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Discourse and politics in the production of homosexual subjectivities in South Africa: a queer theory analysis of selected English non-fiction texts (1992-2008)

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background

The brutal gang rape, beating and stabbing of national footballer and lesbian activist Eudy Simelane by five men in April 2008 in Kwa Thema, a township East of Johannesburg, shocked gay and lesbian people and human rights movements both in South Africa and abroad. The level of violence against Simelane (she was stabbed 25 times all over her body, including her feet) was even harder to make sense of, since South Africa is credited as being one of the most tolerant countries in the world, with a constitution that explicitly outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexuality, race and gender. The reality is that South Africa remains intolerant.

Violence against lesbians is present across the racial spectrum in South Africa (and cannot really be separated from violence against women), but, taking into account the residues of a racially legislated past, black lesbians are more at risk. For example, black lesbians who take on masculine attributes are often punished for this gender inappropriateness with the terrible practice of what is known as corrective rape.[1] Although rape and murder are extreme displays of hatred towards black lesbians, this is not typical of the homophobia that exists in South Africa: family rejection, harassment and social exclusion are more typical (Gevisser 2011). Nevertheless, the question needs to be asked why violent homophobia[2] is on the increase in a country that has one of the most progressive constitutions in the world.

[1] "Perpetrators of corrective rape desire to show lesbians how to be 'real women'. They manifestly believe that forcing heterosexual intercourse onto lesbians will somehow reinstate a 'traditional' hetero-normative sexual identity in their victims" (Prinsloo 2011:1).

[2] In 2009 the Triangle project (a leading gay and lesbian organisation based in the Western Cape) released research that revealed 86% of black lesbians in the Western Cape lived in fear of sexual assault. The research also made known how the project had to deal with ten new cases of corrective rape each week. In June 2011 after the brutal stabbing of Noxolo Nkosana in Crossroads, Cape Town, Marlow Newman-Valentine, the deputy director of the Triangle project was quoted in an article in *The Times* newspaper as saying that gender based violence has "increased dramatically" but the government's initiatives often exclude gay and lesbian people. "They often receive secondary discrimination from service providers such as the police and healthcare facilities because many believe that it is un-African or unnatural to be gay" (Newman-Valentine cited in Nombembe 2011:2). The homophobia against black lesbians in the Kwa Thema township on the East Rand of Johannesburg, has become such a cause for concern that the gay rights group Luleki Sizwe met with the Justice Department on the 15 June 2011 in order to organise the formation of a team to fight homophobic crime. This meeting is the result of discussions with the department after the rape and murder of Noxolo Nogaza in April 2011 in Kwa Thema (Nombembe 2011).

The presence of such a progressive constitution is not a matter of luck or good fortune; it is the result of more than 20 years of struggle by gay and lesbian activists. However, the struggle for gay and lesbian rights in South Africa is not without tension and contestation. In 1982 the first organisation to promote gay rights was established in Johannesburg: The Gay Association of South Africa (GASA). Although Conway (2009) argues that GASA was "expressly apolitical about wider issues in South African society [and ignored] any critique of apartheid or association with black South Africans" (Conway 2009:856), testament from a founding member of GASA and lesbian activist, Ann Smith, paints a different picture. She makes it known that even though GASA had more white members than black members this did not mean that it was a reactionary organisation: "[t]he National Party government of the day…was strongly oppressive, and we [GASA] were in danger" (Smith cited in Hoad et al. 2005: 59).

In 1982 Simon Nkoli, an anti-apartheid, gay rights and AIDS activist joined GASA. In 1984 Nkoli was arrested and accused along with 21 other political leaders of furthering the aims of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). In the Delmas treason trial that followed 11 of the 22 accused (including Nkoli) were found guilty and sentenced to between five and 11 years (Jara and Lapinsky 1998). Nkoli was sentenced to five years, and while in prison he openly admitted that he was gay and he stressed the importance of gay rights to his fellow political prisoners (which included political heavyweights such as Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota, Popo Molefe and Frank Chikane) and was ,therefore, instrumental in helping to change the attitude of the ANC towards gay rights. At this time there was reluctance on the part of the ANC to endorse gay rights at the expense of losing support from potential voters who were homophobic (Hoad 1999).

Although the violence against black working class lesbians is insidious, homophobic violence in South Africa is not restricted by gender, race or class. Eight gay men have been murdered in the Gauteng province in the period 2010-2012: Manolis Veloudos, Jim Cathels, Oscar O' Hara, Siphiwe Nhlapo, Barney van Heerden, Jason Wassenaar , Thebe Mogamisi and Rulov Senekal. The modus operandi in each death was the same: the victims were all bound and murdered in their homes (Germaner 2012). On the 7th February 2012 the body of Bruno Bronn the owner of the gay nightclub Bronx was found in his Green Point (Cape Town) flat. He had been murdered and his hands were bound (Nicholson 2012).

One year after his release from prison in 1987, Nkoli founded the non-racial (and liberation struggle aligned) Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW) and together with the Cape Town based Organisation of Lesbian and Gay Activists (OLGA) successfully lobbied for gay and lesbian rights to be included in the draft Bill of Rights in 1990. OLGA also initiated and won support for a comprehensive charter of gay and lesbian rights which was accepted in 1993 at a national conference of gay and lesbian organisations (Croucher 2002). In December, 1994 the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) was formed, initially a coalition of 36 affiliates, in 2002, it was renamed the Lesbian and Gay Equality Project (LGEP). The LGEP describe itself as "progressive, anti-homophobic, anti-racist, feminist, and anti-capitalist" [and identify the] "fundamental drivers of our oppression and discrimination [as being] patriarchy, gender oppression, social conservatism, slavery, colonialism, apartheid and capitalism" (LGEP 2011:n.p.). Between 1997 and 2006 the NCGLE (and then the LGEP) was responsible for having 16 homophobic laws successfully overturned.[3] In 2002 the LGEP started lobbying to reform the common-law and Marriage Act and, on the 30 November, 2006, the Civil Union Act was passed which legalised same-sex marriage (Judge et

[3] Important court cases fought by the NCGLE and then the LGEP in overturning homophobic laws in South Africa:**1997** – state v Kampher: a conviction of sodomy was set aside as unconstitutional. **1998** – Langemaat v Minister of Safety: medical aid schemes compelled to recognise same-sex partners. **1998** – National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality v Minister of Justice: the crime of sodomy as an unnatural sexual offence was declared unconstitutional (not included in the original judgement in 1997). **1998** - National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian equality and the South African Human Rights Commission v Minister of Justice: sodomy as a crime was decriminalised. **1999** – Martin v Beka Provident Fund: a pension fund has to recognise a same-sex partner and they have to receive the same benefits as heterosexual married partner. **1999** - National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian equality and Others v Minister of Home Affairs: the exclusion of same-sex partners from certain immigration rights declared unconstitutional. **1999** - National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian equality and Others v Minister of Home Affairs: the permanent same-sex partner of a South African citizen is granted the same rights as a spouse in terms of immigration rights. **2002** - Satchwell v President of Republic of South Africa: the permanent same-sex partner of a judge qualifies for the same pension payout as a spouse. **2002** - Fourie v Minister of Home Affairs: first challenge to the marriage laws (case dismissed). **2002** – The Lesbian and Gay Equality Project v the Minister of Finance: the right to equal benefits of pension funds for same-sex partners who work for the state validated. **2002** – Du Toit and De Vos v the Minister of Welfare and Population Development: same-sex couples included in the Child Care Act which meant such couples could both be legal parents of an adopted child. **2003** – J and Another v Director General and the Department of Home Affairs: both partners in a same-sex couple would be allowed to be registered as the parents of an *in vitro* fertilised baby.**2004** – Du Plessis v Road Accident Fund: a permanent same-sex partner had the rights to claim damages or support from a deceased person. **2004** - Fourie and Another v Minister of Home Affairs: the common-law definition of marriage declared unconstitutional. **2005** – Minister of Home Affairs v Fourie: the Constitutional Court upheld the Supreme Court of Appeals decision that the common–law definition of marriage was unconstitutional based on the existing marriage formula. A one year period was granted to correct the problems with the law. **2006** – Gory v Kolver: equal benefits granted to the surviving partner in a same-sex relationship if one of the partners dies without a will (Judge et al. 2008).

al. 2008).However, a “[g]rammar of legitimization” (Reddy 2000:174) does not necessarily mean equality, and the question I posed above remains. Why is there still such a high level of homophobia in South Africa despite its endorsement of human rights?

The emphasis on human rights is a relatively recent approach to protecting the freedoms of individuals. It was only in 1945 that the United Nations was established to make sure that the horror and devastation of the two world wars was never repeated. In December 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the 56 members of the United Nations and the preamble states that the “[r]ecognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world” (Shiman 1993:14). The influence of the UDHR has been considerable and its principles are included in progressive constitutions throughout the world (including South Africa). Much social change in the world has been driven by a human rights discourse from women’s rights to liberation from colonial powers, and from American Civil rights to the overthrow of Apartheid (Ball and Gready 2009). Despite the successes, a human rights discourse is not without its problems and has been critiqued for being based in the liberation of the true and essential self (Butler 2004). It has also been identified as promoting the inclusion of marginal groups into society’s existing power structures as a political strategy (Giroux 2001; Kopelson 2002). Finally a human rights discourse has been accused of promoting the achievement of rights as the epitome of a struggle (Blattberg 2010). In this way of thinking, political struggle is viewed as having an end (liberation) rather than being a process of continual resistance.

Even though there are problems with a human rights discourse, in the South African context, it was this approach to freedom from oppression that led to the demise of apartheid and the achievement of a democracy with a constitution that is one of the most progressive in the world. But, as I have illustrated above, having political rights does not mean the end of discrimination based on race, class, gender or sexuality, and this contradiction is one that is much debated in the popular media, academia and non-governmental organisations. I have already provided evidence of the widespread homophobia that exists in the public sphere and the LGEP additionally

argues that "[e]ven the most progressive laws and policies are rendered useless in the hands of homophobic and prejudiced state officials" (LGEP 2011:n.p.).

1.2 Research aims

Taking into account the contradiction that having political rights does not mean the end of discrimination, the aim of this thesis is to provide a different way into thinking about the paradoxical nature of gay and lesbian rights in South Africa. In order to do this, I examine from a Queer Theory point of view how the discourses of identity and politics are represented in six gay and lesbian non-fiction books written between 1992 and 2008. The reason I have chosen to investigate specifically gay and lesbian non-fiction texts is because the non-fiction genre aspires to be credible, well-researched and informative. In addition, these books have never before been the focus of a dedicated research investigation. I cover the 16-year period between 1992 and 2008 because it encompasses various epochs: that of no gay and lesbian rights; that of gay and lesbian liberation; that of the consolidation of gay and lesbian rights and, finally; that of the right to gay marriage. I believe these epochs to be indicative of a history in which shifts in priorities and issues on the gay and lesbian rights agenda can be identified and in which the evolving image of the public face of homosexuality can be mapped.

Now that the LGEP has fought to overturn every homophobic law in South Africa ,including challenging the Marriage Act [4] because it is reserved for heterosexuals only, there is a space to reflect and re-examine the past. In 2000 Vasu Reddy wrote that

> [i]n fact, the very notion of queer may well have a Western bent to it, but there is simultaneously something distinctly queer about being African queers, and perhaps this is what scholars should investigate (Reddy 2000: 182).

Eleven years on, this study takes up Reddy's challenge.

[4] The Marriage Act (no. 25 of 1961) allows only for monogamous opposite-sex marriages. Same-sex couples have to be married under the Civil Union Act (no. 17 of 2006) and those South Africans who want a customary marriage have to be married under the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (no.120 of 1998).

1.3 Research question

My investigation into the six books is informed by the following question:

> Given the specific South African political and historical contexts in which each book was written, how are gay and lesbian identities constructed?

1.4 Methodology

The theoretical insights provided by Queer Theory (which I explain in my theoretical framework below) have enabled me to answer the research question posed in this thesis, which is concerned with the representation of the discourses of gay and lesbian identity and politics in six non-fiction books over a 16 year period. I have used theory drawn from a post-structural paradigm as it relates to the deconstruction of sexual identities to articulate areas of inquiry into the books and, in addition, I use the books, which are embedded in the unique South African context, to test certain assumptions of Queer Theory as a critical hermeneutic. Implicit in my deconstruction of the books is the adoption of certain understandings based in post-structural thinking as it relates to discourse and identity.

1.5 Approach to discourse

In *The order of things* (1970) and *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972) Michel Foucault outlines his perspectives on knowledge, power and discourse. For Foucault, language is an aspect of discourse and he provides a three dimensional definition of discourse,

> [t]reating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements (Foucault 1972: 80).

The first meaning relates to actual utterances and texts, the second concerns discourse as it relates to specific areas such as the discourse of medicine or the discourse of science, and the third concerns the socio-political conditions of possibility that create the setting for specific utterances or texts. Discourse thus covers the entire area in which knowledges are produced and reproduced. It deals with not only what is thought and said but also establishes what is acceptable and unacceptable, and is in effect an entire field in which language is used in specific ways. By viewing language as only a component part of discourse, Foucault actually

broadens the conception of the linguistic text. A text is constituted not by some objective system of meaning but by particular discursive practices, each of which has particular ideologies and patterns of power. Adopting a Foucauldian approach to discourse has allowed me to make different moves (about which I will say more later) in terms of the books being analysed. In addition by viewing discourse as being partly based in language but also based in complex discursive practices I have much more choice in how to unpack the competing discourses of the books, and these opportunities to 'peel back' the numerous conditions of possibility allow me to make a deep and insightful analysis. Discourse is crucial to the production of subjectivity because the link between the individual and the social is though discourse and, therefore, an analysis of discursive productions can reveal the constructions of subjectivity and identity.

1.6 Approach to identity

Conceptions of identity within Modernity deny any flexibility partly as a result of being rooted in the philosophy of Cartesian Dualism which assumes that identity is situated in the consciousness and that the body is simply a material vessel that accommodates the mind or spirit (Sullivan 2003). This understanding of identity is often based in binary understandings of gender and sexuality (men/women, heterosexuals/homosexuals) and the power that either denies or represses such identities is seen to be oppressive and disenabling. Central to the casting of identity in this light is the true essential being that needs/wants to be liberated and that has a specific set of attributes that are a product of socialisation. Post-structural notions of identity show how sexuality is not only discursively produced, but also how this is linked to power; such an understanding has provided me with the insight that identity must be viewed in a non-essential or reductive way. This allows me to unpack the various discourses that are interwoven in the books in a way that does not mimic what I am critiquing.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Queer Theory is not so much a 'theory' than a conceptual field that draws from gay and lesbian studies, feminism and gender studies. Although originating in the United States in the early 1990s, its influence has spread throughout the world. The phrase 'Queer Theory' was first used by Teresa de Lauretis in 1991 when she edited a

special issue of the journal *Differences* entitled, “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities—An Introduction”. Queer Theory is a critique of essentialist notions of identity using a post-structuralist approach. In addition, Queer Theory attempts to interrogate the pervasiveness of heteronormativity in order, as Berlant and M. Warner [5](1998), argue, to “[t]ry to unsettle the garbled but powerful norms supporting [the privilege of the heterosexual couple]—including the project of normalization that has made heterosexuality hegemonic” (548). Queer Theory also interrogates political rights based on liberal humanist notions attached to the progressive enlightenment values of “freedom, truth, and rationality” (Halperin 1995:19). Queer does refer to sexual orientation, but Queer Theory also takes into account a diverse assortment of sexualities and sexual practices that are considered abnormal, strange or odd, many of which are not homosexual, such as bisexuality and sadomasochism and it also creates a space for research into intersexuality and transgender.

The word ‘queer’ should be considered a verb rather than a noun and can be seen as a position that is available for anyone to adopt in order to investigate why heterosexuality is so normalised. The word ‘queer’ does not refer to a natural type or an already established category; it derives its meaning from being dissimilar from the norm (Halperin 1995). Being queer is not restricted to gay and lesbian people; it includes any person who feels that she or he does not belong in normal society. In fact, it refers to whoever is at odds with the norm or to anyone who “rupture[s] or resist[s]… normal kinship relations” (Butler 1994:15). Queer also refers to people whose genders do not behave appropriately (e.g. ‘‘boys who act ‘like girls’ and girls who look ‘like boys’’’) (Kumashiro 2000: 26). In support of the accommodating nature of queer, Judith Butler argues that “Queer Theory and activism acquired political salience by insisting that antihomophobic activism can be engaged in by anyone, regardless of sexual orientation” (Butler 2004:7).

Many valid critiques have been levelled against Queer Theory since the early 1990s. One of the most telling critiques is related to Queer Theory’s post-structural approach to identity as something that a person does rather than owns, but this does not mean, as Butler argues, that we can “simply throw off the identities we have

[5] Here I am referring to Michael Warner. Later on in this thesis I will refer to Daniel Noam Warner. Throughout this thesis I will refer to either M. Warner (1993; 1995; 1998; 1999) or D.N. Warner (2004).

become" (Butler 1997:12). Identity constructions have genuine repercussions—the possibility of being beaten up or even killed by extremely homophobic people just because of the suspicion that one is a homosexual is very real. One of the aims of Queer Theory, therefore, is to show the power of the fiction of the unitary subject in the construction of who is considered real. As Davies (1997) so accurately puts it:

> [t]he point of post-structuralism is not to destroy the humanist subject nor to create its binary other, the 'anti-humanist subject' (whatever that might be), but to enable us to see the subject's fictionality, whilst recognising how powerful fictions are in constituting what we take to be real (271).

Queer Theory has also been perceived as a theoretical project based in post-structural thinking that does not have a queer intellectual public outside the university and, therefore, has no political accountability. There has also been the potential for certain key texts such as Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) and Eve Koskofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1992) to become metonyms for queer theory and queer culture building. Queer Theorists have also been accused of endorsing risky and flippant types of research. But locating the term 'queer' in a title does not make whatever is being written about or researched seem progressive or revolutionary (Berlant and M. Warner 1995). As a result, Queer Theory has been interrogated and critiqued for being out of touch with the material world in its focus on analysing discourse. However, Milano (2011) argues that the "[r]elationship between individuals and the world is never unmediated: material 'stuff' can only acquire meaning in and through some kind of signifying system" (7). Theorists such as Watson (2005); Quinn and Sinfield (2006) and Kemp (2009) who are actively working with Queer Theory stress that the meaning of queer should never be stabilised in order to ensure that it can morph and change, resist assimilation and always remain subversive. Halperin argues that the more Queer Theory "verges on becoming a normative academic discipline, the less queer 'queer theory' can plausibly claim to be" (Halperin 1995:113).

