' (Harding, 1991) became a key methodological tool to acknowledge such representational problems in order to make explicit the biases of researcher positionality.

Drawing attention to the power of the researcher over the research process, scholars have argued that reflexive accounts may often reaffirm the unequal power balance between researcher and researched (Weems 2006); and rightly argued that reflexivity is not a solution for representational epistemic violence (Hedge 2009). They have also theorized the researcher's shifting positionalities in the research context (Weiner-Levy 2009; Malan 2004) and asserted the relationship between researcher and researched as a criterion for epistemological assessment (Gunzenhauser 2006). Although their contributions provide important insights about the researcher's positionality, they still overplay the power of the researcher over the research product. Moreover, the overemphasis on empathy within such accounts is problematic for it assumes that research participants are willing to befriend researchers.

X's 'interruption' of this research process questions such assumption. X's refusal to proceed with the research demonstrates how research participants are very aware of the ethical dilemmas involved in ethnographic research. X is very familiar with the contradictory position of the researcher as both an 'authentic, related person' and an 'exploiting researcher' which is 'an inescapable feature of ethnographic method' (Stacey, 1988:23). When he said that 'Bororo people are

tired of being used and betrayed' and that the community needed to 'trust the researcher', X was stressing that research with the Bororo must be beneficial to the community. His assertions also questioned 'dualistic models of researcher and researched interaction which imply that manipulation and exploitation only takes place by the researcher' (Thapar-Björkert and Henry 2004: 364). As Thapar-Björkert and Henry (2004) argued, 'researchers can also be objectified, manipulated and exploited, especially when they are not positioned as part of a dominant group or culture' (ibid: 364). Thapar-Björkert and Henry's analysis is significant because it identifies in feminist methodological literature a conceptualization of power which is monolithic and unidirectional. They suggest that 'power is understood as not only top-down, but dispersed throughout both research relationships and the research process' (2004:364).

The present analysis is in agreement with Hayden's (2009) and Thapar-Björkert and Henry's (2004) assertion that the role of research participants has been underexplored in methodological discussions. I agree with their figuration of the research process as a result of a power dynamics between differently positioned subjects. Their analyses convincingly take into account research participants' agency, showing how participants' subject positions can influence research

outcomes. The present work intends to contribute to such endeavour. I argue that Thapar–Björkert and Henry (2004)'s analysis preserves a 'fourth wall' when theorizing the agency of research participants. They theorize research participants' subject positions by emphasizing how participants use research dynamics and manipulate the researcher for the benefit of their own 'local' businesses. In this mode of analysis, the authors place researcher and researched in a disconnected power play and knowing and known as belonging to different universes. Hayden's (2009) ethnographic experience, on the contrary, did not allow her to preserve the 'fourth wall'. In fact, her account illustrates how research participants interpreted and critiqued her social location in global politics. I cannot emphasize enough the value of these authors' theoretical intervention. However, the emphasis of the present essay lies in a hitherto underexplored aspect of research participants' awareness of research practices. Thapar–Björkert and Henry's and Hayden's accounts overlook research participants' critical interpretation of research itself. My research experience has made it impossible for me to overlook such an issue. In my case, X interrupted the research process by breaking the 'fourth wall' and affirming his subject position not only in relation to his own 'local' business, but also in relation to our business: the business of research.

Conclusion

The 'failure' of my initial project can be seen as resulting from an epistemological assumption which placed research participants in an 'object' position. Although I am aware of the colonial legacy of representational objectification in knowledge production, in this project I assumed the comfortable position of a spectator researcher in search of empathy. Such an assumption placed research participants in an object position. My 'ethically conscious methodology' (Fluehr-Lobban 2003) and its engagement with informed consent enabled the opening of a space for discussion between researcher and researched and thus the 'interruption' of the research process. The Brechtian concept of 'interruption' (Brecht 1975) has proven to be a useful metaphor to account for the reconfiguration of this research process. 'Interruption' as a technique with which the actor breaks the empathic 'fourth wall' and invites the spectator to reflect critically about the dramatic situation is a useful metaphor with which to analyse my encounter with X. Using the 'interruption' metaphor, I argued that X refused to continue playing the role of an active research participant creatively resisting globalization processes I had previously assigned to him. He invited me to consider the political implications of research practice and broke the 'fourth wall' separating us.