In South Africa, Queer Theory has been critiqued by Morgan and Wieringa (2005) for being a white Western middle-class male approach to sexuality that does not take into account women, class or race. In South Africa the legacy of institutionalised racial, gender and sexual oppression has led to the development of a completely unique context with a set of challenges that cannot be accounted for by a theory that

critics such as Reddy (2000) and Oswin (2007) argue, is rooted in the affluence and liberalism of Western democracy. In addition, the queer research into dissident sexualities and sexual practices beyond gay and lesbian such as intersexuality, sadomasochism, bisexuality, prostitution and transgender, Reddy argues, "[e]levates the principle of sexual dissidence as the epistemology of sexuality in such a way that the perverse versus the normative becomes the motif of sexuality" (Reddy 2000: 169).The queer post-structuralist approach to identity has also been seen as a denial of the idea of a homosexual identity and, therefore, homosexual rights. The trend in sub-Saharan Africa, Gevisser (2011) argues, is that sexuality has become an issue of identity "'I am lesbian' … rather than mere practice 'I sleep with women'; an overt insistence on equality, rather than a covert satisfying of desire" (2). The reason for this, he argues, is the growth of an urban black working-class lesbian subculture. There is a new generation of black lesbians who are aware of their rights and who spurn the traditional roles they are supposed to occupy in society.

Taking the argument that Gevisser makes here about the importance of self-identifying as a homosexual in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the critique of Queer Theory above in relation to its perceived lack of political accountability, what could a queer post-structuralist critique of essential notions of identity offer in the South African context?

One of the problems with a human rights approach in the South African context is the misplaced confidence that activists, academics and the average person have of rights in facilitating equality. Queer Theory can help in making this limitation in a human rights framework more visible. I would like to outline what I believe a queer analysis[6] could offer in the unique South African context:

- Queer Theory offers a way into a discussion and analysis of identity, beyond identity politics, whilst acknowledging the contribution that identity politics has made in transforming society. A queer approach to identity views identity as something we do and not as something we possess. When identity can be viewed as flexible and unstable, contradictions and resistances within identity categories can be teased out. For example, masculine women, butch

[6] A queer analysis is a different way of trying to understand the complexity of identity that is not based in the pervasive identity politics approach.

lesbians, effeminate men, drag queens, transvestites, cross dressers and men who have sex with men are just a few examples of resistance to institutionalised (but unstable) gender and sexual categories. There is not one correct way to be a man or a woman or a heterosexual or a homosexual. The more a person tries to live up to what it is supposed to mean to be 'real', the more the impossibility of this task becomes apparent. People who perform their gender and sexuality differently to the heterosexual norm are often viewed as a threat to those people who believe in the biological truth of their gender and sexuality. As a result, they are often punished, ostracised, rejected, taunted and, in extreme cases, murdered (see the example of the murder of Eudy Simelane above). Queer Theorists explore how resistance to institutionalised genders and sexualities constructs different possibilities for being in the world, possibilities that irritate and challenge normality.

- Queer Theory can offer a more accommodating approach to the challenges of sexual difference because it tries to take into account non-normative sexualities and sexual practices that are not (only) homosexual. The history of gay and lesbian rights in South Africa is about how the illegitimate subject becomes a legitimate subject, and then, to a certain degree (depending on the context) how a legitimate subject becomes accepted and included (or not) in the body politic. Queer Theorists are, therefore, interested in what happens to those non-normative sexualities and sexual practices that are still illegitimate and they might ask the question: "Will the illegitimate ever be eligible for legitimation?" They might also ask if a particular sexuality accrues more status and value in society, what effect it has on those sexualities that do not, and what the repercussions of such inequality for the field of sexuality in general are.

- Queer Theory draws attention to some of the implications when a politics of rights aims for the assimilation of gay and lesbian people into broader society as a consequence of their being equal. What will happen to sexual difference if there is no difference between being a heterosexual and being a homosexual? Will politics still be necessary? By asking questions such as these, Queer Theorists irritate the boundaries of established political thought. Such queer problematising, however, acknowledges that a politics of rights is

the prevailing political logic in preventing the abuse of gay and lesbian people in liberal democracies throughout the world (and is the aspirant logic in countries in which gay and lesbian people are still abused and do not have rights).

In this thesis I will argue that Queer Theory can challenge and extend the debate about sexual politics in South Africa and can ultimately contribute towards the construction of another discursive horizon. In this process it will become evident that the South African context itself pushed and continues to extend Queer Theory in a unique way.

1.8 The books

Eleven non-fiction gay and lesbian books were written between 1992 and 2008 in South Africa and I have chosen to analyse six of them. The items in bold font in the list below are the books I have chosen.

***Male Homosexuality in South Africa: Identity Formation, Culture and Crises* (1992)**

***Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (1994)**

Aliens in the Household of God: Homosexuality and Christian Faith in South Africa (1997)

Moffies: Gay Life in South Africa (2000)

***Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens: A History and Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa* (2003)**

Balancing Act: South African Gay and Lesbian Youth Speak Out (2005)

Sex and Politics in South Africa (2005)

***Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa* (2005)**

***Performing Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004 Vol. 1* (2005)**

Pride: Protest and Celebration (2006)

To Have and to Hold: ***The Making of Same-Sex Marriage in South Africa* (2008)**

In an overview of these 11 books I will explain the reasons why I have chosen to analyse the six titles highlighted above.

My first chosen text is *Male Homosexuality in South Africa: Identity Formation, Culture and Crises* (1992) (referred to hereafter as *Male Homosexuality*). *Male Homosexuality* was written by Gordon Isaacs and Brian McKendrick—the Heads of the Department of Social Work at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand [7] respectively at the time. *Male Homosexuality* represents an epistemological break from conservative theorising about male homosexuality that occurred during the apartheid era. Rather than homosexuality being the object of research, homosexual concerns become the subject of research. Isaacs and McKendrick draw from the disciplines of psychology and sociology; they not only challenge the more conservative aspects of these disciplines but also illustrate how theory can be re-worked and re-interpreted to challenge certain homophobic assumptions. For example they re-work Erik Erikson's (1968) model of identity development in a non-pathological way, countering Erikson's view of homosexuality as a retarded form of sexual growth.

Isaacs and McKendrick draw from Western gay and lesbian literature and assess its relevance to the South Africa situation which functions as a counterpoint to the discipline specific jargon of the social sciences. *Male Homosexuality* is not just a tribute to homosexuality; it discusses internalised homophobia and the problems that emerge from the gay sub-culture. In addition it also assesses the impact that repressive apartheid legislation had on gay culture at the time and how this led to crisis for many gay individuals. Moreover, there is a discussion of HIV and AIDS which was having a major impact on gay culture. Finally, there is a chapter on clinical interventions that health care professionals can draw from when they encounter homosexual crises in male clients.

The next book that I chose is *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (1994) (referred to hereafter as *Defiant Desire*). *Defiant Desire* edited by Mark

[7] These two liberal universities, one in Johannesburg and the other in Cape Town, were involved in political opposition against apartheid.

Gevisser and Edward Cameron, documents the difficult journey of gay and lesbian liberation in South Africa. *Defiant Desire* was published in a time of transition in South Africa's history and reflects the hope and optimism of such a time but it also questions the role that identity and politics could play in a post-apartheid South Africa. A tone of celebration and authority permeates the book since the inclusion of gay rights in the constitution showed for the first time that homosexuals were official and legitimate citizens. *Defiant Desire* includes an eclectic mix of articles with a wide range of voices. There are 30 articles in the book. Some deal with the history of the gay and lesbian struggle, but alongside these are articles about moffie[8] queens and a lesbian gangster in the Western Cape. An article on stable gay and lesbian couples in Cape Town is juxtaposed with articles on black promiscuity on the Reef [9] and white gay male cruising at 'health clubs' in Johannesburg. There are profiles that include black lesbian life on the Reef, black lesbian experience in Umtata,[10] and Afrikaans gay life in Welkom.[11] *Defiant Desire* includes writing from butch/femme role-playing in lesbian relationships to a discussion on lesbian feminists organising in the Western Cape. There are articles about drag, gay language, gay publishing, homosexuality and literature, activism, HIV and AIDS and gay parenting as well as coming out stories. The multiplicity of the gay and lesbian experience in apartheid South Africa is thoroughly represented.

Between 1994 and 2002 only two non-fiction gay and lesbian books were published: *Aliens in the Household of God: Homosexuality and Christian Faith in South Africa* (1997) by Paul Gemond and Steve de Gruchy and *Moffies: Gay Life in South Africa* (2000) by Bart Luirink. The former is a collection of personal accounts of what it is

[8] "[m]offie', coined in the coloured communities of the Western Cape, has become the South African equivalent of 'queer', 'faggot' or 'flikker', with extremely derisive connotations. Nevertheless, particularly among coloured gay men themselves, it has been reappropriated, with some pride, as a term of self-identity (Chetty cited in Gevisser and Cameron, 1994: 127).

[9] "Johannesburg proper is encircled by a ring of what were once separate centers, some of them large and industrial, most of them dormitory municipalities such as Sandton, Roodepoort, Germiston, Alexandra and Soweto. The whole vast conurbation of inner and outer rings is known as the Witwatersrand, which is the name of the low 'ridge of white waters' that overlays the main gold-bearing seam. The area is also referred to as 'the Rand' and sometimes, just to confuse visitors, as 'the Reef'" (*Welcome to Gauteng* 2010:n.p.).

[10] Renamed Mthatha in 2004, it is the main town of the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province.

[11] In 1994 Welkom was a predominantly Afrikaans white working class gold mining town in the Free State Province.

like to be a gay Christian in South Africa and the latter is also a personal account, this time by a Dutch writer, of male gay life in South Africa. I have chosen not to analyse these two books because the content is not useful to this thesis.

There is a possibility that so few non-fiction gay and lesbian books were published during the period 1994-2002 because it was a time of waiting and seeing how gay life would unfold in South Africa after the first democratic elections in 1994. However, after the successful challenge to the sodomy laws in 1997 and then at least one legal challenge every year (and three in some years) to every existing homophobic law, [12] the NCGLE started to gain confidence and power. A non-fiction book was published almost every year from 2003 until my cut-off point of 2008, with 2005 representing the most prolific year during which four titles were published. [13]

During the period 2005-2006 a further three books that I will not be analysing were published: *Balancing Act: South African Gay and Lesbian Youth Speak Out* (2005) by Karen Martin and Joanne Bloch, *Sex and Politics in South Africa* (2005) edited by Neville Hoad, Karen Martin and Graeme Reid and *Pride: Protest and Celebration* (2006) edited by Shaun De Waal and Anthony Manion. *Balancing Act* is similar to *Aliens in the Household* since it is a collection of personal narratives of gay youth. *Sex and Politics in South Africa* and *Pride: Protest and Celebration* are collections of primary resources (such as letters, photos, copies of laws etc.) that trace gay liberation and gay pride in South Africa and do not have enough narrative for my purposes here.

My third choice is Ken Cage's *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens: A History and Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa* (2003) (referred to hereafter as *Gayle*). *Gayle* was seen as ground-breaking in terms of documenting gay language in South Africa and the book has entered the public realm in a significant way. A search on the internet locates this book as being available on all major online

[12] These include: sodomy decriminalised, adoption of children by homosexual couples allowed, permanent residence to committed same-sex couples, sexual orientation as a ground for asylum for refugees (limited), AIDS not a notifiable disease for immigration and full medical aid benefits for same-sex couples.

[13] *Balancing Act: South African Gay and Lesbian Youth Speak Out*, *Sex and Politics in South Africa*, *Tommy boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa* and *Performing Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004*

bookstores (Barnes and Noble, Amazon and Kalahari).[14] There is even an entry on Wikipedia for Gayle, Cage's self-styled name for the unique South African gay and lesbian language. Given that the field of gay language (or the lavender lexicon) is an established discipline within sociolinguistic research elsewhere in the world, a South African perspective is seen by those that advocate the lavender lexicon to be a welcome addition. The first part of Cage's book is concerned with contextualising the origins of a gay co-culture (defined as that which exists in addition to a mainstream heterosexual culture) and then proceeds to describe the history, form and function of gay language, and there is also a separate chapter on gay non-verbal language. The second part of the book is a dictionary of Gayle which deals with nearly two thousand lexical items used by gay men and women in South Africa.

Tommy boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa (2005) (referred to hereafter as *Tommy Boys*), my fourth choice, is the first South African gay and lesbian non-fiction book to deal exclusively with black working class lesbianism in an African context. The authors, Ruth Morgan and Saskia Wieringa, argue that human rights should be granted to black lesbians in Africa because there is ample proof of female same-sex practices from pre-colonial Africa. Ruth Morgan, cited in *Behind the Mask* (2007), summarises the major thrust of the book when she says that "[w]e hope to dispel the myth that same sex between women is un-African and that sexual liaisons between women are an authentic African practice" (n.p.).Evidence in support of this was gathered by seven self-identified black lesbian researchers who interviewed black lesbians and black lesbian couples in Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. These self-identified lesbian researchers attended a training workshop organised by Morgan and Wieringa on interviewing, working with oral histories and pre-colonial and contemporary women's same-sex relations. The findings from these participant researchers are presented in chapters one to eight of the book and provide rich data about the lived experience and social realities of lesbians in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa.

Another book from 2005 is *Performing Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004* (referred to hereafter as *Performing Queer*) edited by Mikki van Zyl and Melissa

[14]Online bookstore based in Southern Africa

Steyn, and this is my fifth choice. This book contains a selection of fifteen articles, by established and emerging black and white gay and lesbian scholars, that explore an array of subjects since the inclusion of the Equality Clause in the Constitution. These include the construction of Zulu gay masculinities; black lesbians' experiences with their families and communities; the problems with coming out at work; claiming gay space in Cape Town as a form of defiance; gay men and HIV in the post-apartheid era; mental health policy considerations for gays and lesbians; pastoral care towards gays and lesbians by the Dutch Reformed Church and the relevance of Western law in South Africa. The various contributors approach to gay identity and politics is nuanced and represents a wide array of contested voices.

The final book that I chose is *To Have and to Hold*: *The Making of Same-Sex Marriage in South Africa* (2008) (referred to hereafter as *To Have and To Hold*), edited by Melanie Judge, Anthony Manion and Shaun De Waal, which is a collection of 40 articles that deal with various aspects of the struggle for gay marriage in South Africa. These include legal and religious issues, reflections on marriage and a practical guide to the Civil Union Act where the editors of the book encourage readers to start if they are "eager to tie the knot" (Judge et al. 2008:7). *To Have and To Hold* brings together a range of voices on the subject of gay marriage—voices that range from those of legal experts to those of the newly married. The scope of the book is wide; it includes a mixture of academic and personal articles and a photo gallery of many gay weddings.

A significant motivating factor in my choice of these six texts is that they all include a strong research element and four of them are anthologies and, therefore, represent a wide range of opinions. Although it has been difficult to obtain the sales figures for each book, it is unlikely that any of them has been a bestseller. However, they are good sources for an analysis of the dominant discourses on gay and lesbian identities and politics in South Africa over a 16 year period, and are still influential and still available on Amazon and Kalahari and in the libraries of most universities in South Africa. [15]

[15] On 14th December 2011 a search on *Google Scholar* revealed that *Male Homosexuality* had been cited 46 times; *Defiant Desire* 155 times; *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens* 13 times; *Tommy Boys* 62 times; *Performing Queer* 22 times and *To Have and To Hold* 15 times.

I need to stress that although the six non-fiction books are all written or edited by white authors, a third of each of the four anthologies I analyse are written by African[16] gay men and lesbian authors. In addition, all six books are politically progressive in their approach to gay and lesbian identity and politics in South Africa. They are all aligned with the ideals of the progressive gay and lesbian movement in South Africa, as represented by GLOW and OLGA in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the NGCLE and LGEP in the late 1990s and 2000s.There are only two books that are not anthologies, *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and *Gayle* (2003) and the focus of the research in these two volumes concentrates mainly on the white gay male population. However, the authors of these two books make clear the limitations of researching a mainly white gay population. Isaacs and McKendrick state that their research population, drawn from the gay service organisation GASA 60-10[17] is small, mainly white and middle-class and is not "typical of all gays" and this, therefore, "introduces a distinct bias into the study" (Isaacs and McKendrick 1992: 169; 172). Similarly, Cage's research concentrates on the gay language of white English and Afrikaans gay men. He stresses that isiGqumo, the gay language, used according to him, by Nguni, Sotho, Venda and Tsonga gay men "has not been researched yet" (Cage 2003:23) but he does include as many isiGqumo words as possible.

In addition what is made evident by each author and editor without exception in the introductions to the six books is that the gay experience in South Africa has frequently been associated with white, middle-class, urban males, and that such a perception has been damaging both socially and politically. The six books, therefore, aim to expand or progressively re-examine (in the case of *Male Homosexuality* and *Gayle*) gay identity in a South African context. I feel that the editors of *Defiant Desire* Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron accurately represent the approach to problematising gay identity in the six non-fiction books when they write that they "will not marginalise—or deny a voice to—anyone" (Gevisser and Cameron 1994:12).

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[16] This refers to African, Indian and coloured people (http://www.statssa.gov.za/). The term 'African' is contested because for some people it refers to only black people.

[17] GASA (Gay Association of South Africa) was started in Johannesburg in 1982 and linked up with the gay organisation 6010 in Cape Town which also started up in the same year. Although offering numerous services to the gay community and being one of the first organisations in South Africa to respond to HIV and AIDS, GASA and GASA 6010 were ultimately criticised for their lack of opposition to apartheid (De Waal and Manion 2006).

1.9 Overview of thesis

In Chapter 2, “Theoretical Framework”, I outline the ideas of those theorists who are pivotal in informing my post-structural approach to discourse and identity: Judith Butler, Michel Foucault and Gayle Rubin. I also unpack the key debates that have occurred between feminism and Gay and Lesbian Studies over the past 20 years and which have led to the emergence of Queer Theory. In Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 I draw on evidence from the six books to support my arguments as they emerge, rather than presenting a chronological analysis of each book.

In Chapter 3, “Confessing to Homosexuality: Politics, Identity and the Problem with Disclosure”, I explore the six books in relation to their various approaches to issues of identity and politics by analysing their point of view regarding the coming out narrative. From a gay and lesbian rights perspective coming out is viewed as a milestone or landmark in the gay experience and is associated with empowerment and the combating of prejudice, discrimination and violence against sexual minorities. From a queer perspective, coming out is interrogated for being linked to the liberation of the true but repressed self. Coming out also forces a person into the established identity category ‘homosexual’ and thus works to reinforce and control sexual categories. *Gayle* (2003) and *Tommy Boys* (2005), in particular, provide significant support for this conceptualisation of coming out, but I also make reference to *Male Homosexuality* (1992), *Defiant Desire* (1994) and *Performing Queer* (2005).

Chapter 4, ““The Price We Pay”: Compromises in the Fight for Gay Marriage” [18] is premised on the argument that asking for and then receiving legitimation from the state does not come without terms and conditions. In addition, there has to be some consequences for the field of sexual inquiry in general when ‘the abnormal’ are admitted to one of society’s most normative institutions. In this chapter I investigate and try to understand why the LGEP fought for such a normative institution given its radical agenda. I additionally investigate what price had to be paid by the LGEP in order to win for gay and lesbian people the right to marry. I also reflect on whether the trade-off for gay marriage could have been the disavowal of some of the negatively perceived sexual practices and performances that are located in the gay and lesbian sub-culture, such as gay male promiscuity, butch femme lesbians,

[18] The first phrase comes from Judge et al. (2008:12).

feminine men and drag queens. In constructing my arguments I call on the work of Butler (2002) that I explore further in Chapter 2. Although there is no evidence of the debate related to gay and lesbian marriage in *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and only one reference to it in *Defiant Desire* (1994), from the publication of *Gayle* (2003) onwards more and more space is dedicated to the issue of gay marriage. In this chapter I focus on those books which contain the most extensive discussion on gay marriage—*Tommy Boys* (2005) and *To Have and To Hold* (2008).

In Chapter 5, "The Changing Representation of Homosexuality in South Africa: For Better or for Worse?" I argue that the representation of homosexuality in the six non-fiction books that I investigate changes dramatically over a 16 year period from a defiant and outrageous celebration of difference to a celebration of one of the most normative institutions in society—marriage. Why do these books increasingly dissociate themselves from the differences associated with homosexuality? In this chapter I make known the assimilationist and queer political approaches to the public face of homosexuality. I draw theory through from my literature review based on the ideas of Foucault (1978) and Rubin (1993)[19] about the construction of normal and abnormal sexualities and the differing values and statuses awarded to them. I also assess the importance of the de-pathologisation of homosexuality but question what the impact of the concomitant alignment of homosexuality with normality means for a politics of difference, and specifically if this has any relevance in the South African context with its virulent homophobia. Finally, I investigate the tension between the representation of outrageous queerness and gay and lesbian respectability in two of the earliest non-fiction texts, *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and *Defiant Desire* (1994).

In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the key literature that has informed my thinking in this thesis. I also present my theoretical framework and describe the tools that I have used to analyse the six books under investigation.

[19] Rubin, G.S. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" was originally published in 1984 in Vance, C.S. (Ed.) *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul. However, I use the essay as published in Abelove, H.; Barale, M.A. and Halperin, D.M.1993. *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. London: Routledge throughout this thesis.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

This thesis aims to provide a different way into thinking about the paradoxical nature of gay and lesbian rights in a post-apartheid South Africa. Such an investigation is made possible, I argue, by the space that has been created now that all homophobic laws have been successfully challenged and overturned. This thesis, as I have indicated above, will investigate the discourses of politics and identity in six South African non-fiction gay and lesbian books written over a 16-year period using Queer Theory as a conceptual tool. In this chapter I elaborate on those theorists from whom I obtained the tools to conduct such an inquiry. I also trace how Queer Theory emerges from the contestation between Gay and Lesbian Studies and feminism.

There is no genealogy for Queer Theory, as there is, for example, for feminism or linguistics, and whilst certain theorists' names do occur more frequently than others, there is no neat trajectory of ideas to trace and follow. I have chosen to work with three influential queer theorists for this thesis: Judith Butler, Michel Foucault and Gayle Rubin. These three theorists have contributed greatly to the destabilisation and subversion of essentialist formulations of identity as they relate to race, gender and sex, a project that is central to my own research.

Essentialist understandings of race, gender and sex are based on the belief that these categories are natural and biological properties of an individual. Such notions, which are pervasive and very powerful in society, are circulated by, reflected in, and reinforced by, different discourses and institutions such as the media, literature, education, religion and science. These discourses and institutions play a vital role in influencing people to adopt commonsense beliefs about the correctness, inevitability of, and truth about, what constitutes race, gender and sex. Coupled with these beliefs is an associated set of behaviours that are considered to be socially acceptable and that, often, intend to perpetuate white middle class patriarchal values. Judith Butler, Michel Foucault and Gayle Rubin strike at the foundation of such beliefs by presenting an approach to identity that is flexible, mutating, unstable and local. Generalised normative ideas about gender and sex, femininity and masculinity are demonstrated to be mythical, and categorised identities are shown always to be resisting their limitations. By way of example: on being labelled under

the sign ‘lesbian’, Judith Butler writes “I would like to have it permanently unclear what that sign signifies” (Butler 1990:121).

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section isolates the seven key concepts about discourse, gender, drag and the subject developed by Judith Butler that provide me with the tools to destabilise the link between gender and sex. The second section identifies some of the key insights made by Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1978). Foucault maps how the regulation of sexuality shifted from the married couple to children, sodomisers and the insane between the 17th and 19th centuries. This shift established the distinction between normal and abnormal sexualities which, paradoxically, did not lead to the greater control of sexualities, but rather, to the multiplication of them. The third section is dedicated to an analysis of Gayle Rubin’s “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality” (1993) (referred to hereafter as “Thinking Sex”) in which she identifies essentialist ideas about sex as being only one of the areas in which sexual thought is stifled. She reveals other ways in which this occurs through, for example, sex negativity, sex obsessiveness and the establishment of a sexual value system. Rubin links these repressive spheres to the marginalisation of sexual minorities and then argues why they cannot be accounted for by feminism or Gay and Lesbian Studies. The tension between feminism and Gay and Lesbian Studies leads to a discussion of sex and feminism, the feminist sex wars, the relationship between lesbianism and feminism, and sex and feminism in the South African context. Finally, Queer Theory as a critical hermeneutic to approach the fields of gender and sexuality is discussed.

2.1 Judith Butler

Judith Butler is a prolific writer, not only on gender and sexuality but also on language, philosophy, law and politics. She is amenable to being interviewed and to being the interviewer which means that there is a massive bibliography on her work. I have focused only on those writings which have direct relevance to this thesis. I have drawn seven key ideas from Butler’s work as outlined below:

- Heteronormativity and the matrix of intelligibility (Butler 1990; 1993; 2004);
- A person is always produced through and in discourse (Butler 1991; 1997a);
- Gender as an imitation of nothing (Butler 1991; 1997a);

- Resisting heterosexualised genders through drag (Butler 1991; 1997a; 1997b);
- The link between sexuality and gender is not resolute (Butler 1997a; 1998);
- Human rights and the constitution of the subject (Butler 2004); and
- Being critical of the political—problematising gay marriage (Butler 2002).

2.1.1 Heteronormativity and the matrix of intelligibility

Heteronormativity refers to all the discourses and practices in society that operate to make heterosexuality logical and privileged, i.e. normative. In Chapter 5 in my analysis of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and *Defiant Desire* (1994), I illustrate how these two texts challenge the heteronormative construction of the categories good (hetero) and bad (homo) sexuality. According to Butler (2004) the 'norm' in heteronormativity produces and maintains fields of intelligibility and the norms of gender and sexuality are governed by what she calls, elsewhere, the "matrix of intelligibility" (Butler 1990:17) or the "heterosexual matrix" (45). The matrix constructs subjectivity by articulating individual differences between people based on natural categories such as man, woman, homosexual and heterosexual. In my analysis of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and *Gayle* (2003) in Chapter 3, I show how the difference between being a homosexual and being a heterosexual is established through the coming out narrative and I then critique this narrative for reinforcing normative binaries.

Butler (1990) argues that once a person is identified as belonging to a specific category certain natural suppositions are made about them. They become known as social subjects and can therefore be categorised and controlled. When a person deviates from these natural identities she or he is no longer intelligible and may, consequently, be punished. For example, people are regulated by gender and sexuality which operate to make one culturally intelligible. When people deviate from a gender or sexual norm they become subject to punitive mechanisms that are in place (for example a boy being called a 'faggot' for displaying feminine characteristics). When I discuss *Tommy Boys* (2005) in Chapter 4, I show how the power of heteronormativity and the matrix of intelligibility in the African context have led to the exclusion of and violence against lesbians.

It must be noted that the heterosexual matrix that Butler writes about in *Gender Trouble* (1990) was problematic for her because it came to be seen as a "totalizing symbolic" (Osborne and Segal interview Butler 1994: 4). In *Bodies that Matter* (1993) she changed the term "heterosexual matrix" to "heterosexual hegemony" in order to open "the possibility that this matrix … has a kind of malleability" (Osborne and Segal interview Butler 1994: 4). Despite this change in terminology by Butler, I prefer to use the terms "matrix of intelligibility" and "heterosexual matrix" in this thesis since they are now familiar in academic discourse. However, I do take into account in my use of them Butler's warning that they should be malleable rather than totalising descriptions. I demonstrate in my analysis of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) in Chapter 5, how the construction of the category homosexual in the matrix of intelligibility in the early 1990s in South Africa was based on abnormality and deviance. In the same chapter my investigation into *To Have and To Hold* (2008) shows how the category 'abnormal homosexual' has transformed to such an extent that gay and lesbian people now have the right to marry.

2.1.2 A person is always produced through and in discourse

There is no doubt that Foucault's (1978) influence is pivotal in Butler's (1997a) contention that a person is always produced through and in discourse. However, in relating discourse to the specific notion of performativity, Butler draws on the linguistic theories outlined in J.L Austin's *How to Do Things With Words* (1962) and Jacques Derrida's critique of these theories in "Signature Event Context" (1986). In devising her ideas about performativity and performative acts she explores the idea of speech acts that "bring about what they name" (Butler 1997a:11).

Austin (1962) differentiates between two types of speech acts. First, constative utterances or perlocutionary acts are speech acts that have psychological consequences. For example, a babysitter who wants the child she is looking after to go to bed so that she can entertain a friend might say, "If you don't go to bed now, the bogeyman is going to come and get you." Second, performative utterances or illocutionary acts are the effect/s of a perlocutionary act. For example, by psychologically scaring the young child the babysitter gets the child to physically go to bed. These concepts are the foundation of Butler's idea of performative acts.

However, in her formulation of performative acts, she is mindful of the critique of Austin's theory explicated in Derrida's essay "Signature Event Context" (1986).

Derrida challenged Austin's contention that performative utterances work only if they are contained by the limitations of context and authorial purpose. According to Austin, in order for a performative utterance to put into action what it labels, three conditions are necessary. First, it must be said by someone who is nominated in a suitable context. Second, it must keep to specific conventions and, third it must take cognisance of the objectives of the speaker. Austin gives much attention to trying to differentiate between predictable and unpredictable performatives which, he asserts, pointed to a flaw in the linguistic sign. It is this flaw in the linguistic sign on which Derrida focuses his attention. For Derrida, Austin would not be trying to differentiate between predictable and unpredictable performatives if he were not aware that what people say is often taken out of context and is used differently to the speaker's initial intention. Derrida claims that what Austin refers to as a flaw in the linguistic sign is actually pervasive in all linguistic signs which are all, therefore, susceptible to "appropriation, reiteration and … re-citation" (Derrida cited in Salih 2004: 63).

Derrida refers to this process as "the essential iterability of [a] sign which cannot be contained or enclosed by any context, convention or authorial intention" (Derrida cited in Salih 2004: 63). Derrida maintains that the sign can be relocated into unanticipated contexts and cited in unpredictable ways. He refers to this transplanting and appropriation as "citational grafting" (Derrida cited in Salih 2004: 63) whereby all signs that are put between quotation marks can be used in ways that the author did not originally intend. Derrida proposes that this points to the capacity of the sign to fail and argues that this is an inherent feature of the sign. Butler saw a space for subversion in Derrida's understanding and reformulation of the linguistic sign, and she uses this space to portray performative acts as bringing to life what they name (Salih 2004).

Performative acts are linked to the authority of speech: when they are said they perform an action that persists. For example "I now pronounce you man and wife" not only performs the action "to marry" but also reinforces "the heterosexualization of social bonds". Performative acts can be viewed as a locale where "power acts *as* discourse" (Butler 1997a:11, original emphasis). However, power itself is not a

subject that has agency: it is only by constantly repeating certain acts, that power, with all its flaws, is revealed.

Performative acts can be related to subject formation in the following way. A person who speaks produces not only an effect in discourse but before he or she speaks, there is a discourse that informs what is spoken. Likewise, a person does not even exist (besides in the flesh and blood sense) before his or her subjectivity is discursively constructed. A person becomes a subject only by being named, hailed or interpellated. Althusser (2001) provides the example of being hailed with a "Hey, you there!" by a police officer and continues: "[a]ssuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*" (Althusser 2001:118, original emphasis). Therefore, a person can say 'I' only once he or she has been addressed and the 'I' has been activated to speak. The paradox here is that a person needs to be recognised socially to emerge as a subject and this recognition relates to numerous factors such as context and social identity. For example, in my analysis of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) in Chapter 5, I explain the difficulties that the authors had in finding research participants because of the persecution of homosexuals in South Africa at the time. The only research subjects who were willing to identify as homosexual were a small group of white middle class men who volunteered at a gay crisis organisation.

Butler (1997c) argues that "[t]o be hailed as a 'woman' or 'Jew' or 'queer' or 'Black' or 'Chicana' may be heard or interpreted as an affirmation or an insult, depending on the context in which the hailing occurs" (91). Further, full recognition is not possible because a person cannot completely occupy the name of whatever social identity is hailed or activated. For Butler (1990), there cannot be an assumption of a preceding truth behind a supposedly descriptive category such as homosexual. Even if the 'I' is a result of a particular repetition which seems to endorse the appearance of stability and consistency, there is no 'I' which comes before the sexuality that it is supposed to enact. The repetition and the subsequent inability to reproduce this repetition generates a multitude of performances that make up and dispute the unity of the 'I' (125). In this way subjectivity will always be fractured and unable to correctly play out the assumptions of particular categories. When I discuss *To Have and To Hold* (2008) in Chapter 4, I show how gay and lesbian identities are viewed as immutable

by an overwhelming majority of the contributors to the book. This point of view is, therefore, in conflict with the understanding of identity that Butler (1990) describes above that is flexible and unstable. She argues further that becoming a subject is never complete; it is an ongoing process. This is a key idea for Butler for two reasons. First, it underpins her argument about the performativity of gender. A person becomes recognised as a particular gender only by repeating certain acts that over time come to be seen as real. Butler, however, stresses that

> [i]f gender is a kind of doing, an incessant activity performed in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing, it is not for that reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint (Butler 2004:1)

Second, as a result of the performativity of gender anyone can imitate a different gender, which offers a way for gender to be subverted. For example, a male drag artist is not just an imperfect imitation of a woman but an imitation that shows the very instability of the category 'woman'. Similarly, a butch lesbian does not only imitate a man but she accentuates the fragility of masculinity. A South African lesbian feminist theorist such as Mary Hames would be in disagreement with Butler on this point as I make known in my analysis of Hames's article "Lesbians and the Civil Union Act: A Critical Reflection" in Chapter 4. For Hames butch lesbians are trying to imitate men which reinforces patriarchal norms.

Gender performance and drag are just two examples of gender subversion that Butler provides, but there are many more. As Butler states, "[y]ou can't plan or calculate subversion. In fact, I would say that subversion is precisely an incalculable effect" (Osborne and Segal interview Butler 1994: 5). In the course of my examination of *Defiant Desire* (1994) in Chapter 5, I explain how drag shows in 1950s Cape working class coloured communities subverted political and gender norms that were enforced in apartheid South Africa.

2.1.3 Gender as an imitation of nothing

In conceptualising her idea that gender is an imitation of nothing, Butler (1991) was influenced by two key texts: Joan Riviere's "Womanliness as a Masquerade" (1929); and Esther Newton's *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (1972). The pivotal argument presented by Riviere is that there is no difference between being a

real woman and impersonating one. She concludes by stating that "[t]he reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade'… they are the same thing" (Riviere cited in Case 1993: 300). A valuable insight provided by Newton in *Mother Camp* (1972) is that drag is not about assuming a gender that legitimately belongs to a particular group.

> It seems self-evident that persons classified as "men" would have to create artificially the image of a "woman", but of course "women" create the image "artificially" too. Note that the only item that is intrinsically more "faked" for a male is the bosom. But what of padded bras? As of 1969, beads and long hair are no longer exclusively "feminine" symbols (5).

Butler drew on the ideas of Riviere and Newton in formulating her contention that there is no such thing as a real woman since even a man could masquerade as a woman. The perception of what is the correct or appropriate gender/sex is always incorrectly established as a result of the compulsory regime of heteronormativity. In relation to this in my study of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) (see Chapter 5) I describe how the authors aim is to show how the male homosexual lifestyle is more encompassing than sexual activity. The reason for this is that one of the ways that heteronormativity maintains its dominance is by casting male homosexuals as overtly sexual and, therefore, not normal.

There is no gender that legitimately belongs to a particular category as this would assume that gender is linked to sex, and that femininity is the biological property of a female and masculinity the biological property of a male. According to Butler (1991), drag is an example of how gender is about impersonation:

> Drag constitutes the mundane way in which genders are appropriated, theatricalized, worn, and done; it implies that all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation. If this is true, it seems, there is no original or primary gender that drag imitates, but *gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original*; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an *effect* and consequence of the imitation itself (127, original emphasis).

In a structuralist approach to gender and sex, gender is seen to be socially constructed, sex is seen to be biological and the two genders—male and female—are those that naturally couple. This is what Butler (1991) calls "heterosexualised genders" (127) and while they are seen to be the most truthful genders, they are in

fact a fantasy. By way of example in my investigation of *Tommy Boys* (2005) in Chapter 3, I show how being a lesbian in the African context is a powerful and dangerous way of resisting heterosexual and gender norms. For Butler, the truth of heterosexualised genders is created through a repetitive performance that establishes these two genders as compulsory and original and, therefore, the source of all imitations. People who believe in such gender fantasies perceive anyone who does not perform their gender or sexuality correctly as being bad copies of heterosexual men and women—an inferior version of the original. In Chapter 5 I look at how, in *Male Homosexuality* (1992), the shame of homosexuality, which the authors aim to tackle by promoting a version of homosexuality that is more normal, is related to the idea that gay men are flawed versions of heterosexual men.

Original heterosexuality is seen as the source of all copies and any imitation of original heterosexuality is considered to be an inferior copy. However, Butler (1991) argues that the original "is itself a copy of nothing" (128). Heterosexuality's claims to originality need to be questioned in terms of what origins mean. An origin needs proof to show that it is an origin so it needs an offshoot, but it also needs to be different from that offshoot. Therefore, if it were not for the idea of homosexual as an offshoot there would not be any formulation of heterosexuality as the origin. Essentially, Butler argues that there is no actual source for heterosexuality: it is an unattainable copy of itself that pretends that it is the original.

For Butler, while gender is a compulsory performance, it is not a final one because it is never complete: the subject can never achieve what 'it' is supposed to copy. Gender is an effect of a "regulatory regime of gender differences" (Butler 1997a:16) in which genders are separated and put into a hierarchy under restriction and the subject becomes intelligible only in such a hierarchy. In my discussion of Rubin (1993) below I illustrate how normal and abnormal sexualities are also hierarchically organised and separated.

An example of the way that gender becomes intelligible, Butler claims, is in giving a girl a typically feminine name which starts a process that is binding, never complete and which never matches the standard of what it means to be feminine and a girl. What is ironic here is that, in order to pass the test 'girl', this girl has to make sure that she knows exactly what it is that makes up a girl. Butler argues that

> [f]emininity is thus not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, and punishment (Butler 1997a:18).