Our negotiation of the terms of research brought into light that research participants may intentionally influence research outcomes not only according to what they choose to reveal and through their manipulation of the researchers to serve their own interests (Thapar–Björkert and Henry 2004). Participants also influence research processes by asserting their interests in relation to our business, that is, the business of research. The outcomes of this project suggest that research participants are often aware of the implications of research practice, which objectifies them and guarantees the researcher voice in the powerful position of knowledge production. Through his ‘interruption’, X invited me to analyse critically my position as a researcher. When he broke the ‘fourth wall’, I was forced to reflect about my previous epistemological assumptions. My initial research project assumed that Bororo individuals are active subjects only in relation to their own ‘local’ affairs. It assumed that the Bororo would perform Bororo identity and I would analyse it. X’s ‘interruption’ encouraged me to think back and examine my inherited colonial epistemological assumptions.

My dialogue with X to negotiate the terms of research led me to realize that ethics and representation could not be tangential arguments in this research process. Instead, they should be the central point of inflection of my inquiry. The ‘cultural

revitalization’ project lost its significance when I started to reflect upon the very process of doing research in the Bororo community. I thought it would be fruitful to start to explore the hierarchies which link the ‘cultural revitalization’ project with ‘research’ and the meanings that this practice has to the Bororo. X’s ‘interruption’ encouraged me to focus primarily on the displacement of my ethnographic gaze. The reconfiguration of the project has sought to come to terms with X’s critical intervention and to consider analytically the assumptions which informed its empathic gaze. X’s intervention also invited me to consider the political implications of research practice and the subject positions that each one of us were assigned to play according to our social locations. The acknowledgement of the wider knowledge politics being played in our encounter was a fundamental step for a more dialogical epistemology.

Throughout the analysis of this research process, the significance of the contribution of feminist scholarship to a more dialogic epistemology becomes very apparent. It is therefore unreasonable to question the validity of gender research when one governmental goal (at least in its rhetoric) is to reduce inequality. Global inequalities are very present in the ways in which knowledge is produced, and, as I have demonstrated above, the contribution of feminist epistemologies is a

crucial step in overcoming unequal relationships in the production of knowledge. The pertinence of this exercise is unquestionable for the production of knowledge, which can offer much to inform the creation of equality policies.

Endnotes

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² I am aware that using the term ethnography to describe the analytical efforts of this article is problematic. Taking Willis and Tandman's (2000) definition of ethnography as a basis, I acknowledge that ethnographic analysis requires a much richer description as well as a much more sustained research encounter. This is one of the reasons why I decided to focus specifically on the analysis of the research encounter itself. The description and analysis of this research encounter can be referred to as ethnographic because throughout the research process, I have allowed lived experience to reconfigure the questions I asked. It is through

the description and analysis of my research encounter with the Bororo that I attempt to make a small contribution to the theoretical debates in feminist epistemologies and methodologies.

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Queering Translation: Transcultural Communication and the Site of the You

Roland Weißegger

Translators are often construed as mere intermediaries in transcultural communication, doing little more than transferring packages of meanings that have been unambiguously defined by other parties that really matter. However, translation is hardly innocent, and translation is hardly powerless. Translators produce texts and thereby identities/realities, and this text/identity/reality production cannot happen without interference/intervention from all participants in communication (which includes those parties that are usually theorised as passive, such as translators or recipients). Submission to hegemonic discourses is not a neutral non-decision, but a political act. Therefore, translators take part in the construction of identities. Transcultural communication is an ideal site to expose the cultural constructedness of identities/realities, thereby deconstructing these identities/realities and enabling allegedly passive recipients to see through and behind social constructs.

Keywords: translation, transcultural communication, queer theory, identity construction

In accordance with Butler's (2006 [1990], xix) notion that neither grammar nor style are politically neutral, I will be using 'oq' as an all-purpose personal pronoun and an all-purpose ending for nouns describing people throughout this text. I have deliberately chosen these two letters which contradict all English conventions so that 'oq' constantly nags and jumps out at the reader, drawing attention to the constructedness of gendered, sexualised, etc. subjects instead of letting oq creep back into a cosy final/-ised/-ising world after one or two sentences.

However, I might not have applied this strategy everywhere or consistently and would therefore like to invite You to look for constructed identities/subjects in this text as well.

Introduction: Why should I care?

The question of visibility of marginalised groups – amongst them deviant sexualities, deviant cultures, and translators themselves – features strongly in translation studies (c. f. Keenaghan 1998, Venuti 1994). However, such examinations often presuppose the existence of stable, homogeneous

marginalised identities which then need little more than a little sunlight – visibility – to prosper and thrive. Thereby, they deny/obfuscate that these identities/subjects, whether thriving or not, may very well not already be planted, waiting readily for the right time to emerge, but much rather emerge only through emerging itself: someone's identity is not a pre-social given, but much rather something one acquires / is being acquired in and through society.

This article is based on the idea that there is no presocial, prediscursive essence to any subject or identity – any *I* –, but that this subject is instead constructed discursively and interactively. I will argue that transcultural communication as an interface – or, much rather, *transface* – between, as well as in, cultures can be regarded as an ideal site to expose this cultural constructedness of identities/realities. However, My purpose with this text is not to offer conclusive, one-size-fits-all answers, but much rather to pose questions, including questioning whether My purpose with this text should/could matter to You. Consequently, some or many of the suggestions presented in this article might seem radical, extreme or quite simply egocentric and ignorant as I'd like to offer them as a corrective to hegemonic humanist notions of the absolute/-ly free subject who decides what one wants, needs, etc. by oneself, free from social/outside influences.

I will firstly offer a short overview of identities and communities, their interrelations and, most importantly, how they are constructed every day. After that, I will look at the belief in translation as the transfer of distinct packages of predefined meanings from one distinct predefined culture to another. I will also examine the idea that translators are active participants in communication, interactants, agents with agency – whether they want it or not. Thereafter, I will introduce the notion of transcultural drag, acknowledging translators' power in text/reality production. Finally, I will investigate the question of right vs. wrong, which will prove to be an uneven fight.

Questionable Identities: *There is no I in I, but there might be some I in U.*

In this article, I understand identity as the outcome as well as the source of two dimensions: personal identity and collective identity. I'd like to stress that they are – or should for the purpose of this text be regarded as – interrelated. Namely, our personal identities are strongly influenced by the collective identities that are available for us to *identify* with; at the same time, personal identities may influence which collective identities arise for others to identify with. Harvey (2000, 146) posits that 'the central question of identity formation – "Who am I?" – is recast as "Where do I belong?"'.

One example of this identification of the self via identification with a collective identity is that of gayoqs whose various identities are often influenced by the blueprint identities they are offered in various 'gay communities'.

What is important here is that there is not only a whole lot of interconnectedness between personal and collective identities, but that both are constructed discursively, that is, in and by society, and that consequently both personal and collective identities are culturally, temporally, spatially, etc. contingent. For the purpose of this article, discourses – which I believe to be the most relevant and, contrary to bodily essentials, influencable site of inter-active identity construction – can be regarded as ways of communicating about something (and communication need not be verbal); importantly, far from merely describing what is *already there* (read: pre-social, prediscursive, essential), discourses *produce* what they describe (Foucault 1972, 49). Furthermore, as society consciously or unconsciously constructs both Us and Me (and these two construct each other), I am You are We are governed by societal norms and thereby societal power relations. As identity construction is an interactive process, the passive/-ly constructed actively take part in their own construction, by either submitting to or challenging dominant ideas about what their identity is supposed to look like: af-

ter all, there might be some I in I, or, more importantly, some We in I and some I in We. Although We might not construct Ourselves, We take part in each otheroq's construction. One important example of this taking part in one's own construction is the concept/-ion of so-called *communities*. These communities enforce the unitedness of the homogeneous/homogenised/homogenising deviant subjects by fostering a feeling of togetherness, supporting them with baulks and bars (c. f. Jagose, et al. 2001, Harvey 2000). As a result, subjects that deviate from a community's normative deviance might be marginalised even further. For example, the homepage of a usoq-founded 'club' on a gay dating website that focuses on BDSM relationships/sex stresses that slavoqs with taboos are not welcome, overtly prescribing which slaves are to be considered 'good'/'real' slaves (Sir Erik 2011).

This marginalisation was one main reason for critiques of the supposedly unitary feminist subject: the postulated fundamental/essential female identity was primarily that of the dominant white, heterosexual middle class, who themselves marginalised groups such as lesbioqs (Holland-Cunz 1996). As Crenshaw (1991, 1242) states, 'the problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference ... but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences.'