Similarly, masculinity and heterosexuality are also forced repetitions of a norm for which there is no original and which is highly regulated. Trying to show the truth of heterosexualised genders is impossible and always fails, as is evidenced by the numerous subversions of heterosexualised genders of which drag is one example. This can be seen in *Defiant Desire* (1994); I explain (see Chapter 5) how the notion of homosexuality as defiant is presented by the editors, and, following from this how a space is opened up for a presentation of drag as a way of resisting the foundations of heterosexual normality.

2.1.4 Resisting heterosexualised genders through drag

Gender is a necessary repetition which cannot be escaped, but it also provides the very tools for the resistance to, and subversion of, heterosexuality. However, just copying heterosexuality and showing its privileged position in society is not the same as subverting it. Even if every human did drag it would not lead to the demise of heterosexuality. So, for example, a movie like *Mrs Doubtfire* (1993) in which Robin Williams acts the part of an aging Irish female housekeeper is not subversive because, at the end of the movie, he is discovered and punished and there is a return to, and a revering of, heteronormativity. So what counts as an act of gender subversion that does not revere heterosexuality? Butler does not have an answer to this because, for her, resistance cannot be calculated, but in terms of *Mrs Doubtfire*, one subversive ending would have Robin Williams taking on his aged female persona and reconciling with his ex-wife in a lesbian, intergenerational relationship.

When drag queens parody femininity and butch lesbians parody masculinity it is as a copy of a copy for which there is no source. Therefore, the consequence of gay identities is not an imitation of heterosexuality, but is, rather, the exposure of heterosexuality as a copy for which no original exists. Heterosexuality is constantly trying to prove that it is the original and, in so doing, it in fact shows that it is under constant threat. A constant threat to heterosexuality is the imitation of femininity and masculinity, examples of which I provide in my analysis of *Defiant Desire* (1994) in Chapter 5 (with specific reference to two articles that investigate drag shows and a

transgender lesbian gangster in the segregated working class Cape in the 1950s and 1960s).

This is why heterosexuality needs to replicate itself to protect itself from that which threatens its very existence—homosexuality. Heterosexuality and homosexuality are completely reliant on each other for their existence: one does not make sense without the other. Heterosexuality is seen as natural and normal, and homosexuality is viewed as unnatural and abnormal. See below for a discussion of Foucault (1978) in which I trace the 'invention' of normal and abnormal sexualities in 19th century Western Europe, and also uncover one of the fundamental weaknesses in Foucault's argument about the development of a politics of difference which lies in his ignoring the impact of colonialism.

Heterosexuality is seen as normal only because homosexuality is not. Heterosexuality consistently tries to eradicate homosexuality, but this is unsuccessful. The reason for this is that heterosexuality can never live up to the fantasy it projects; there is always resistance to it. The constant failure of heterosexuality allows the parody of gender to flourish. Butler cautions, however, this does not mean that gay identities are derived from, or governed by, heterosexuality but are rather shaped by it (Butler 1997a). Parodies of heterosexuality (such as drag) highlight how completely constructed heterosexuality is by revealing that it makes itself the original only through a compelling performance of duplication. A drag queen knows exactly how to act, be and look because she has the perfect role-model—the feminine fantasy. The more genders are copied and duplicated, the more the heterosexual assertion to originality is shown to be false. In my analysis of *Defiant Desire* (1994) in Chapter 5, I highlight how in the context in which the book was written, drag as a form of resistance to heterosexuality was a contested issue in the gay and lesbian movement because of the association of drag with the heteronormative stereotype of gay men dressing up as women because they are not really men.

Butler's notion of drag as resistance to the assumed naturalness of heterosexuality and the categories male and female has often been misunderstood by those critics who see drag as a "role" (Butler 1990:130) that can be changed arbitrarily. This would imply that behind each drag artist is a free and stable subject who can change

gender from day to day (Butler 1997a). Quite the opposite actually occurs: in order to become a recognisable subject it is necessary that some kind of gender imitation is already occurring. Drag is not about producing different types of genders but is rather about revealing the myth of normative heterosexuality. Being a person and being a gender is interwoven and the fiction of the unity of gender is achieved by repetition which creates the illusion that there was a genderless subject to begin with (Butler 1997a).

2.1.5 The link between sexuality and gender is not resolute

In psychoanalysis the connection between gender and sexuality is a complex process of consultation between the connection of identification and desire. These complex understandings are vital. However, it is also necessary to understand the importance of how sexuality and gender connect in a structural way, because that is the existing paradigm. The alignment of gender with sex is, as Butler notes, "the most reductive of heterosexism's psychological instruments" (Butler 1997 a: 24) because the multiple ways in which one can, say, identify as a woman or as a man attest to the impossibility of a singular femininity or masculinity. Further, although sexuality does not determine gender it is necessary to preserve this link (albeit in a non-essentialising and reductive way) because, as Butler explains, homophobia[20] often assigns a failed gender to homosexuals. My examination of *Defiant Desire* (1994), reveals how homosexual issues in South Africa were only taken seriously by activists in the liberation struggle once there was a change in their perception that all homosexuals were either limp-wristed effeminate men or beefy lesbians (see Chapter 5). Butler (1997a) adds that homophobic dread about homosexual acts is frequently about not performing gender correctly. Thus it is important, she argues, that a theoretical tool be available to show how sexuality is monitored by regulating and humiliating gender.

[20] I am sure that Butler would confer with M.Warner (1999) when he writes "[h]omophobia is a misleading term…because it suggests that the stigma and oppression directed against this entire range of people can be explained simply as a phobic reaction to same-sex love" (38).

2.1.6 Human rights and the constitution of a subject

Butler (2004) questions the underpinnings of a human rights discourse for being associated with individuals. As a result, the defence against discrimination is associated with specific groups of individuals. Butler argues that the problem with a human rights discourse is that the language used represents people as bounded beings but that this is not adequate to describe the complexity of people. For example, in a discourse that represents people as bounded, gender is seen as something that is constructed by society and sexuality is seen as a biological possession. In Chapter 3, in my interrogation of the coming out narrative, I show how for gay and lesbian theorists such as Plummer 1975; Cass 1979; Coleman 1982; Cain 1991; Rust 1993; Phelan 1993; Gagné et al. 1997; Elliot 1996; Hubbard and De Welde 2003, and Rasmussen 2004, coming out as a homosexual is viewed as revealing one's true but hidden essence.

However, for Butler (2004) gender and sexuality are not constructions or possessions, but rather, "*modes of being dispossessed*" (19, original emphasis). Butler argues that the connection between rights and the possession of a true self is about who is considered real and who is not; about "[w]hat makes my own life bearable … and what makes … the lives of others bearable" (17). Who is and who is not considered real is a question not only of knowledge but also of power. When the unreal makes a claim to be real it involves the disruption of established knowledge and realities. This is exactly where transgendered, butch-femme and transsexual people are located—on the borders of unreality but trying to have a bearable life, trying to be seen as real. I question (see my analysis of gay marriage in the South African context in Chapter 4) whether the legitimation of gay and lesbian lives through marriage would have any effect on the future efforts to legitimate lives that are not narrowly defined as gay and lesbian.

For Butler (2004), transgendered, transsexual and butch-femme people are often viewed as frivolous and marginal by the gay and lesbian rights movement and, as a result, are not seen to be important in developing new political ideals. This results in a failure to recognise what the otherwise-gendered endure and that embodiment comprises a contested set of norms about who constitutes a possible subject in politics. In my analysis of *Gayle* (2003) in Chapter 3, I show how the author argues

that gay and lesbian lives are more important than outrageous and gender deviant queer lives because they have been made more respectable by the constitution. In a similar vein in Chapter 5, I reveal how the authors of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) argue that "transsexuals, and butch-femme types" (211) are often drawn to the gay sub-culture and that this is problematic because such people dilute what should be an exclusive gay space.

Transgendered and other outcast positions make us question the norms of what is real and they indicate how new types of reality can be forged. This cannot happen if the body is seen as a "static and accomplished fact" (Butler 2004: 29). M.Warner (1999) argues that the BTI (in LGBTI [21]) is included only in the interests of political correctness and that these lives are often ignored, sidelined or not seen to be as important as gay and lesbian lives are. In a similar vein, Butler (2004) criticises the aims of "lesbian and gay international rights movement[s]" (29) for asserting homosexuality not only as a sexual practice but as a feature of the social world. In Butler's Western and privileged American context perhaps homosexuality is nearly completely accepted, but in the South African context this is not the case at all. Despite gay and lesbian people having full constitutional equality with heterosexual people, to be gay or lesbian in South Africa means to subject oneself to a particular set of dangers and threats.

I do understand that Butler is not suggesting that gay and lesbian lives are not worthy of protection, she is arguing rather that to assert gayness as the most worthy of outcast sexualities raises the question of what does and what does not count as a human life.

> [i]t is one thing to assert the reality of lesbian and gay lives as reality, and to insist that these are lives worthy of protection in their specificity and commonality; but it is quite another to insist that the very public assertion of gayness calls into question what counts as reality and what counts as human life (Butler 2004:29-30).

Crucially, in her critique of a rights-based discourse, Butler argues that to struggle for sexual rights is not just about attaching rights to a person, but about striving "*to be conceived as persons"* (Butler 2004: 32, original emphasis). If we conceptualise rights as something that should be attached to a person, we assume that he or she

[21] Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex

is already constituted. However, if one is trying to become recognisable as a person as well as agitating for social transformation, then to struggle for rights becomes a way to become involved in the political boundedness through which sense is made of a person. International human rights subject the human to "redefinition and renegotiation" (33). Those responsible for drafting human rights rewrite the human when they are faced with the cultural limits of a human. This is inescapable. In *Tommy Boys* (2005) (see Chapter 4), it seems to me that the editors challenge Butler's ideas about subject formation and a human rights discourse. Such a challenge is premised on the reality that in the majority of countries in Africa (bar South Africa) gay and lesbian people are not seen as humans and are subject to torture, abuse and even death. Their lives are not considered to be as worthy as the lives of normal people are.

What Butler is attempting to do writing in a contemporary liberal and affluent Western context in which gay and lesbian people have a high degree of recognition, is to try to make sense of what rights do for a sexual minority that is not gay and lesbian. Sexual minorities have to adopt norms that do not suit them because rights recognise us and sustain our viability as human. Therefore, sexual minorities are reliant for being intelligible on the norms of others. In my appraisal of *Defiant Desire* (1994) in Chapter 5, I present the editors' and various authors' points of view as to the most efficacious way to ensure that homosexuals never have to endure persecution again in a post-apartheid South Africa. The prevailing political approach to end apartheid at the time by the ANC was based on a human rights model and this is the approach that was adopted by the gay and lesbian movement.

For gay and lesbian people to be recognised by a rights-based discourse has not brought about full recognition. To be and to live differently from the norm can still lead to death (as I mentioned in Chapter 1 in relation to Eudy Simelane). For Butler (2004)

> [t]he person who threatens violence proceeds from the anxious and rigid belief that a sense of world and a sense of self will be radically undermined if such a being, uncategorizable, is permitted to live within the social world (34).

This violence comes from a need to maintain the supposed natural link between gender and sexuality. The danger of assuming natural biological categories is that

they do not take into account how humans are “produced, reproduced, and deproduced” (Butler 2004: 36). It is essential, therefore, to keep open what could potentially constitute a human in rights based discourse and politics. The reason for this is that if we start with a human as the foundation of human rights then such a human is already known and defined, but “we do not yet know and cannot ever definitively know in what the human finally consists” (37). It is for this reason that dual routes in politics should be followed. For Butler, the notion of dual routes refers to being aware of how not having human rights can lead to suffering, as well as being aware that the limited construction of ‘human’ in ‘human rights’ leads to doctrinaire politics. In looking at *Defiant Desire* (1994) (see Chapter 3) I provide numerous examples from a range of authors showing how gay and lesbian people were not considered to be human, and as a result, their lives were less valued. By the time that *To Have and To Hold* was published in 2008, it was evident that gay and lesbian lives were more valued. This is a positive progression. However, gay and lesbian lives seem to be more valued than other queer lives such as those of transgendered, bisexual and intersexed people. This is made evident by the fact that even though the Civil Union Act is open to the entire LGBTI community, *To Have and To Hold* (2008) is exclusively (bar two exceptions) concerned with the lives of gay and lesbian people.

Butler (2004) continues that while the discourse of human rights is necessary to obtain gains, it is understood that the discourses ‘human’ and ‘rights’ should also be critically dissected. In particular, the boundaries and assumptions of inclusion and the ways in which these boundaries and assumptions should be extended, obliterated or revised in order to open up what it means to be gendered and human needs to be scrutinised. In order for a life to become bearable there are specific norms that have to be satisfied and, although norms themselves are always contested this does not mean that a single political course is adequate. As Butler argues, “[d]emocracy does not speak in unison; its tunes are dissonant, and necessarily so” (39). In my three analysis chapters, I trace the changing political paths from the earliest text in 1992 to the latest one in 2008. The earlier texts unanimously support liberation politics as the most progressive approach in bringing a positive change to the status of homosexuality in South Africa. The later texts

reflect more of a dissonance with regards to the effectiveness of a rights-based political discourse in ending prejudice against gay and lesbian people in this country.

2.1.7 Being critical of the political—problematising gay marriage

In “Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?” (2002) (referred to hereafter as “Kinship”) Judith Butler challenges the reduction of the gay marriage debate to the simple question of ‘for’ or ‘against’, arguing that this simplification does not account for the subtleties that construct this field. This polarised debate has seen those for gay marriage fighting for equality within the status quo and those against gay marriage wanting to have nothing to do with the status quo. As Kemp (2009) argues, assimilationists want only “a place at the table” whilst radical queers want to “burn the table” (8). Butler frames “Kinship” by arguing that to be ‘for’ or ‘against’ gay marriage is a result of the norms of choice that are restricted by the language that we are forced to use to articulate resistance. The restrictions enforced by language are problematic for her, and the effects of the limits of language is a consistent thread in her work (see 1991; 1993; 1994; 1997a; 2002). She, therefore, attempts to develop radical ways of thinking that can rupture the language norms by which we are bound. A person may wish for a new way in which to articulate the gay marriage debate, and in the development of theory there seems always to be a new language on the horizon, but there is not. This forces a person to make a choice rather than to question the construction of having to make a choice that is bound by the norms of intelligibility.

There is a clear sense in “Kinship” that Butler (2002) finds gay marriage very problematic. However, she does not want to resolve the dilemma in favour of one or the other position, but rather, aims to “to develop a critical practice that is mindful of both” (28). Butler is aware that not to be recognised by the state has serious and very real consequences: “If you’re not real, it can be hard to sustain yourselves over time” (25). She further argues that

> [i]t means that when you arrive at the hospital to see your lover, you may not. It means that when your lover falls into a coma, you may not assume certain executorial rights. It means that when your lover dies, you may not be able to receive the body. It means that when the child is left with the nonbiological parent, that parent may not be able to counter the claims of biological relatives in court and that you lose custody and even access (25).

As I point out in my analysis of *Tommy Boys* (2005) in Chapter 4, Morgan and Wieringa describe the terrible homophobia against lesbians in Africa, and as a result, they argue for lesbian rights to include marriage. However, being required to ask the state for legitimation in order to be recognised does not mean that questions cannot be asked about the very nature of the state or of legitimation itself. This is why it is necessary to be critical of the political, and, in the context of this chapter, that would be gay marriage. This idea informs my analysis of *To Have and To Hold* (2008) in Chapter 4. The editors of this text (Judge et al.) argue that the price of difference in South Africa is too high and, therefore, they see gay marriage as an effective way of combating homophobia by normalising homosexuality. I argue that this approach to difference needs to be critically re-assessed.

In the gay marriage debate the state is seen to be withholding the right to marriage which, within a human rights discourse, should be distributed impartially irrespective of sexual orientation. However, there is often little thought given to what the implications of gay marriage will be and the fact that "the state's offer might result in the intensification of normalization is not widely recognized as a problem within the mainstream lesbian and gay movement" (Butler 2002:16). Gay marriage is concerned with state legitimation which is an "ambivalent gift" because legitimation occurs only through exclusion, by "producing and intensifying regions of illegitimacy" (17). The gay marriage debate in the United States is premised on making the illegitimate legitimate. However, what is not considered is that, beyond this binary, is "a field that is less thinkable, one not figured in light of its ultimate convertibility into legitimacy" (17). This field outside the legitimate/illegitimate debate is not yet thought of as anything and does not have legitimacy as its ultimate aim. It is the place of possibility which for Butler "is as crucial as bread" (Butler 2004: 29).

The debates about gay marriage, however, occur according to a logic based on legitimate/illegitimate and there is little consideration of the effect of gay marriage on possibility**.** For example, questioning whether marriage should include homosexuals is based on the premise that sexuality is already organised around marriage and that anything outside of this is neither possible nor recognisable. This is the point that informs my critique of *Tommy Boys* (2005) in Chapter 4. The editors of *Tommy Boys*, make a claim for the right of gay marriage in a contemporary African setting by providing evidence of the existence of women marriages in pre-colonial Africa. They

also make numerous other traditional same-sex practices known and so it seems strange that they should highlight gay marriage as the preferred way to organise African same-sex sexuality when there are so many other ways that it manifests. Gay marriage legitimates only gay people, and the various sexual practices that fall outside of the ambit of the married gay person become illegible, and this results in the emergence of new sexual hierarchies. These hierarchies create a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate queer lives but also produce different types of illegitimacy. I show, in my exploration of *To Have and To Hold* (2008) (see Chapter 4) how in its hasty bid to get gay marriage legalised in South Africa, the LGEP did not fully think through the potential of gay marriage to reconfigure legitimate and illegitimate queer lives. In the American context Butler argues further that the idea that other sexual possibilities will not be eligible for legitimacy is ignored in the gay marriage debate. In other words, those who are not recognised by the state do not exist. Butler (2002), however, challenges such bounded normativity (in which the field of exclusion is made known only by what is included) by arguing that there is

> [a]lways the possibility of savoring the status of unthinkability, if it is a status, as the most critical, the most radical, the most valuable. As the sexually unrepresentable, such sexual possibilities can figure the sublime within the contemporary field of sexuality, a site of pure resistance, a site uncoopted by normativity (18).

This (the possibility of a site that cannot be co-opted by normativity) seems very attractive for a radical critique, but Butler questions how one can think of a politics from an unrepresentable point of view. Additionally, it is vital to question how one can think of politics without consideration of the unrepresentable. In terms of this predicament, therefore, a person might want to just opt out, to function somewhere between the legitimate and the illegitimate. This is exactly where the critical perspective is located—"at the limit of the intelligible" (Butler 2002:19), in other words, on the outskirts of intelligibility, far removed from what is considered legitimate.

The risk in this formulation is that being on the outskirts of intelligibility could be construed as an apolitical position. But this is definitely not the case according to Butler's line of thought. In a discourse of intelligibility, politics necessitates that one take a stand for or against marriage. However, critical reflection insists that one interrogate why gay marriage has become the question that will determine what

constitutes important political discourse. A commentator on gay marriage Yarbrough (2006), argues that it has progressed into the "seemingly inevitable civil rights issue of our time" (497).In my conclusion to Chapter 4, I question how gay marriage came to dominate the political agenda of the LGEP in South Africa from the late 1990s, when prior to this time robust queer activism was the order of the day.