Therefore, many exponentoqs of some of today's mainstream deviances favour an approach that is usually conflated under the term 'Queer Theory'. 'Queer' is understood/presented to be the ultimate non-category category, the non-identity identity, basically open for everyone who wants to become part of it (Jagose, et al. 2001). Queer Theory relies heavily on the notion that subjects and identities are constructed. For example, Judith Butler states that '[there] is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler 2006 [1990], 34). There is no natural gendered essence inherent to every body, but instead every body produces this essence / these essences oqself. Furthermore, by constantly performing gendered identities, We naturalise them, offering them a place to stay and settle as well as making them seem natural (that is, unquestionable). However, We cannot choose our gender/-ed identities freely and voluntarily, but are constricted in doing so by 'oppressive and painful gender norms' (Butler and Kotz 1992, 83).

Consequently, identities are not neutral, no matter how / by whom they are constructed, but are both constructed in interaction with power relations and placed into hierarchies themselves. As the subject is brought into a context (and without context, there is no text – no sub-

ject), oq enters the manifold fields of power, and while all fields are supposed to be equally fertile and re-productive, some might enjoy an hour more of warm/-ing sunlight.

'Effectively, the attitudes, values, rights and so on of the dominant group are taken to be not the partial construct which they really are, but a universal standard applicable to all. ... It is not possible to be in the words of the catchphrase "different but equal" if the standard of equality is a construct of group A.' (Shildrick 1997, 109; oqs emphasis)

Identity construction, and consequently, identities are not neutral but instilled/infested with discourses, with power, with hierarchies. Consequently, the de-naturalisation of identities, although it might lead to expulsion, is an important step towards making these negative effects accessible to politics (Cameron 2003, 453). Rendering identities questionable contributes to making them political, that is, relevant to discussions of 'valid' citizenship.

The Neutrality Myth: *Let's transfer some packages of predefined meanings from one culture to another.*

There is a popular belief amongst both 'ordinary peoploqs' and some 'professional translatoqs' which regards translatoqs and interpretoqs as mere intermediarioqs in the

communication between parties that really matter (c. f. Kahane and Smith 2007). Consequently, these irrelevant intermediaroqs are often expected/expect to stay/be/-come neutral and only convey what was unambiguously expressed by someone else in another language.

This 'neutrality myth' is based on the idea that meaning is an inherent property of signs and texts, and that therefore, translation is quite simply the transferring of distinct packages of predefined meanings (that is, meanings that either exist in some kind of read-only space from which they are taken, or that depend solely on the 'intention' of their 'original' authoq) from one culture to another. However, just as with identity, meaning is produced discursively and interactively (Shildrick 1997). It is therefore the act of interpreting – that is, understanding – that attaches meaning to texts, and as translatos need to understand what they translate, they attach meaning to the texts they translate, whether they want / believe / are aware of it or not. Consequently, texts aren't simply either a holy/divine/profane original that holds the Original Meaning or an unworthy copy that is destined to fail at conveying said trademarked Original Meaning. Much rather, every text is, in a way, a translation: each time You interpret a text, You attach meaning to it, depending on Your personal biography, that is, Your multiple identities.

Once a translatos has understood and thereby recreated – created anew, not copied – a certain text, os produces yet another text: based on a certain source text (which is both situated and recreated in a spatial, cultural, historic, subjective, ...² con-text), os creates a target text, which is then resituated and recreated as a new source text by other participantos in communication. Authoq A creates a text based on the textual resources available to os > translatos B interprets and thereby re-creates it. Then, translatos B creates a text based on os recreation of authoq A's text and based on the textual resources available to os > 'recipientos' C interprets and thereby re-creates translatos B's text. Consequently, recipientos, far from merely perceiving/receiving predefined meanings, create these meanings themselves.

However, the authoq/translatos is not entirely dead. By choosing from the discourses available in a particular situation, os, under certain circumstances, influences which interpretations will be more likely to emerge than others in which contexts. Discourses, however, are already instilled with the intentions of others that use them (c. f. Resch 2001, Bakhtin 1981), and discourses produce identities and subjects. Furthermore, as meaning is produced interactively, each interactantos re-interprets and thereby re-creates these discourses.³ As We have already seen/shown, discours-

es both reflect and create political ideas; consequently, they are not neutral. What this means for translators (and everyone else) is that there are *no neutral decisions* when it comes to discourses or communication in general. By using, and at the same time, submitting to discourses, we validate and reproduce them and thereby the realities/identities they construct. By submitting to certain hegemonic discourses, translators construct identities according to these hegemonic views (and possibly influence these views themselves). It seems therefore that translators are no more passively neutral than anyone else, but just as actively (and often, unconsciously) political insofar as that they necessarily influence individuals/identities/society in one way or another by choosing to represent/reproduce society/identities/reality in certain discursive ways, be they hegemonic or not.

We will now examine a few examples of how translated texts construct identities. I have chosen a self-help book / advice book / guide for gay men for this purpose. As gay men discover/uncovering their assumedly previously buried essential sexuality/sexualities might turn to books such as this one, it can be considered to have an exceptional influence how its readers construct themselves. The book was first written and published in English (Ford 2004) and then translated to German (Ford and Kalkreuth

2004).⁴ I will look specifically at its title, who the respective authors include/exclude in the communal gay identity, and the stance authors take on pornography.

The English version of the book is titled 'Ultimate Gay Sex', and its contents are exactly as advertised: the chapter 'sex' spreads over 72 of its 176 pages, and almost all other chapters refer to sex in one way or another. For example, the chapter about 'Your amazing body' concerns itself with 'Erogenous zones', 'Sex and health' and 'Different ages of sex'.

The German version of the book is titled 'Gay Love: Liebe, Sex und Partnerschaft' ('Gay Love: Love, Sex, and Partnership').⁵ In the meantime, it is just as interested in the intricacies of giving head and receiving cock as the English version. However, the title sets these unquestionably valuable pieces of advice in a context that is very different from that of the English version. Whilst the latter overtly declares that it is primarily about sex, the German version constructs its *loving gay* subject as someone who identifies oneself not only via one's sexuality, but actually predominantly via one's sex.

In one of the introductory chapters – titled 'Diversity'/'Vielfalt' –, the identity of this gay subject is referred to explicitly:

English:

This all makes for an incredibly diverse community of people; a massive, richly textured patch-

work of guys who are sometimes at odds with one another. But even when we disagree, we still have that one thing that makes us family. *Drag queens, gym rats, circuit queens, everyday Joes*—we may be completely different from each other, but we have a shared experience, the experience of living in the world as gay men. (Ford 2004, 18; my emphasis)

German:

Daher ist die schwule Welt so vielfältig, ein buntes Netzwerk von Individuen, die manchmal nicht miteinander auskommen. Dennoch gehören sie zur selben Familie. *Tunten, Muskelmänner, Bären, Landpomeranzen* – sie mögen sich in vieler Hinsicht unterscheiden, aber eines verbindet sie: das Leben als schwuler Mann in dieser Welt. (Ford and Kalkreuth 2004, 18; my emphasis)

Firstly, these passages show that the authoqs indeed presume a gay identity, a gay ‘community’ even, assuming a ‘shared experience’ that is common to all gay manoqs. Secondly, whilst the authoq of the English version uses the first person pronoun ‘we’ to refer to ‘the gays’, effectively including oqself in the homogeneous/homogenised/homogenising gay identity and constructing and fostering a feeling of togetherness, the authoq of the German version chose to refer to the book’s

subject(s) – *them* – using less communal third person pronouns.

Finally, both authoqs offer an explicit list of prototypical gay sub-identities: ‘Drag queens, gym rats, circuit queens, everyday Joes’ and ‘Tunten, Muskelmänner, Bären, Landpomeranzen’ (‘Queens, musclemen, bears, Nancies’). These lists overtly show who gets to be included in / excluded from the assumed and thereby realised common identity. First, drag queenoqs apparently aren’t part of the German-speaking ‘gay community’ and the authoq of the German text marginalises them. Secondly, whilst the English version includes flamboyant circuit queenoqs as well as more mundane everyday Joeoqs, the German gay subjects seem to live at the fringes of normal/-ised/-ising society. They can choose to be either effeminate fagoqs or cuddly bearoqs. Both versions fail to include / exclude a range of even more deviant identities, for example people who are into BDSM. This can be considered to be both a result as well as a source of the marginalised status that these groups have, inside the gay community that is supposedly united in the shared experience of Ultimate Gay Sex as well as Gay Love.

We have now seen/invented how the authoqs of both the English and the German version of the self-help book construct particular gay identities, offering certain people opportunities for identification – a ‘home’

– whilst denying them to others, and at the same time shaping their re-adoqs through these very opportunities and how they are presented. Another example of how the authoqs construct identities is a short info box about pornography in the book. The titles of this info box are ‘Is it exploitation?’ / ‘Ausbeutung?’, which already hints at the more-or-less moralising tone that follows.