Butler (2002) questions why becoming political depends on a person's ability to operate within the established binaries of gender and sexuality rather than interrogating why the sexual field is constrained by the acceptance of these very terms.

> Without the critical perspective, we might say, politics relies fundamentally on an unknowingness—and depoliticization—of the very relations of force by which its own field of operation is instituted (19).

Recommending that one be critical, that one think about how a sexual domain is created, does not mean suggesting that one must inhabit a place that has no boundaries. Rather, being critical about how domains become limited takes place through breaking up the ground itself. Even in intelligible sexuality there are always middle zones or hybrid zones that show that binaries are not exhaustive. Such middle or hybrid zones irritate the boundaries between legitimacy and illegitimacy. In terms of the gay marriage debate, sexual practices that are not yet articulated within the language of what counts as legitimate occupy such zones. These unarticulated positions are shut down as a result of the desperation to stake a political claim, so options become naturalised. It is therefore crucial to "keep the tension alive between maintaining a critical perspective and making a politically legible claim" (Butler 2002: 20). This is not to suggest that one should be critical rather than political in relation to gay marriage, but, rather, that "a politics which incorporates a critical understanding is the only one that can maintain a claim to being self-reflective and nondogmatic" (20).

To be political does not mean that one has to take an immutable and fixed stand. To state that one is 'for' or 'against' gay marriage may be complicated because one may want to secure that right for those who want to marry even if one does not want to do so oneself. In Chapter 4 in my exploration of *To Have and To Hold* (2008), I note that the editors (Judge et al.) explain how gay marriage was interrogated by all

stakeholders and although there were many reservations, in the final analysis it was decided that marriage should be made available as a right. Butler adds that one may want to counter the homophobic arguments that have been mounted against gay marriage or one may feel that marriage is the best option for gay and lesbian people, in order to establish a new norm for the future. Finally Butler (2002) argues that

> it may be that one not only opposes it for oneself, but for everybody, and that the task at hand is to rework and revise the social organization of friendship, sexual contacts, and community to produce non-state-centered forms of support and alliance, since marriage, given its historical weight, only becomes an 'option' by extending itself as a norm (and thus forecloses options), one which also extends property relations and renders the social forms for sexuality more conservative (21).

For a progressive sexual movement (such as the gay and lesbian rights movement) to propose that marriage is the only way to legitimate sexuality is "unacceptably conservative" (Butler 2002:21). Even if the quest for legitimacy is centred on the recognition of legal contracts, one still needs to interrogate why either marriage or legal contracts become the determinant of, for example, how health care benefits are allocated. Why can there not be a way to grant such benefits without consideration of the beneficiary's marital status? The argument that gay marriage should become a right in order to gain access to legal benefits takes little cognisance of the ramifications for the "community of the nonmarried, the single, the divorced, the uninterested, the nonmonogamous" (21). I discuss in my examination of *To Have and To Hold* (2008) in Chapter 4, how, for me, the Civil Union Act, rather than moving Family Law in the direction of diversity, has actually eroded the rights of unmarried gay and lesbian people.

That the gay and lesbian rights movement would look to the state for the legitimation of gay marriage given its recent history makes sense for Butler. Striving for such recognition is, partially, a response to AIDS and in particular, is a "shamed response" (Butler 2002:26) (given that AIDS was seen to be the result of gay male promiscuity). In my analyses of *Gayle* (2003) in Chapter 3 and *Male Homosexuality* (1992) (see Chapter 5) I show how the authors of these texts, shamed by the association of homosexuality with deviant sex, construct arguments in support of a more holistic gay lifestyle. Butler questions whether gay male promiscuity is the disavowal that the gay and lesbian rights movement wants to make in order to secure gay marriage

and, furthermore, she questions whether they have thought through the social repercussions of this disavowal.

The gay marriage debate in the American context creates a significant dilemma for Butler. Living with norms that provide the queer community with no recognition results in suffering. But demanding to be recognised can lead to new forms of control, new sexual hierarchies. The sexual field can be foreclosed and the state's power can be extended if one does not critically challenge "the very norms of recognition supplied and required by state legitimation" (Butler 2002:26). An example of the extension of the State's power since the passing of the Civil Union Act in 2006 is that legislation is being tabled that encourages South African couples (including gay and lesbian couples) to marry in order to prevent the decline of "traditional family values" (Laganparsad 2011:13).

In asking the state for legitimation, what will be considered to be legitimate sexual arrangements will be limited and the role of the state in delimiting norms will also be upheld, thereby limiting other ways of being in the world. For the gay and lesbian community to ask for, and subsequently be granted, the right to marriage according to a set of norms that delegitimates sexual relations outside of marriage is to, Butler (2002) argues, "transform a collective delegitimation into a selective one [and] such a practice is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with a radically democratic, sexually progressive movement" (27). In my conclusion to Chapter 4, I question how the LGEP, which describes itself as a radical sexual rights organisation that is anti-capitalist, came to sanction marriage as the most legitimate way to organise gay and lesbian lives in South Africa.

In deconstructing the subtleties that construct the marriage field, Butler interrogates the 'for' debate in order to highlight the consequences of selective state legitimation whilst, at the same time, bringing to the fore the complexities of the 'against' argument in which no recognition at all can lead to "social or literal death" (Butler 2004:8).

The ideas from Butler that I have discussed above—heteronormativity and the matrix of intelligibility; the discursive construction of the subject; gender as an imitation of nothing; the resistance to heterosexualised genders through drag; the unresolvable link between sexuality and gender; the problem of human rights for the constitution

of the subject; and the necessity of being critical of the political—permeate my problematising of gay and lesbian identity and politics in South Africa throughout this thesis. Although Judith Butler's ideas are central to this thesis, this does not mean that I use them uncritically.

2.2 Criticisms of Judith Butler

Judith Butler is aware of the limitations of her earlier work as embodied in *Gender Trouble* (1990). These limitations arise primarily from a disjuncture between her intentions and how her work was perceived and interpreted, which highlights the impossibility of guaranteeing meaning. For example, one criticism of statements she makes in *Gender Trouble* is that there is only gender: that sex does not exist. In addition, this interpretation perceives gender as being only performance and, therefore, "radically free" and thus the materiality of the body is negated (Osborne and Segal interview Butler 1994: 2). Butler tries to remedy this in her book *Bodies that Matter* (1993) in which she devotes her energies to an explanation of the materiality of the body and the normalisation of sex. Butler has also been censured for her ideas about drag and she does concede that she did not refer the theatricality of drag back to the psychoanalytic discussions which inform drag. She notes that an examination of gender melancholia could have been useful, given the "iconographic figure of the melancholic drag queen" (Butler 1997a: 20). In "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification" (1997b), Butler elucidates how melancholic identification is central to the formation of the gendered ego and how understanding this process may explain why people find it so difficult to grieve the loss of homosexual attachment.

One of the most consistent criticisms of Judith Butler is that her work is difficult to read. Butler has suggested on numerous occasions that reading difficult texts needs practice and that reading intensively has the potential to make "politically dissident readers" (Butler cited in Salih 2003: 42). Butler also contends that the reading public's desire to read complex texts should not be underestimated. For example *Gender Trouble* is still selling in England and North America 20 years after its publication and it has been translated into 22 languages (Salih 2003).

One of the most notorious criticisms of Butler is Martha Nussbaum's "The Professor of Parody" (1999) in which she accuses Butler of being completely out of touch with

the practical struggles of feminism. Nussbaum discredits nearly all Butler's ideas about gender and subversion for being idealistic when compared with the lives of real women and, therefore, suited only to the academy. Nussbaum concludes her article by labelling Butler's ideas of the subversive power of parody as "hip quietism" and as something that "collaborates with evil" (13). Nussbaum argues that, by theorising too abstractly, and in following Foucault's premise that power is pervasive, Butler denies space for the material conditions of women. She classifies Butler's type of feminist theorising as being "more insidious than provincialism" in that it is a "complete turning from the material side of life, toward a type of verbal and symbolic politics that makes only the flimsiest of connections with the real situation of real women" (2). She further claims that Butler's feminism has no public commitment, is appropriate only for middle-class Americans and that it bases its political action on "a sly send-up of the status quo [as] the only script for resistance that life offers" (13).

Salih (2003) argues that Nussbaum's article is an example of "reading Butler against the ethical grain" (42). According to Salih, when Nussbaum accuses Butler of writing obscurely and alienating readers she herself epitomises the anti-democratic uses of "clarity" that Butler has frequently written about (42). For example, Butler asks questions while Nussbaum puts forward evaluative statements; Butler is tentative in her findings whilst Nussbaum completely denounces Butler's theories. Finally, Nussbaum's parody of Butler's ideas on parody highlights two of Butler's most significant insights. First, that parody is not itself subversive and second, that complex texts (like Butler's) may be "grafted and recited in unforeseen ways" (42). I would further argue that it is thanks to criticisms by academics such as Nussbaum that a key, but somewhat abstract idea of Butler's, such as the limitations of the subversive potential of parody is foregrounded and that Butler's complex texts are themselves being used and understood in ways that she herself never intended.

Rosemary Hennessy (1995), a Marxist feminist, has much in common with Nussbaum, and also criticises Butler for her approach to materiality and for reducing the social to discourse. Hennessy argues that Butler's casting of the subject as a discursive construct hides some of the weaknesses of the relationship between materiality and sexuality. According to Hennessy, the problem of identity for Butler is a problem of the representation of the discourses of which a person is comprised. Although Butler is aware that discursive and non-discursive practices make up the

materiality of the social realm, she does not adequately explain the connection between the two. According to Hennessy's analysis, in *Bodies that Matter* (1993) Butler argues that matter (in the form of a body with a sexuality) is always materialised and never just given. However, Hennessey argues that Butler frames this in only one area of social production through the regulatory practices of norms and discourse. She recognises that the target of Butler's argument is those constructionist theorists who see matter as surpassing the limits of discourse (in other words that biology can be used to explain difference). However, for Hennessy the explaining of matter only in terms of discourse means that the social is reduced to discourse (Hennessy 1995).

Hennessy argues that Butler sees heterosexuality as an institution or a norm but does not explain the differences between an institution and a norm, or the relationship between them (Hennessy 1995). Furthermore, Hennessy argues that while there is no doubt that different components of social life are discursively regulated, their materiality cannot be reduced to the discursive:

> While political and economic practices are always made intelligible and shaped by our ways of making sense of them, reducing materiality to discourse alone has the effect of obscuring much of social life (39).

Hennessy further contends that Butler understands history in very restricted and limited ways. For example, Butler argues that gender parody is only subversive depending on the context but does not historicise this. To historicise, for Hennessy, is to make connections not only in local historical contexts but also to recognise that the extension of social life is reliant on its reproduction in a variety of fields. She argues that this is a form of critical practice that can trace links between and among different fields and on many different levels of analysis in order to connect specific social formations with the broader context. Thus, for Hennessy, to historicise urban middle class American drag at the beginning of the 21st century means that it is necessary to connect it not only to the discursive practices that make it possible, but also to the prevailing social relations as well as locating it in a broader frame of late capitalism and multinationalism.

> Butler's presupposed concept of the social displaces analysis of social totalities like capitalism and patriarchy, however, in favour of an exclusive emphasis on the specific and the local…. In so doing she confines history to a

> very limited frame whose unspoken 'context' has a very specific address: the new bourgeois professional class (Hennessy 1995:41).

Thus, according to Hennessy (1995), Butler's emphasis on the discursive production of the subject does not take into account how the subject is historically secured even though she does refer to historical context. Hennessy argues that the problem with this is that her analysis "assumes that *anyone* might participate in exposing the fiction of sexual identity" (41, original emphasis). Hennessy, however, suggests that this is not possible because, as much as post-structural thought has destabilised the notion of the coherent subject, the labels 'gay' and 'lesbian' are still seen as something with a stable signifier, hence the continuation of violence against gay people. She argues that

> [f]or many lesbians and gays who have not had the social resources for mobility to insulate themselves from heteronormativity's insistence that sex equals gender; drag has been not so much playful subversion as a painful yearning for authenticity, occasionally with brutally violent results (Hennessy 1995:42).

Hennessy's (1995) criticisms of Butler need to be contextualised in terms of her Marxist feminist approach in which there is an emphasis on how the material conditions of women and gay and lesbian people intersect with their oppression. For her, the discursive production of subjectivity is but one aspect of a process that is much bigger than the individual and that includes numerous other factors such as multinationalism. Hennessy, therefore, has fundamental ideological differences with Butler and it is not difficult to understand why she regards Butler's work as being bourgeois and out of touch with the needs of those individuals who "[yearn] for authenticity" (42) .

Yet another critic, Boucher (2006), acknowledges that Butler makes a significant contribution to leftwing cultural politics with her post-Marxist emancipation project but criticises her for what he calls "methodological individualism" (144). He, therefore, has much in common with Hennessy (1995) and Nussbaum (1999) who similarly criticise Butler for not taking into account the connection of personal emancipation to not only the local context, but also to the broader context of social relations. Boucher (2006) argues that by concentrating only on the individual in an abstract way, Butler does not take into account structural influences such as economics and crisis

tendencies in the social system. Furthermore, he argues that by making dominant norms and how they relate to an individual the core of contestation, she limits her theory to the "perspective of an isolated individual either resisting their subjectification or confronting their oppressor" (114). Boucher argues that Butler becomes trapped in the classic debate between the individual and society that sees resistance reduced to individuality instead of collective action. Boucher concludes by noting that "for all her hostility to liberal political philosophy, her own alternative seems to be only another, somewhat more radical version of moral and political individualism" (137).

The criticisms by Nussbaum, Hennessey and Boucher of Judith Butler are all grounded in questioning how political change can occur when politics, according to these critics, is enmeshed in discourse and not social reality. Such criticisms reveal Nussbaum, Hennessey and Boucher's approaches to subject formation to be completely different from that of Butler who draws heavily on Foucault in formulating her ideas about the role of discourse in the production of subjectivity. In drawing from Foucault, Butler makes clear that the link between the individual and the social is though discourse and, therefore, an analysis of discursive productions can reveal the machinations of subjectivity and identity.

2.3 Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault's large body of work has disturbed the worlds of science, madness, prisons and language. His 1978 book, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, in which he critiques modern regimes of sexuality, has had a significant influence on challenges to essentialist notions of identity. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, however, is not just an abstract theoretical project as Foucault presents potential tools for subversion.

> All my books … are little toolboxes, if you will. If people are willing to open them and make use of such and such a sentence or idea, of one analysis or another, as they would a screwdriver or a monkey wrench, in order to short circuit or disqualify systems of power … all the better (Foucault cited in Halperin 1995:52).

The History of Sexuality Volume 1 has not only been influential in troubling conservative ideas about identity categories in society but has also been pivotal in

the development of Queer Theory and politics. Further, two theorists who are crucial to this thesis, Gayle Rubin and Judith Butler, have been greatly influenced by *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* and have, accordingly, developed a profound challenge to ideas about sexual minorities and gender. In 1994 Judith Butler interviewed Gayle Rubin for the journal *Differences*: the extract below shows how influential *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* has been for both of them.

Gayle Rubin: "Thinking Sex" had its roots back in 1977-78, and I started doing lecture versions of it in 1979. I think you were at one of these, at the Second Sex Conference at the New York Institute for the Humanities.

Judith Butler: Right. The first time I saw a copy of Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*.

Gayle Rubin: Was I waving it around?

Judith Butler: Yes. You introduced it to me.

(Rubin and Butler 1994: 71-72)

In contemporary societies in the West and South Africa people think they are sexually liberated and enlightened and it is a widely held belief that the sexual revolution of the 1960s facilitated this liberation. However, one needs only to scratch the surface of an investigation into sex and sexualities to uncover a field that is not only highly contested but that is still very repressed. Why are sexual minorities still seen as abnormal in comparison to the normal monogamous heterosexual couple with children? As I make clear in my exploration of *Male Homosexuality*, at the time of its publication in 1992, homosexuality in South Africa was seen as abnormal and was, therefore, illegal (see Chapter 5). The situation in contemporary South Africa (2012) is of course very different, but, as I illustrate in Chapter 1, homophobia still exists.

In *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* Foucault traces how the monogamous heterosexual couple with children has become the norm. He identifies the 19th century as the pinnacle of the solidification of discourses around sex that have legitimised this normalisation. He argues that the Victorian era is viewed as a time of sexual repression and Puritanism compared to contemporary times. For Foucault, however, the key question is not why we are repressed, but rather, "[w]hy do we say, with so much passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against

our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed?" (Foucault 1978:9) In the South African context people are very inhibited by sex as a result of the influence of religion and the legacy of reductionist apartheid sexual and gender policies. In Chapter 1, I reveal that despite progressive laws regarding gender and sexual difference, what counts as correct gender and sexuality performances are still based on so-called common sense ideas about what constitutes the normal and the correct.

The aim of this thesis, as outlined in the introduction, is to provide a different way into thinking about the paradoxical nature of gay and lesbian rights in South Africa. In order to do this, as I have already pointed out, I examine how the discourses of identity and politics are represented in six gay and lesbian non-fiction books written between 1992 and 2008 from a Queer Theory point of view. One of the arguments that I make in this thesis concerns the way that homosexuality, once considered an abnormal sexuality, has become more normal. In order to understand the creation of the division between normal and abnormal sexualities, the work of Foucault is pivotal.

The arguments from *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1978) that have the most relevance for this thesis are the classification of sexualities; the dynamic and fluid character of power; the way that power operates to control marginal sexualities; and how the goal of politics should be resistance rather than liberation.

2.3.1 *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*

Foucault (1978) identifies the period from the 17th to the 19th centuries as a time when, paradoxically, talk about sex was curtailed but discourses about it multiplied. Prior to this time the body and sex "made a display of themselves" (3). Even though societies were organised around the married procreative couple, sexualities or behaviours that digressed from this were punished as acts and not as types of people.

However, by the 19th century the body and sex were domesticated and silenced and abnormal behaviours were classified and marginalised. The monogamous married heterosexual couple with children became the yardstick for sexuality. Foucault (1978) argues that the process to normalise and elevate monogamous heterosexuality and the nuclear family was a result of capitalism's need for a stable

labour force. What was required was a “sexuality that [was] economically useful and politically conservative” (37). Any deviation from this led to severe penalties as “[m]odern puritanism imposed its triple edict of taboo, nonexistence, and silence” (5). Foucault calls this the “repressive hypothesis” (10). He argues that since the 16th century discourses about sex have multiplied with an increasing “incitement” that has led to a “science of sexuality” (12-13). Foucault’s concern in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* is to problematise how sex has been put into discourse and, further, to trace how it has been monitored by the “polymorphous techniques of power” (11).

Whilst it may seem that the repression related to sex that peaked in the 19th century would have led to greater secrecy and control, quite the opposite occurred—perversions actually multiplied. Until the end of the 18th century three central systems regulated sexual practices—Christian pastoral and canonical law and civil law. The sexual relations between man and wife were at the heart of this regulation of sexual practices. The regulation of sexual relations that fell outside of this relationship was not as clear, illustrated, Foucault (1978) argues, by “the uncertain status of ‘sodomy’, or the indifference regarding the sexuality of children” (37). There was no apparent difference between breaking the rules of marriage and other transgressive sexual acts; they were equally damned. Serious infractions included adultery, rape, incest and sodomy. A court could denounce sodomy as well as marriage without the consent of parents as “general unlawfulness” (38).