English:

Not everyone finds pornography appealing or useful. While some of us may enjoy watching guys having sex on film or get off on seeing naked men in magazines, for others this is a turn-off. Many men who are in relationships feel that using porn for sexual gratification is degrading or disrespectful to their partner. *It just depends on who you are and what you’re comfortable with.* (Ford 2004, 157; my emphasis)

German:

Nicht jeder kann sich für Pornografie begeistern. Während die einen Spaß daran haben, Männern beim Sex auf dem Bildschirm zuzuschauen oder nackte Körper in Zeitschriften zu betrachten, törnt es andere *schlichtweg* ab. Viele Männer in Liebesbeziehungen finden, Pornografie zur sexuellen Befriedigung zu „*benutzen*“, sei erniedrigend oder respektlos dem Partner gegenüber. (Ford and Kalkreuth 2004, 157;

my emphasis)

Interestingly, the German text perceives/produces pornography as even less positive than the English one does. First, it emphasises the negative aspects of pornography. For example, the authoq of the German text claims that ‘törnt es andere *schlichtweg* ab’ (‘for others this is *simply* a turn-off’) – in the English version, the corresponding extract reads ‘for others this is a turn-off’. Additionally, the sentence ‘Pornografie ... zu “*benutzen*” (“*using*” porn)’ leans more towards ‘abusing’ as the authoq of the German text introduces the quotation marks to distance oqself from the word ‘benutzen’ (in the English version, there are no quotation marks around ‘using’/‘benutzen’). Secondly, whilst the English version emphasises/acknowledges re-adoqs’ agency, the German version simply ends in ‘sei erniedrigend oder respektlos dem Partner gegenüber’ (‘is degrading or disrespectful to their partner’), without even alluding to the idea that some people might have a different moral stance on the matter. It seems that the authoqs of the two versions, although agreeing on some important points, come to different conclusions.

There are many possible reasons for the differences between the German and the English version of ‘Ultimate Gay Sex’/‘Gay Love’. For example, it is possible that the authoq of the German text tried to ‘adapt’ it to its German target audi-

ence (although thereby also adapting the target audience). Maybe oq thought that German gayoqs were more interested in discovering/creating their identity rather than sex than gayoqs in the United States. Maybe Kalkreuth's choices are unconscious reflections of oqs own identity, oqs own alignment/alliance with certain ideas/discourses. Maybe, in the case of the 'missing' last sentence in the German extract about pornography, the 'reason' for this striking difference is just that the translatiq missed that sentence, or that the layoutoq of the German book missed it, etc. However, My focus in this text is not on possible motivations/non-motivations for why a translatiq did what oq did, but rather on the arte-/fact that these doings might influence identity/reality construction.

Transcultural Drag: *Look at me, I'm fabulous obvious!*

We have seen/shown/created that not only are non-neutral identities constructed discursively, but that how they are constructed is also culturally, temporally, spatially, subjectively, ... contingent. Cultural practices are 'central to the production of subjects, rather than simply reflecting them' (Simon 1996, 134). Therefore, transcultural communication – and translation as one form of transcultural communication – can be posited as an ideal site for exposing the cultural constructedness of stereotypes, subjects, iden-

tities, realities.

In order to understand/create how transcultural communication can expose these cultural constructions, We need to think about what transcultural communication can be. Transcultural communication is often conflated with intercultural communication to designate communication across a language barrier, which is sitting peacefully between one distinct, homogeneous/homogenised/homogenising culture and another. People who communicate transculturally are regarded as walking up to that language barrier and throwing meanings to the other side. However, it might not be as simple as that. First, the idea of homogeneous identities, communities, cultures, etc. is inadequate. Although all sheep in a herd might seem identical to an outsideq (and although they might even consider oqsselves more-or-less identical), they are not. However, they are not simply different but equal, there are always some that are (made) a little darker than others, who then detect/elect new darker ones themselves and so on. Secondly, depending on which aspects a sheepeq considers most relevant for oqs identity and which aspects other sheepeq consider most relevant for any sheepeq's identity, oq might be counted towards different cultures at the same time.⁶ Finally, as cultures and identities are often not as distinct as We would like them to be, but are in fact diffuse polymor-

phic spectres, so is transcultural communication. As there is not a-cultural, a-social, a-political space that We could ever access (Shildrick 1997), transcultural communication is not simply the interface *between* distinct cultures, but interacts with the (already indistinct) cultures it is supposed to sit silently between.