The power of the church to regulate sexuality started to wane after the Counter-Reformation and secular discourses began to regulate sex. This led to a proliferation of discourses around sex in the 17th and 18th centuries that resulted in two changes in the regulation of sexual relations. First, heterosexual monogamy was spoken of less frequently. The drive to try to control it was abandoned and the lawful couple with its ordinary sexuality was allowed to carry on more or less unnoticed. Second, as a result, the focus shifted from monitoring the sexual relations of the married couple to others such as children, mad people, criminals and those who engaged in acts of sodomy. The time had come for such people, who had previously barely been noticed, to “step forward and speak, to make the difficult confession of what they were” (Foucault 1978:39). This, according to Foucault, marked the beginning of the distinction between normal and abnormal sexualities. This is the key idea that frames all three of my analysis chapters. Heterosexuality is viewed as a normal sexuality

and homosexuality as an abnormal sexuality. However, I question what the consequences are of obtaining rights in a political paradigm that was formulated to exclude difference in the drive for homosexuality to be viewed as more normative and legitimate.

Abnormal sexualities were, Foucault (1978) argues, endemic to all levels of society and were distinct from sexual misdemeanours such as rape, adultery or "violat[ing] cadavers" (39). People who engaged in unnatural sex were often associated with crime and vice and, although they were not always persecuted, they were pestered and put into asylums: "[t]his was the numberless family of perverts who were on friendly terms with delinquents and akin to madmen". The regulation and classification of this "numberless family of perverts"(40) had less to do with the church and more to do with the increased control and monitoring that was instituted by the discourses of medicine, education and psychology. Further, the control of sexuality was not simply about the prohibition of the deviant or the unnatural, but rather, about a complex interrelation of power dynamics. What is an abnormal sexual practice or what qualifies a person to be described as abnormal changes continually. For example, 60 years ago it was unthinkable that homosexuality could be considered a normal sexual practice. In Chapter 5, I show how research into homosexual issues by gay and lesbian theorists and psychologists has shifted from providing evidence to show that homosexuality is not abnormal to providing evidence to show that homosexuality is normal. In this chapter I also consider what the implications are when homosexuals are perceived to be the same as heterosexuals.

For Foucault (1978) power is local. It is not something that ripples down a hierarchy or something that the master is in control of and the servant is completely devoid of. He argues that "[p]ower comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations" (94). Foucault conceptualises power as being a relation which operates in a dynamic and unstable way. Power is fluid and omnipresent in society and is unevenly stabilised by institutions such as the home, education, medicine and science: "power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (93). Foucault argues that power is not only negative; it has an affirming and creative capacity and is inherent to freedom. Similarly, resistance is not outside of power but is an integral component of power relations**.** In Chapter 4, in my

analysis of *Tommy Boys* (2005) and *To Have and To Hold* (2008) I show how the editors of these books conceive of power in a binary way. This is made evident in the editors' approach to difference and the regulation of difference, which is premised on gay and lesbian people (the different) and homophobic people (who regulate difference, often violently). There is little explanation of how resistance to gender and sexuality conformity is used in immeasurable ways in opposing and dealing with discrimination.

Foucault identifies four different ways in which power operated to control and repress marginal sexualities in the Victorian era: the control of children's sexuality; the classification of perversions; monitoring marginal sexualities; and the control of marginal sexualities by the family, educational and psychiatric institutions.

First, children's sexuality was increasingly controlled. Foucault (1978) argues that, since the 19th century, educators, parents and doctors have tried to thwart masturbation in children as if it were "an epidemic that needed to be eradicated" (42). At every opportunity monitoring mechanisms were put in place, traps were set, corrective discourses instituted and parents were informed on even the suspicion that their child was masturbating. Foucault argues that rather than being a vice that had to be eliminated masturbation was actually a support or a "prop" (42) for an entire system of surveillance. Masturbation needed to be a secret so that it could be exposed: systems of surveillance functioned not to eradicate masturbation but to ensure that it persisted.

> Wherever there was a chance [masturbation] might appear, devices of surveillance were installed; traps were laid for compelling admissions; inexhaustible and corrective discourses were imposed; parents and teachers were alerted, and left with the suspicion that all children were guilty (Foucault 1978: 42).

The second way in which power operated to control and repress marginal sexualities was by classifying individuals and by naming perversions. Here Foucault uses his famous example of sodomy. According to Foucault (1978), prior to the 19th century, sodomy referred to a class of acts that were not allowed, and someone who was caught engaging in sodomy was seen only as breaking the law. In the 19th century the act of sodomy was transposed onto a person—a homosexual—with numerous different attributes—"[a] childhood … a type of life, a life form, and a morphology,

with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly mysterious physiology" (43). Everything the homosexual was became influenced by his sexuality. Such a sexuality had to be confessed to and I elaborate further on this in Chapter 3**.** Foucault argues that the moment that homosexuality was classified there was a concurrent constitution of medical, psychological and psychiatric discourses to diagnose and treat it. For Foucault, homosexuality was categorised when it was transformed from sodomy into some type of "interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul [so that] the homosexual was now a species" (43). A number of other minor perversions also became species that 19th century psychiatry classified with outlandish names such as "zooerasts" and "presbyophiles" (43). The workings of power aimed not to eradicate the proliferation of deviant sexual categories, but, rather, to give them a more durable and noticeable reality.

Monitoring marginal sexualities was a third way in which power operated to control and repress such sexualities. Sexuality was regarded as a medical object that needed to be detected both physically and behaviourally and then treated, just as one would treat a wound. People whose sexualities were marginal were observed, examined and questioned in a variety of confessional situations. The outcome of the confessional was often an admission about confidential material by the patient that frequently exceeded what was being asked, and that aroused and amplified the questioner's curiosity. This is an example of how the powers that monitored sexuality took great pleasure in their task. "The medical examination, the psychiatric investigation, the pedagogical report" Foucault (1978) argues "[all] function as mechanisms with a double impetus: pleasure and power". Such pleasure is derived from being the questioner and the monitor, and unveiling sexual deviancy that is hidden, but there is also a pleasure in being the deviant or pervert and "scandalizing, or resisting". Foucault refers to this as a game of "capture and seduction" that has been played since the 19th century by parents and children, adults and adolescents, educators and students, doctors and patients and the "psychiatrist with his hysteric and his perverts". However, rather than inhibiting sexualities, "capture and seduction" served to proliferate and multiply sexualities (45).

The fourth way in which power functioned to control and repress marginal sexualities was through the family; educational and psychiatric institutions which operated as "*devices of saturation*" (Foucault 1978:45, original italics). Although it seemed as if

the family was a “monogamic and conjugal cell” (46) in the 19th century, it was actually a locus of pleasure and power that was connected by flexible relationships. New family relations and regulations such as the separation of adults’ and children’s bedrooms; the segregation of boys and girls; the implementation of stringent rules for infant care; the increased monitoring of infantile sexuality; the defining of the hazards of masturbation and the importance accorded to puberty all made the family a “complicated network, saturated with multiple, fragmentary, and mobile sexualities” (46). Educational and psychiatric institutions, with their large populations, their hierarchies, their spatial arrangements and their surveillance systems, also made them a locus of pleasure and power similar to the family. However, they were even more extreme since they had “privileged spaces or rituals” such as “the classroom, the dormitory, the visit, and the consultation” (46). It is in educational and psychiatric institutions that the different forms of non-conjugal and non-monogamous sexualities that highlighted the instability of the “monogamic” (46) and conjugal family were launched.

The significance to this thesis of an exposition of how power operated to control and repress marginal sexualities in the Victorian era is to show how the control of homosexuality as an abnormal sexuality in apartheid South Africa was based on many of the mechanisms I describe above. In apartheid South Africa homosexuality was seen to be perverted and was monitored by the state, family and educational and psychiatric institutions. In the six books that I analyse it is the very damaging control of homosexual identities by apartheid, and the legacy this has imprinted on the minds of ordinary gay and lesbian people, that is exposed and explored.

Looking back at the Victorian era from a modern perspective it seems wholly sanitised, moral and ordered but Foucault (1978) argues that it was actually characterised by “blatant and fragmented perversion” (47). This was not simply a case of hypocrisy or because the prohibitions of Victorian society were so restrictive that a “perverse outbreak” resulted (47). It is crucial to understand that the way in which power was operationalised with regard to the body and sex during this time far exceeded the law and taboo. Power operated not by avoidance but by creating ever increasing sexualities in which pleasure and power were reinforced by each other. Foucault argues that “[m]odern society is perverse, not in spite of its Puritanism or

as if from a backlash provoked by its hypocrisy; it is in actual fact, and directly, perverse" (47).

The diverse sexualities that manifest in the family as a preference, or in specific relationships or spaces, are linked to the "exact procedures of power" (Foucault 1978:47). Foucault cautions that when monogamous conjugal sexuality became regulated as the singular form of sexuality, deviant sexualities that were previously tolerated were not simply belittled. Rather, he argues that

> [t]hese polymorphous conducts were actually extracted from people's bodies and from their pleasures; or rather, they were solidified in them; they were drawn out, revealed, isolated, intensified, incorporated, by multifarious power devices (47-48).

Foucault (1978) contends that the Victorian era produced so many different vices and pleasures that very few new ones have subsequently been discovered. What has happened since then is that societies have developed new rules and regulations for the "game of powers and pleasures" (48). Therefore, the myth that the rise of the modern industrial state ushered in increased sexual repression is not true. This was actually a time during which there was an explosion and multiplication of unorthodox sexualities. As Foucault states "[i]t is said that no society has been more prudish … [b]ut it is the opposite that has become apparent" (49).

A human rights approach to politics, which became popular after the Second World War, influenced many social liberation movements in the West and the so-called Third or Developing World. An example of such a social liberation movement is the gay and lesbian rights movement. Liberationist-style politics reflect the liberal humanist tradition which is based on the political ideal of liberating the true self and which gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s. The aim of liberation politics is the inclusion of secondary groups into society's existing power structures. This style of politics has been criticised for not being able to express a new social vision and because it ultimately "failed to disturb hegemonic systems of domination" (Kopelson 2002:19).

The ideologies that informed liberationist-style politics can be traced to Cartesian dualism and "enlightenment-era values [of] freedom, truth, and rationality" (Halperin 1995:19). The emergence of the modern liberal state and the accompanying human

rights discourse draws from these three values. The type of power that operates in such a state takes as "its objects 'free subjects' and defines itself wholly in relation to them and to their freedom" (18). At the core of the human rights discourse is the belief that ideology takes possession of the mind of a person who then develops a false consciousness. The subsequent aim, then, of liberationist-style politics is to liberate the mind and reveal the limitations of a repressive dominant culture through consciousness-raising. As I point out in my analysis of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) (see Chapter 5) at the time of their writing Isaacs and McKendrick argued that the white male gay sub-culture was limited to hedonism and, as a result, was unable to contribute not only to gay liberation but also to liberation from apartheid. One of the aims of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) was, therefore, I argue, to raise the political consciousness of the white gay male population in South Africa.

For Foucault, identities are formed in politics according to certain requirements of the liberal state. Such requirements assume that rights and claims are made on the basis of an "injured identity" (Butler 1997c: 94). The more specific identities become, the more "totalized" (11) they start performing. The totalisation of the individual extends the power of the state, by transforming individuals into subjects of the state. In Chapter 3, in my discussion of *Tommy Boys* (2005), I explain how the editors promote a local rather than a global understanding of homosexuality because of the lack of recognition by the governments of various African countries of homosexuality and related homosexual issues.

Foucault calls for the re-making of the subject beyond the power of the law. According to Butler, in doing this, "Foucault is not calling for the release of a hidden or repressed subjectivity, but rather, for a radical making of subjectivity formed in and against the historical hegemony of the juridical subject" (11). I show in my analysis of *Performing Queer* (2005) in Chapter 3, how one of the authors, Charl Hattingh, calls for gay and lesbian people to be more authentic by coming out, not only privately but also publicly. Likewise, in my exploration of *Tommy Boys* (2005) in Chapter 4, I explain how the editors promote consciousness raising around lesbian issues as a way of combating hatred of, and violence towards, lesbians in Africa. The idea as put forward by Hattingh and Morgan and Wieringa of a repressed or prejudiced subject who needs to be helped to a truth that has been hidden runs counter, of course, to how Butler and Foucault articulate subject formation.

Foucault argued that political opposition based on resistance as an ongoing and never-ending process was more effective than a once-off liberation. Although a once-off liberation does not end discrimination against gay and lesbian people (since this and other vectors of oppression need to be continually resisted), liberation does make it easier to create the possibilities to continually resist. Therefore, this does not mean that gay rights should be neglected and, in fact, Foucault does support them, but he argues that they should not be viewed as the epitome of the struggle for equality and he goes on to say that the possibility of formulating new rights and types of relationships should be opened. It is for this reason that he writes: "[m]y work has nothing to do with gay liberation" because "[t]here can be discrimination against homosexuals even if discriminations are prohibited by law" (Foucault cited in Halperin 1995:31). The idea that the aim of politics should be resistance rather than liberation is an important concept in this thesis. In the South African context, in particular, the liberation of race, gender and sexuality and their subsequent protection in a progressive constitution has not ended discrimination.

Foucault's *History of Sexuality Volume 1* shows how the categories 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' (and all other deviant sexualities) were created as a result of the shift in the control of sexuality from the church to the secular discourses of medicine, education and psychology in the 17th and 18th centuries. Once a category is named, confessed to and the truth about it established, it can be monitored and controlled. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* also shows how the monogamous heterosexual couple had become (and remains) an ideal through the creation and then the delegitimating of perversions. As I show in Chapter 3 in my discussion of *Male Homosexuality* (1992), homosexuality was viewed as a perversion at the time (early 1990s) and so the authors, Isaacs and McKendrick, as I have mentioned before, aim to present homosexuality as more normal.

The construction of normal and abnormal sexualities, Foucault claims, was not a simple process and is the result of a complex set of power dynamics. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* is pivotal to this thesis because it traces how the division between normal and abnormal sexualities was established and how such divisions are maintained and controlled today. In Chapter 5, I draw a link between normal and abnormal sexualities and talk about the ways in which this has influenced

assimilationist and queer approaches to the public face of homosexuality in the South African context.

2.4 Criticisms of Foucault

Though Foucault's work has had a profound influence on thinking about sex and politics he is not without his critics. The most famous criticism of Foucault was probably that of Jean Baudrillard (1976) in an essay entitled "Forget Foucault" published in the French magazine *Critique* which Foucault edited at the time. Baudrillard critiqued Foucault's explanation of power as being almost perfect thus marking the end of theorising about it, which indicated how both power and an analysis of it is constrained. He could not understand how Foucault could see power as being located everywhere. According to Hegarty, Baudrillard argued that Foucault had actually "emptied power—not by removing any critical value it might have as a term but in revealing that power ends itself" (Hegarty 2004: 92). Baudrillard requested a response from Foucault but he never got one and I think that Foucault's hesitance in engaging in critical debate with Baudrillard points to a resistance on the part of Foucault to re-work and re-define those aspects of his work—such as power—that he thought were complete.

Even though Judith Butler draws significantly from Foucault she does not do this uncritically. In *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997c), Butler criticises Foucault for not including a theory of the psyche in his theory of power. She claims that "Foucault is notoriously taciturn on the topic of the psyche" (84). She further criticises Foucault's conception of power in *Imitation and Gender Insubordination* (1991) as being unconditionally located in discourse and his argument that, even if power can be a productive force, oppression is always framed within discourse. This conception is problematic for Butler especially in how it positions the "invisible" lesbian (Butler 1991:136). She argues that, unlike gay males who can use the political strategy of discursive reversal in fighting their oppression, lesbians are often not even featured in discourse. The problem here is this: if you are not even legible in discourse, how can discursive strategies to deal with invisibility be developed? For Butler (1991)

> [i]t is this particular ruse of erasure which Foucault for the most part fails to take account of in his analysis of power. He almost always presumes that

> power takes place through discourse as its instrument, and that oppression is linked with subjection and subjectivation (136).

It is vital to make sense of the silences in theory as Butler does of Foucault's silence in relation to oppression and discourse. In relation to my own project, I am trying to identify the silences and the absences (or what has become delegitimated) in the drive by the gay and lesbian movement in South Africa to promote homosexuality as being of the same value as heterosexuality.

Foucault has also been subject to feminist, post-colonial and Marxist appraisals of his work. For feminists such as Bartky (1988) and Soper (1993) Foucault's work is insensitive to gender and sexual difference. For them, Foucault theorises sexuality so generally that he ignores the construction of inequalities between men and women in the West. Bartky (1998) argues that

> Foucault treats the body throughout as if it were one, as if the bodily experiences of men and women did not differ and as if men and women bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life (63-64).

For a post-colonial theorist such as Stoler (1995), Foucault's work sidelines issues of racial difference by making racial issues secondary to those of desire "[c]hildren are invariably othered in ways that compare them to lower-order beings […] they are too close to nature, they are, like racialized others, not fully human beings" (51).

Foucault has also come under fire from theorists such as Jurgen Habermas, Michel Walzer, Charles Taylor, Frederic Jameson, Terry Eagleton, Clifford Geertz and Edward Said who claim that he is limited by his methodological strategies (Hoy 1986: 9). Other points of criticism from these theorists include, first, that Foucault takes the notion of an independent subject too far in proposing that life should be about the struggle against freedom from discipline. So, for example, following a rule means surrendering to society's control. Second, they argue that Foucault does not adequately explain the conflict between individuality and society, nor does he elucidate what the reasons for struggle are or whether it is goalless. Third, Foucault has also been classified as a nihilist because he does not outline the objectives of change in society and advocates a type of progressivism in which laws in society are pointless. Fourth, for theorists such as Walzer, Foucault is an anarchist of the worse kind.

> Foucault does not believe, as earlier anarchists did, that the free human subject is a subject of a certain sort, naturally good, warmly sociable, kind and loving. Rather, there is for him no such thing as a free human subject, no natural man or woman. Men and women are always social creations, the products of codes and disciplines (Walzer cited in Hoy 1986:61).

Finally, Foucault has been criticised for concentrating his theorising only on the West and neglecting the influence and impact of colonialism on a politics of difference. This has particular significance for understanding contested sexual politics in South Africa. For example, homophobia in a South African context is far more violent and aggressive when compared to Western countries. However, a Foucauldian approach to resisting homophobia would rely on the political conception of discourse to provide the most appropriate strategies. This would include a shift from trying to find the truth underlying violent homophobia, to trying to understand the related complexities and networks of power (Halperin 1995). However, in the post-colonial racialised context of South Africa, the tools that Foucault claims can "short circuit … systems of power" are not always the most functional (Foucault cited in Halperin 1995:52).

Despite these criticisms there is no doubt that Foucault has had a significant influence on the development of new ways of thinking about sexuality in society. The queer approach to identity that I adopt in this project (in which gender and sexuality are not viewed as a possession, but as, rather, a complex performance) would not be possible without Foucault. In addition, his ideas have been crucial to Gayle Rubin's research into radical sex.

2.5 Gayle Rubin—Theorising radical sex

Gayle Rubin (1993) uses Foucault's rupture of biological and static accounts of sex as the foundation for her article "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" which has become highly influential in the field of the politics of sexuality. Butler suggests that "Rubin's work has offered a series of methodological suggestions for feminism and queer studies which have significantly shaped the emergence of both fields of study" (Rubin and Butler 1994: 62). Rubin's article is pivotal to this thesis since it provides a framework for theorising politics and identity from a radical perspective.

Rubin (1993) argues that “sex is always political” (4). This is a key idea in the text *Defiant Desire* which I examine through two different theoretical lenses (Chapter 3 and Chapter 5). For Rubin, essentialist ideas about sex are but one domain in which sexual thought is choked. She identifies a further five spheres of sexual regulation but I will discuss only the four that are most relevant to this thesis: sex negativity, the fallacy of misplaced scale, the hierarchical evaluation of sex acts, and the domino theory of sexual peril.

The first sphere in which sexual thought is stifled relates to “sex negativity” (Rubin 1993:11) in Western culture which has had a major influence in South Africa as a former Dutch and British Colony. There is no doubt that as a former British and Dutch colony, South Africa has been fundamentally affected by Western thinking, values and culture. However, this does not mean that South Africa is a colonial clone. South Africa is a hybrid country with a mixture of the modern and the postmodern, tradition and ingenuity, localised cultural norms and imported Western norms. The theory that I use in this thesis that emanates from the West is, therefore, made sense of only by taking into account this hybrid context. In addition, the hybrid South African context troubles the Western theory that I use.

Rubin argues that in the sphere of sex negativity, sex is not only assumed to be biological but is also considered to be dangerous and destructive. In my investigation into *Male Homosexuality* (1992) in Chapter 5, I bring to light how the authors view gay male promiscuity in South Africa as dangerous because it contributes to all homosexuals being viewed as sex obsessive and as the carriers of disease. The authors propose long term loving relationships as an antidote to gay male promiscuity which, they further argue, is a type of internalised homophobia. The conservative idea that sex is dangerous and destructive became influential in assimilationist gay and lesbian[22] theorising in America in the 1980s when one of the causes of HIV and AIDS was seen to be gay male promiscuity.[23] Undoubtedly gay male promiscuity did play a part in the spread of HIV, but the disavowal of the link

[22] See for example Altman 1982; Bronski 1984; De Cecco and Shively 1984 and Shilts 1987

[23] Butler (2002) argues that one of the reasons that the gay and lesbian movement in America has looked to the state for recognition via marriage is the shame of the association of HIV with gay male promiscuity.

between sex and homosexuality in order to counter the link between HIV and gay male promiscuity has come at a price, which point I discuss in Chapter 5.

In the orthodox Christian tradition, Rubin continues, sex is seen as inherently sinful and as something that should be engaged in only by married people for the purpose of reproduction. All other erotic practices are seen as inherently bad or evil. (In my survey of *Defiant Desire* (1994) (see Chapter 5) I show how at the time of writing that homosexuality was viewed as subversive since it challenged the normativity of heterosexuality). In the approach that views sex as sinful the body plays a major role. For example, the genitals are seen to be inferior (since they are located in the lower part of the body, near the anus) compared to the mind and the soul (which are located in the upper part of the body, near to the heart and the brain). These ideas, according to Rubin, are so widely circulated that they do not even have a religious referent: they have "acquired a life of their own" (11).

The second sphere in which sexual thought is repressed is the "fallacy of misplaced scale" (Rubin 1993:11) and is a consequence of the first sphere. In this sphere, sex has taken on such significance in society that laws have been developed to monitor sexuality in a completely unreasonable way. For example, in my analysis of *Tommy Boys* (2005) in Chapter 4, I am interested in how the editors had to take the toughest stand against violence and discrimination against lesbians in Africa because of the passing of legislation in various African countries that aims to outlaw homosexuality and homosexual practices.

Rubin argues that throughout much of European and American history a single incidence of consensual anal penetration could be the grounds for being put to death. Identifying sex as over significant is in keeping with Foucault's argument that in Western Europe in the 19th century, sex was held responsible for causing all illnesses, problems or physical disorders.

> From the bad habits of children to the phthises of adults, the apoplexies of old people, nervous maladies, and the degeneration of the race, the medicine of that era wove an entire network of sexual causality to explain them (Foucault 1978:65).

In the South African context, before the repeal of the sodomy laws in 1998, a person engaging in consensual anal sex could face seven years' imprisonment. In addition,

careless touching between men and dancing with another man could lead to prosecution (*Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest* 2009: n.p.). Even outside the law, in the social realm, Rubin argues, sex is loaded with importance. For example in my study of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and *Gayle* (2003) in Chapter 3 I show how the link between negative sexual stereotypes and male homosexuality is seen as shameful by the authors of these two volumes and as a result they provide evidence to refute such a link. Essentially these authors aim to show the lack of importance of sex for normal male gay men.

The third sphere in which there is constraint on sexual thinking is the “erotic pyramid” (Rubin 1993:12) which creates a hierarchy based on the value placed on different types of sex and sexualities. Although Rubin does not actually use a pyramid structure I have placed the values attributed to different sexualities from the most valued to the least valued below.

Married reproductive heterosexuals

Unmarried monogamous heterosexuals in couples

Most other heterosexuals

Masturbation (as an inferior substitute for partnered encounters)

Stable lesbian and gay male couples (verging on respectability)

Bar dykes and promiscuous gay men

Transsexuals, transvestites, fetishists, sadomasochists, sex workers, prostitutes, porn models

Intergenerational sex

(Rubin 1993:11-12)

In 1984, when Rubin was writing, heterosexuality was the most valued category of sexuality, occupying the top tiers of the value system (with married couples at the very top). Below this was masturbation which was considered to be preferable to homosexuality but still seen to be inferior to heterosexual coupling. In the middle section of the hierarchy stable gay and lesbian couples were considered to have more value than promiscuous gay men and dykes who frequented bars. At the bottom of the hierarchy the sexualities that inhabited the second lowest tier were people whose gender or sexual preferences did not conform to normative gender

and sexual ideals and people who made a living through sex. Finally, intergenerational sex was viewed as the sexuality accorded the lowest value in 1984. I explain, in my analysis of *To Have and To Hold* (2008) (see Chapter 4) how, since the passing of the Civil Union Act in 2006, married gay and lesbian people are awarded much more value and status in the erotic pyramid. This is definitely connected to the 15 legal benefits they are entitled to but that unmarried heterosexual and homosexual people do not qualify for.

It must be emphasised that Rubin clearly delineates between consensual sexual encounters and paedophilia and rape. However, akin to Foucault, she also demythologises the conception of young people as pure, innocent and devoid of sexuality and, therefore, in need of protection. She argues that there are numerous mechanisms in place in society for the regulation and even evacuation of sexuality in young people. The protection of children in a discourse of "erotic hysteria" (Rubin 1993:6) has often been the cornerstone of repressive sexual laws which not only regulate sexual behaviour but also restrict crucial sexual liberties. Rubin refers to the research by Demetrius Zambaco in "Onanism and Nervous Disorder in Two Little Girls" (1981) as an example of the hysteria around children's sexuality. Zambaco cites the work of a Dr. J. Guerin who claimed to have succeeded in curing masturbation in young girls by "burning the clitoris with a hot iron" and who recommended that a person should not "hesitate to resort to the hot iron, and at an early hour, in order to combat clitoral and vaginal onanism in little girls" (Guerin cited in Zambaco cited in Rubin 1993:3). This horrific example draws attention to the role of medicine in regulating young girls' sexuality which is considered to be dangerous and sinful because masturbation is not productive.

There are, Rubin argues, particular rewards that are associated with different levels of the erotic pyramid which I have summarised below.

High in hierarchy

Have certified mental health

Respectability

Legality

Social/physical mobility

Institutional support

Material benefits

Lower sexual behaviours or occupations

Presumption of mental illness

Disreputability

Criminality

Restricted social and physical mobility

Loss of institutional support

Economic sanctions

(Rubin 1993:11-12)

The rewards flowing from the erotic pyramid can be summarised as follows. If a person's sexual value is high up in the hierarchy it is rewarded with positive attributes such as mental health; respectability; legality; mobility; support from institutions in society; and material benefits. However, if a person's sexual value is placed lower down in the hierarchy, there are no such rewards, but there is, rather, a presumption of mental illness; seediness; criminality as well as a lack of mobility and the loss of support from institutions; along with no material benefits. My study of *Male Homosexuality* (see Chapter 5) shows that at the time when it was published in 1992, homosexuals occupied a very low place in the erotic pyramid in South Africa. This had much to do with homophobic attitudes and the persecution of homosexual behaviour and the outlawing of homosexuality in general during the apartheid era.

For Rubin (1993), hierarchies of sexual value operate in the same way as racism, ethnocentrism and religious chauvinism since they "rationalize the well-being of the sexually privileged and the adversity of the sexual rabble" (13). The sexual value hierarchy which locates heterosexuality and marriage as the most normal forms of sexuality and sexual behaviour can be placed in a "charmed circle". Those sexualities that are in opposition to heterosexuality and marriage form part of "the outer limits" (13).

The figure below clearly shows how the charmed circle and outer limits are defined by each other.

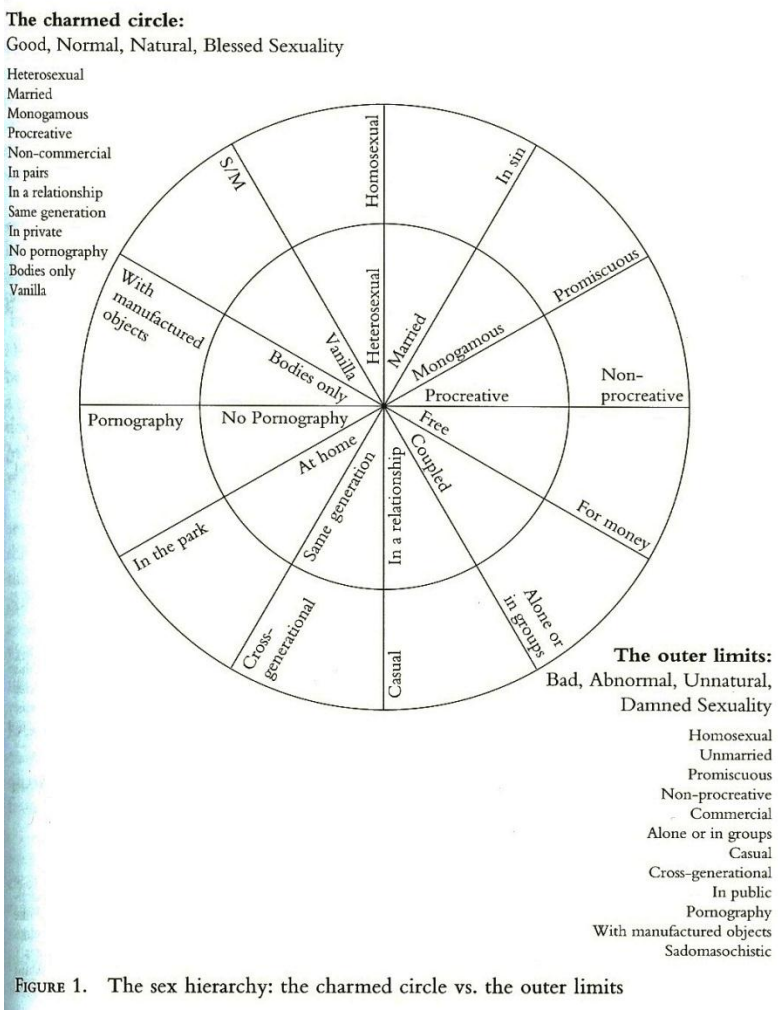


FIGURE 1. The sex hierarchy: the charmed circle vs. the outer limits

Figure 1 The Charmed Circle (Rubin 1993:13)

The charmed circle shows how certain sexual values operate as the truth and, as a result, push to the margin those sexualities that are not true and, therefore, deviant. The basis of the legitimation of the charmed circle is "good, normal, natural, blessed sexuality" (Rubin 1993:13) that is associated with monogamous stable reproductive heterosexuality, the practice of which takes place in private. In Chapter 5, I demonstrate how the authors of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) promote a type of homosexuality based on the qualities of good, normal blessed sexuality in order to counter the association of homosexuality at the time with deviance and abnormality. The sexualities at the outer limits Rubin (1993) argues are delegitimated by being associated with "bad, abnormal, unnatural, damned sexuality" (13) that is associated not only with homosexuality, but also with promiscuity, prostitution, pornography, sadomasochism and public sex. By 2003 when *Gayle* was published, homosexuality in South Africa was not viewed as a deviant and abnormal sexuality. In my analysis

of this text in Chapter 3, I describe the author's argument about how homosexuals can shed camp linguistic and physical behaviours (which are features of closet behaviour as a result of being viewed as abnormal) because the rights afforded them by the constitution means that homosexuals are equal and as normal as heterosexuals.

Rubin argues that society has a need to draw and maintain an imaginary line between good and bad sex. Discourses on sex consider only a very small part of human sexuality as being appropriate and, Rubin argues, a line is drawn that separates good sex from erotic behaviours that do not conform to this conception of good sex. In the South African context in 2012, there are numerous institutional and societal discourses that elevate marriage (and that includes gay and lesbian marriage) to the status of what is good and normal, and demotes all other erotic behaviours as being potentially risky and not completely normal. What Rubin was arguing about in the early 1980s still has relevance to the South African context. Where should the line be drawn to determine which erotic practices may or may not cross over the line into the respectability of good sex, Rubin asks. The diagram below highlights the struggle over where to draw the line in terms of the sex hierarchy.

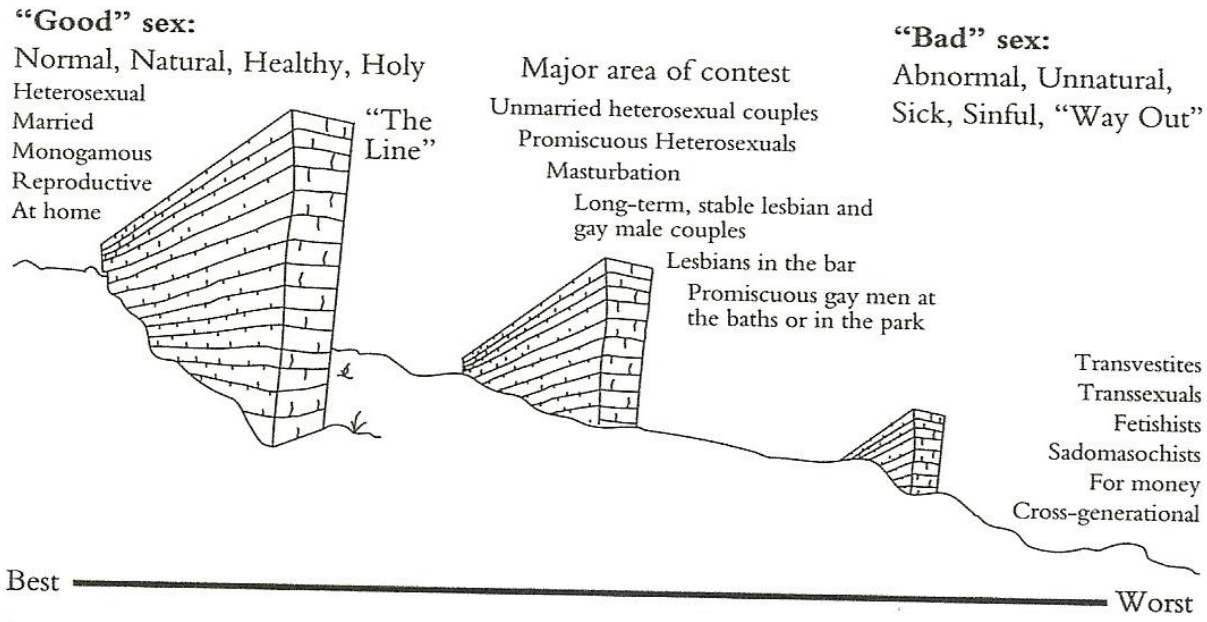


Figure 2 The sex hierarchy: The struggle over where to draw the line (Rubin 1993:14)

As can be seen from the diagram above, sex is represented on a continuum from most to least acceptable sex. It has some approximation to the erotic pyramid but is

depicted in a horizontal configuration. Once again, normal heterosexuality or good sex is located at the privileged end of the continuum and, on its opposite end, are those behaviours associated with bad sex such as transvestism, sadomasochism and prostitution. The most contested area, according to Rubin in the context in which she was writing, is the middle area that is separated from good sex by an imaginary line, which could shift to include those practices that are considered eligible for legitimation. Promiscuous heterosexuals and gay men, stable gay and lesbian couples and practices such as masturbation are included in this area (Rubin 1993:14).

In the South African context, heterosexual promiscuity is a controversial topic and there are divergent points of view about it. In the article “Pressure to be Promiscuous”, Gqola (2009) argues that despite 40% of all HIV infected people living in Southern Africa, many people choose to have multiple sex partners. The effectiveness of public awareness campaigns and public education as central in combatting HIV, she argues, needs to be interrogated: does such information actually makes a difference? She argues that

> [s]ex with multiple partners is so entrenched in Southern Africa that it is a religion, a basic moral philosophy for most people here. It is often simply called culture or, specifically, African culture. Political leaders who marry an increasing number of wives and royalty that flaunts an equal number of wives and concubines are highly visible (1).

Gqola (2009) explains that men collapse cultural practice with having multiple partners and that challenges to this are labeled as being “unAfrican” (1). In addition, in Southern Africa young men are pressured into being promiscuous and young women are brought up to be accessible to men. The promotion of promiscuity is constructed as an essential element in the composition of a real African man, someone who not only pursues women but is also appealing to them. Gqola provides an example from her youth when the Xhosa word “isoka” (playboy) was used as an admiring description of “demonstrably promiscuous straight African men” (1).

Gqola (2009) continues that African women are not allowed to ask questions about their partner’s sexual activities and, as a result, negotiating condom usage is very difficult. Although there is awareness that many men have multiple sexual partners,

very few women “want to own up to it and its consequences”. Finally, Gqola maintains that the “ultimate weapon” in the “pressure to be promiscuous” is to accuse an African person of being disloyal to their culture (2). This is “an effective silencing weapon because it reminds Africans of prior wounding by a series of violent systems that started with slavery and ended with apartheid” (2).

Therefore, in the South African context, being a traditional African heterosexual promiscuous male is not associated with the bad sex part of Rubin’s continuum. Rather, promiscuity is seen as admirable and an integral part of Southern African culture by traditionalists. However, in the HIV prevention community these sexual practices would definitely fall into the bad sex category. While the challenges associated with heterosexual promiscuity and HIV are beyond the scope and focus of this thesis, this dilemma emphasises that sexuality in Africa does not replicate sexuality in the West and our unique situation apropos sexual identity with its multiple intersections of colonialism, race, gender, culture and masculinity offers a significant challenge to the theorising of sexual practice that emanates from the West.