As transcultural communication transcends homogeneous/homogenised/homogenising cultures in which identities/realities seem all-to-easy to naturalise – but are naturalised in different ways –, it can expose the cultural constructedness of these identities/realities. This is where what I would like to call ‘transcultural drag’ comes into play. The term is an homage to Butler’s (2006 [1990]) idea that drag shows can destabilise heteronormative realities by exposing that gender is performative – a performance. Additionally, transcultural drag seeks to not only unobtrusively nudge certain privileged deviant identities into the sunlight so that they might thrive a little better (maybe at the cost of others), but instead *drag* identity and reality constructions to the light, making them visible and thereby accessible to politics. In arte-/fact, transcultural drag can put into question the very notion of identity – that is, an assumed/created coherent ‘personality’.

Of course, there are many ways to do this, which is why We will only look at a few possible variants of queering translation. For example,

when translating a love story, the translator could randomly change gendered personal pronouns to challenge the monolithic binarity of gendered reality. If a source text makes strong use of stereotypical identities, the translator could further exaggerate them to expose them as stereotypes; or dismantle and dissolve them; or create new, deviant stereotypes; or add subversive footnotes to point at the constructedness of identities and realities.

A concrete example I’d like to offer here is a German translation of Bruno Latour’s ‘Nous n’avons jamais été modernes’ / ‘We Have Never Been Modern’ / ‘Wir sind nie modern gewesen’ (Latour and Roßler 2008). This text contains a reference to the child’s play ‘Wer hat Angst vorm schwarzen Mann?’ (‘Who’s afraid of the black man?’ – ‘Who’s afraid of the big bad wolf?’) (Latour and Roßler 2008, 53), which submits to / transports / re-creates racist discourses. In this case, the translator could have used another metaphor – or added a footnote pointing to these racist discourses – or overexaggerated the phrase, replacing the ‘black man’ with any other constructed group, for example, ‘Who’s afraid of the green tree?’. In this case, the readers would probably have recognised the ‘original’ name of the game and wondered why the translator had chosen a different name, or attributed this decision to Latour as the *original* author

of the text, which might be more probable.⁷

Which solution seems most promising always depends on the context, and this context includes the identities of those involved in translation, including the authoq of the source text, the translatoq, the clientoq and the active recipientoqs. For example, the clientoq who ordered the translation of 'Ultimate Gay Sex' might not have accepted aggressive transcultural drag for ideological, financial, ... reasons. Therefore, the translatoq could have tried not to reinforce/reproduce a belief in monolithic identities, nor marginalise certain deviant groups and bolster social norms. In the explicit list of sub-identities of the unified gay identity, the translatoq could have included additional otherwise marginalised groups, thereby more strongly showing that *the* gay community is in fact fragmented and diverse. Oq could also have moved the focus away from sex or changed the title to something more explicitly connected to sex, or oq could have taken a less moralising stance on pornography.

Importantly, again, it might not be possible or even desirable to take extreme measures. Under certain circumstances, a translatoq might want to strive to be 'neutral'; under certain circumstances, a translatoq won't get a job if oq's aim is to excessively queer texts; under certain circumstances, too 'obvious' transcultural drag might not work; un-

der certain circumstances, radical transcultural drag might be possible and desirable. Of course, these are just a few possible answers to a few possible questions, and a few possible questions to a few possible answers.

Ethics/morality: *Mine, Yours, Ours?*

We have already briefly looked at the problem of what translatoqs should do and what they should not be allowed to do. We have also already examined the belief that translatoqs may not 'interfere' with the intentions of other parties that really matter / donate materiality and discovered/invented that translatoqs are participants in communication, whether they/We want it or not. There is no way of transferring anyone's original intentions, because they are inaccessible to other beings (and maybe even to the *original* oqself). Consequently, one of the traditional pillars of translation – that translatoqs should not do anything that runs contrary to the intentions of the source text's authoq – might not be stable enough to support a roof shielding those translatoqs who would want that from their agency. Additionally, We might want to ask Ourselves whether hegemonic discourses that have been naturalised, and are therefore used unconsciously, can actually be considered to be part of someone's 'core' 'intentions'.

It is usually argued that translators have to consider loyalties to different parties that hold a stake in communication. At first, this was the original author and reader alone. Then, clients and passive recipients joined the author in partisanship, and finally, the translator himself was allowed to take a place in what was henceforth called the 'power rectangle' (Prunč 2011, 331–2).⁸ The underlying idea is that if the translator doesn't want to do a certain translation for personal/ethical reasons, he should decline to do it. However, easy as this solution might seem (if we ignore that translators also inhabit the fields of, for example, economic power), it might be insufficient. Just as allegedly passively submitting to hegemonic discourses has similar effects to *actively* pursuing them (in prolongation and support), simply rejecting jobs might have the effect that someone else takes them. Translators produce texts/identities/realities even by claiming/believing that they refuse to do so.

In parallel to identity, ethics/morality is usually believed to be, above all, a normative source of inspiration, when it is, at the same time, a reflection of the outside world (that is, the fields of power with us indifferent, but unequal sheep grazing on them). A particular act is ethical only if it is supported by society and the morals it enforces – even though this supportive society might not be the immediate society in the context of

which that act is committed. An ethical act is a socially sanctioned act, it seems / is sealed. Consequently, ethics is itself situated and therefore culturally, temporally, spatially, ... contingent. In arte-/fact, ideas about ethics/morality might very well be part of or accomplice to the very hegemonic mechanisms of identity construction that transcultural drag tries to expose.

Additionally, morality/ethics is more often than not heterogeneous and contradictory. In some cases, we can either submit to the part of morality that forbids passive translators to interfere with communication, or to that part that shuns misogyny, homophobia, racism, etc. By following one part of morality into battle, we attack another one. Either way, we will face a situation of incoherence/inconsequence which cannot be resolved by simply appealing to 'ethical principles'.

Conclusions: Are there any?

Over the course of this text, we have looked at ourselves and at each other, constructing and creating every body and every thing involved in the process. We have discovered/invented that we communicate using discourses that re-produce what they claim to re-present. We have taught/learned that translators have inevitable agency, that they can't escape their agency, and that they exert agency even by refusing agency – in principle, it seems / is sealed, every communicative act

involves agency in meaning/identity/reality production. Importantly, this involves not only the authoqs of ‘originals’ but all people involved in the making of a text, including an assumedly unassuming/innocent audience. In the examples taken from ‘Ultimate Gay Sex’/‘Gay Love’, You interpreted/created My interpretations/creations of the translatoq’s interpretations/creations of a text by an authoq who interpreted/created identities/realities and was influenced by otheroqs’ interpretations/creations of identities/realities. Consequently, as transcultural communication is the inter-/transface between/across/in cultures, and as the ways in which identities/realities are constructed are culturally, spatially, etceterally contingent, transcultural communication and translation can be sites in/on/around which the constructedness of these identities/realities can be *dragged* into the light instead of merely making pre-constructed identities more or less visible. Translatoqs can paint the nails which hold together reality pink and black and indulge oqsselves in transcultural drag. Finally, We have seen/shown that ethics and practice are strongly interrelated. Complex, situated questions don’t have universal/-ist, simple, omnipresent and omnivalid answers. I am of course not arguing for a translative/transformative world revolution (if only because that would be unquestionably/unquestionably unethical). Much rather, the solution I’d like to

propose for all these questions – if they need to be liquidated at all – is consciousness/reflexivity on the parts of all participant oqs in communication. However, this final/finite answer is, first and foremost, a question, an offer to You to interpret it, rephrase it, recreate it, answer it, question it.

Endnotes

¹ I will capitalise Me, You and Us throughout this text. After all, We matters/matter – donate/donates materiality.

² I repeatedly use ellipsis in this text to indicate that lists that seem exhaustive might in arte-/fact very often not be finite and to invite You to amend/elaborate them.

³ There are uncountable other authors whom I could have cited to bolster this statement. However, Resch is a translation scholaroq and Bakhtin a dead, white, often and popularly cited manoq, thereby lending me oqs’ authority/authorship: what would a text, especially an academic one, be if it didn’t have / weren’t conceded authority/authorship?

⁴ Kalkreuth is the translatoq.

⁵ All translations of German passages are Mine/Ours.

⁶ We have called these cultures ‘collective identities’ above.

⁷ Additionally, the notion of recognising implies that there is something for the readoqs to recognise that exists outside of their influence. However, by recognising an allusion, readers re-

create them in their own image/-ination.

⁸ 'Power tetrahedron' might be a more suitable term as it acknowledges that every partōq influences every other partōq

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