What the work of Gqola makes clear is that attempts to fix sexual practices in a hierarchical configuration do not show how the valuing of different sexual practices changes across contexts. This is made evident by the example of the practice of promiscuity which is highly valued by African traditionalists but condemned by the HIV-awareness community. The complexity of the sexual practice of promiscuity is further outlined by Reid and Walker (2005):

> The role of contemporary research on sexualities in Africa is to challenge the dualities and dichotomies of the colonial gaze that has been so influential in shaping an understanding of ‘African sexuality’, and to deepen and broaden the narrow public health perspective that sees sexuality primarily as a medical issue (6).

Rubin (1993) makes it very clear that the erotic pyramid, charmed circle and good/bad sex continuum should not be seen as “monolithic, omnipotent structure[s]. There are continuous battles over the definitions, evaluations, arrangements, privileges, and costs of sexual behaviour” (23).

Having outlined the three domains in which sexual thought is stifled (sex negativity, the fallacy of misplaced scale and the hierarchical evaluation of sex acts) I want,

now, to refer briefly to Rubin's last sphere of sexual regulation—"the domino theory of sexual peril" (Rubin 1993: 14) in which the imaginary line that separates good and bad sex also separates order from chaos. Only sexuality on the right side of the line is granted "moral complexity" or virtue, and the further the sexuality or practice deviates from this line the more it is abjected and associated with vice (14).

Rubin frames "Thinking Sex" by proposing that "sex is always political" (Rubin 1993:4) and in terms of political theorising and action around changing perceptions of sex she argues that people have always turned to feminism. But the relationship between feminism and sex is very complex, as I will go on to discuss.

2.6 The relationship between sex and feminism

Feminism has always been interested in theorising about sexual issues and promoting political activism related to these issues, but this has not been all smooth sailing. As Martin(1994) highlights, "[a]t its worst, feminism has been seen as more punitively policing than mainstream culture" (105). Theorists refer to first, second or third wave feminism as broad descriptive tools in feminist research and I overview each wave briefly below. This overview is important in order to show the shift in feminist issues and constituencies over the past 100 years.

The first wave of feminism occurred in the late 19th century and the early 20th century and was confined mostly to the United States and the United Kingdom. The most important issues in this wave were property rights for women; opposition to married relationships based on the ownership of women; and, at the end of 19th century, the advocation of political rights for women. The constituency of the first wave of feminism was Western white upper-and middle-class women

The second wave of feminism occurred from the mid-1970s until the late 1980s, was still concentrated in the United States and the United Kingdom, but was starting to spread to other parts of the world. Although this was the period of the feminist sex wars between pro-sex and anti-porn feminists, other issues included the fight for social, cultural and political equality for women. This was also the time of the development of numerous different feminist theoretical positions from Marxist feminism to post-colonial and third world feminism. Second wave feminism was initially limited to Western white middle-class women, but the values associated with

this limited constituency were challenged for being unable to effectively deal with different races, classes and sexualities, so different feminist organisations started to develop so as to deal with these issues.

The third wave of feminism began in the early 1990s and continues to be felt. It is located in many different places of the world. The constituency of this wave of feminism is women and men of all classes, races and sexualities including queer people, transgendered people and transsexual people. What is central to this feminism is the critique of second wave feminism for promoting essentialist notions of identity and for encouraging political separatism. Third wave feminism uses post-structuralist understandings of gender and sexuality to theorise the space between feminism and Gay and Lesbian Studies. However, other strands of feminism (such as Marxist and third world feminisms) are still powerful in various contexts.

2.6.1 The feminist sex wars: the battle between pro-sex and anti-porn feminists

In the 1970s and 1980s (and situated primarily but not entirely in the West) two separate, and conflicting strands of feminist thought developed in the second wave of feminism. This development has retrospectively been labelled the 'feminist sex wars' because it was seen to be a battle between pro-sex and anti-porn feminists.

Pro-sex feminists argued that women's sexuality should not be restricted and they condemned the damaging repercussions of restrictions on women who are sexually active. This led to a political call against limiting moralistic accounts of sex and for the sexual liberation not only of women but also of men. This pro-sex tradition was pre-empted by the work of Havelock Ellis (1927) and Alfred Kinsey (1948; 1953) and, in the second wave of feminism, was not necessarily limited to feminists but also included groups of militant prostitutes and members of the reproductive rights movement. Although such a divergent group of sex radicals had an uneven record in relation to sexual and even feminist concerns, Rubin (1993) argues that they embodied "the spirit of modern feminism" (29).

Anti-porn feminists view sexual liberation as an extension of male privilege. Gender is viewed as being equivalent to the dominant and subordinate positions within sexuality (sexual domination by men in sex is associated with gender domination in the public area). One of the most memorable slogans associated with this strand of

feminism is “[p]ornography is the theory, and rape the practice” (Morgan cited in Bristow 1997:148). Anti-porn feminism was based on what Butler calls “rigid determinism” and a “discourse of victimization” (Butler 1994:7). For anti-porn feminists women’s oppression and their domination by the patriarchy was initially blamed on graphic representations of sex such as pornography, but as Rubin (1993) argues, eventually all sexual variance was seen as anti-feminist. This included prostitution, sex education, sadomasochism, male homosexuality, transexuality, promiscuity, public sex, transvestism and fetishism. Rubin asks, “[w]hatever happened to the family, religion, education, child-rearing practices, the media, the state, psychiatry, job discrimination, and unequal pay?” (28)

Anti-porn thinking is best encapsulated in the writings of Catherine MacKinnon (1979; 1987; 1989); Susan Brownmiller (1975; 1984); Andrea Dworkin (1980; 1981; 1983; 1987; 1988) and Dianne Russell (1992; 1993a; 1993b). Anti-porn feminists such as Dworkin and Russell claimed that all men were violent and predisposed to rape. Dworkin wrote that “[m]en love death .... [m]en especially love murder. In art they celebrate it, and in life they commit it” (Dworkin cited in Bristow 1997:150) while Russell argued that “[m]ost men have at least some predisposition to rape women” (Russell cited in Bristow 1997: 156).

At the time Rubin was writing in 1984, the polarities between anti-porn and pro-sex feminism had been recognised and a middle ground was starting to develop. Although this position was not yet completely articulated, Rubin nevertheless censured it for portraying both sides as extremist. She adds that “[i]n political life, it is all too easy to marginalize radicals, and to attempt to buy acceptance for a moderate position by portraying others as extremists” (Rubin 1993:30).

One of the arguments of the middle ground feminists was based on the issue of consent. Legal and social legitimation for consenting sexual behaviour was an important rallying call for sexual radicals. The middle ground feminists criticised sexual radicals for not placing limits on, and lacking an understanding of, the structural constraints on consent. Rubin concurs that the political discourse of consent is extremely problematic and that structural constraints on consent exist but she contends that this analysis has been incorrectly applied since it does not

account for “the very specific semantic content that consent has in sex law and sex practice” (Rubin 1993:30).

Rubin argues that much sex law does not draw a distinction between coerced and consensual acts of sex (only rape law does). Legally, a person can enact heterosexual activities as long as they are not against the law and that these acts are consensual. However, Rubin claims this does not apply to other, illegal, sexual acts such as sodomy and sadomasochism where “[u]nlike rape [they] may be committed between two persons both of whom consent, and, regardless of which is the aggressor, both may be prosecuted” (31). Rubin maintains that sodomy laws and the prosecution of sadomasochism on the grounds of aggravated assault interfere with consensual behaviours, and criminalise them. Furthermore, “[w]ithin the law, consent is a privilege enjoyed only by those who engage in the highest-status sexual behaviour” (31). Thus whilst there are structural constraints that obstruct sexual choice, their function is not to force someone to become a pervert and they operate, in fact, in quite the opposite way by trying to force everyone to be normal.

A crucial issue that created a further schism between pro-sex and anti-porn feminists was the issue of lesbianism.

2.6.2 Lesbianism and feminism

Lesbianism had a complicated relationship with early second wave feminist groupings in the United States and the United Kingdom. For example Case (1993) argues that much feminist research in the 1980s started with an analysis of “working-class-women-of-color” (295) which never included lesbians. In such a move, race and class are prioritised and sexual choice is demoted from a position of authority. Even if lesbianism were to appear it would be as a “bridesmaid and never the bride” and was not only “ghosted” but assigned the “role of skeleton in the closet of feminism” (294-295).

The lesbian who engaged in butch-femme role-playing was criticised as being male-identified and, therefore, seen as contributing to patriarchal domination. In liberal feminist groupings, Betty Friedan’s assertion that lesbians were a “lavender menace” (Friedan cited in Sullivan 2003:32) led to a division between heterosexual and lesbian feminists and the establishment of radical lesbian feminist groups such as

the Radicalesbians, Daughters of Bilitis and the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists. In 1979, the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists wrote that their "definition of political lesbian [was] a woman-identified woman who does not fuck men … lesbians are feminists not homosexuals" (33).

In radical lesbian feminist groups, gender rather than sexuality was the point of political organising, and lesbianism was portrayed as idyllic. It was argued that lesbians had more in common with heterosexual women than with gay men and the practices that surrounded gay male culture, which were considered an extension of patriarchy. Rubin argues that

> [m]ost of the actual practice of gay male culture was objectionable to many feminists, who mercilessly condemned … gay male masculinity, gay leather, gay fist-fucking, gay cruising, and just about everything else gay men did (Rubin and Butler 1994:76).

Radical lesbian feminists considered stable long term monogamous lesbian relationships in which there is no role-playing as the means to create true equality between the sexes. The problem with this, as Butler has argued, is that "[l]esbians make themselves into a more frail political community by insisting on the radical irreducibility of their desire" (Osborne and Segal interview Butler 1994: 4).

For radical lesbian feminists, lesbian relationships would replace married reproductive heterosexuals at the top of the hierarchy of sexual value and heterosexuals would be shifted to the middle of the pyramid while everything else would remain the same (Rubin 1993). This idealisation of non-role-playing lesbianism in feminism was personified by the Daughters of Bilitis who aimed to erase "butch-femme behaviour, its dress codes, and lifestyle from the lesbian community and to change lesbians into lesbian feminists" (Case 1993:296). The espousal of a political lesbianism which did not imitate heterosexuality led to a moralising rhetoric that had dire consequences for working class lesbians, black lesbians, butches and femmes, and sex-positive lesbians. Such people became completely alienated from radical lesbian feminists who tried to desexualise lesbianism (Sullivan 2003:34).

Sex-positive lesbians refused to have anything to do with radical lesbian and anti-porn feminists and they developed their own critique of normative sexuality that has

had a great influence on queer theorising. Activists and writers in this paradigm include Pat Califia (1982; 1988a; 1988b); Joan Nestle (1992); Gayle Rubin (1975; 1991; 1993) Esther Newton (1979; 1993); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985; 1990) and Amber Hollibaugh (2000). Hollibaugh (2000) encapsulates the approach to sexuality by sex-positive lesbians.

> [w]ho are all the women who don't come gently and don't want to; … are the lovers of butch or femme women; who like fucking with men; practice consensual s/m; feel more like faggots than dykes; love dildos, penetration … think gay male porn is hot; are into power (96)?

The feminist sex wars were not won by either side and started to peter out at the end of the 1980s as a different set of sexual politics came to the fore as a result of the strengthening of globalisation and the impact of AIDS. However, these two strands of feminism did lay the foundation for the development of different strategies and approaches to deal with sexual politics in feminist inquiry.

At this point it is important to consider how the feminist sex wars and developments in the theorising of radical sex influenced the South African women's movement.

2.6.3 Sex and feminism in South Africa

In tracing the history of feminism and the women's movement in South Africa, I draw on Seidman's (1993) article "No Freedom without the Women: Mobilization and Gender in South Africa, 1970-1992". In South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s the focus of the women's movement was to fight for the end of apartheid and then to ensure that black women were not sidelined in the political enfranchisement of the black majority. Far removed from their agenda was sex or the feminist sex wars being fought by feminists in the West. This debate influenced only a small minority of feminists in South Africa—mostly educated black and white women working in organizations dealing with gender-based violence, and women's movements in universities.

While anti-porn feminists in the West were arguing about whether the missionary position was a form of male domination, the 1970s and 1980s in South Africa represented the height of both apartheid oppression as well as resistance to it. Resistance to political inequality in South Africa was conceptualised and organised differently in comparison to other African countries such as Mozambique, Kenya and

Zimbabwe, and this informed a very particular approach to women's issues. In Mozambique, Kenya and Zimbabwe, gender equality was often viewed as a divisive issue that was not an immediate concern compared to the political freedoms needed by the entire nation. Although many women in South Africa at the time did not label themselves as feminists, they refused "to subsume questions of gender subordination under appeals to national unity" (Seidman 1993: 292) and feminist demands actually influenced the broader nationalist movement.

One of the reasons for this was that the economic needs of apartheid for a cheap unskilled labour force had led to the urbanisation of a large proportion of black people. This, combined with the migrant labour system, undermined male dominated household patterns and also created a class of relatively economically independent women. South African women activists were definitely influenced by international feminist ideas and pushed for tactical gender issues such as greater equality in political organisations, the workplace and the home (Seidman 1993: 312). However, issues of sex and its relation to feminism were largely not debated. Since there was an assumption of normative heterosexuality at the time, lesbian issues were not considered a priority.

However there were attempts, particularly in the Western Cape, to organise and popularise lesbian feminist issues. In "Lesbians in Love and Compromising Situations: Lesbian Feminists Organising in the Western Cape" (a chapter in *Defiant Desire*), Armour and Lapinsky (1994) argue that radical lesbian feminism was the only type of feminism at the time that was uncompromising in its support of black and third world lesbians since it was based on Ti-Grace Atkinson's famous observation that "feminism is the theory and lesbianism is the practice" (Armour and Lapinsky 1994: 296). Armour and Lapinsky also make it known that lesbian feminism refers to a move away from the "domination of the worldwide edifice of heterosexual patriarchy" which has as its core the "worship" of maleness and the "destruction of female energy and power" (295).

Armour and Lapinsky (1994) write about the powerful influence of consciousness-raising groups in the Western Cape in the 1970s, which, for many women, "were the first place they felt free to articulate their feelings of attraction to other women and to consider what the political implications of this might signify" (297). However, they

argue that the building of sustainable lesbian feminist organisations in the Western Cape was almost impossible because many lesbians were not comfortable with the terms ‘lesbian’ or ‘feminist’. In addition, women who engaged in butch-femme role playing were worried about possible criticism, and black and white working class lesbians felt alienated by the intellectualism of lesbian feminism. As a result, radical lesbian feminism in South Africa remained “largely the preserve of university educated women” (299).

Despite this, the women’s movement in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s can be seen to have been highly effective since it focused primarily on political rights for black women, and on a general improvement in the lives of all women. Although it was influenced by Western feminism, the South African women’s movement was not caught up in the divisiveness of the feminist sex wars.

I want, now, to discuss the crucial issue that arose from the conflicts between pro-sex and anti-porn feminism—the proposed separation of the study of gender and the study of sexuality.

2.7 The separation of gender and sexuality? Judith Butler’s criticisms of Gayle Rubin

In “Thinking Sex” (1993), Rubin challenges the assumption that feminism should be the privileged site for sexuality and, controversially, proposes that theorising about sex and gender should be separate endeavours. Her assertions were aimed in particular at the anti-porn feminists who were becoming increasingly powerful. She argues that feminism should be concerned with gender since it cannot account for sexual minorities. She contends that, although sex and gender are related they differ from each other and should be viewed as separate areas of social practice. Even though Rubin acknowledges that “[i]n the long run, feminism’s critique of gender hierarchy must be incorporated into a radical theory of sex, and the critique of sexual oppression should enrich feminism”, she argues that ultimately, “autonomous theory and politics specific to sexuality must be developed” (34).

The controversial proposed separation of the study of gender and sex by Rubin garnered supporters and critics, the most renowned critic being Judith Butler.

Rubin's "Thinking Sex" (1993) had a profound influence on theorising about sex and gender in the 1980s and 1990s. Gay and lesbian theorists advanced it as evidence that the study of gender and sexuality should be separate domains, with sex being the domain of Gay and Lesbian Studies and gender being the domain of feminism. The seminal *Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, published in 1993, identified "Thinking Sex" as a foundational text for Gay and Lesbian Studies and thus placed it as the first text in the anthology. In the introduction, the editors, Abelove, Barale and Halperin write that "Lesbian/Gay Studies does for *sex* and *sexuality* approximately what Women's Studies does for gender" (Abelove et al. 1993: xv, original emphasis).

For Butler, Rubin's proposed separation of sex and gender, which was subsequently taken up by gay and lesbian theorists, was extremely problematic. She argues that the link between sexuality and gender is not resolute and that the "destabilizing of the heterosexual presumption of that very structuralism still requires a way to think of the two in a dynamic relation to one another" (Butler 1997a: 24).

Therefore, for Butler, the most significant problem arising from the separation of sex and gender proposed by Rubin and the allocation of sex to Gay and Lesbian Studies and gender to feminism is that, crucially, it ignores those theorists who work *between* these two fields. As a result, she questions what a "proper object" of study should be, ultimately arguing in an aptly titled article, "Against Proper Objects" (1994).

For Gay and Lesbian Studies, identifying sex as their proper object of study means that feminism is de-sexualised, and this obscures the work of pro-sex feminists and radical sexual theorists. Such a separation between sex and gender denies the link between progressive sexual politics and feminist goals and is ultimately based on the argument that Gay and Lesbian Studies will supersede feminism. For Butler, the appropriation of sex as the proper object of study for Gay and Lesbian Studies by Abelove et al. is, in part, a misunderstanding of Rubin's article "Thinking Sex". Rubin, she observes, did not actually call for a specific gay and lesbian frame in which to investigate sex. Rather, she was arguing that feminism cannot be the only field in which sex is theorised. In a 1994 interview with Judith Butler, Rubin makes this clear.

Judith Butler: Well tell us what you had in mind when you wanted to designate the provisionally autonomous status of sexuality as a field?

Gayle Rubin: … I wanted to be able to articulate a sexual politics that did not assume that feminism was the last word and holy writ on the subject.

(Rubin and Butler 1994: 89)

Rubin's aim in "Thinking Sex" was actually to agitate for an account of why sexual minorities are regulated and, moreover, to counter the anti-porn feminists who considered sexuality to be only about sexual domination. According to Rubin, the conservative anti-sex rhetoric of the anti-porn movement "produced some of the most retrogressive sexual thinking this side of the Vatican" (Rubin 1993:29). In 1984, when "Thinking Sex" was first published, a separate account of sexual oppression that took into account sexual minorities was a political necessity.

However, by the 1990s the political landscape was different and it became evident that Gay and Lesbian Studies could not account for sexual minorities such as prostitution and transexuality. Moreover, by making sex their proper object, Gay and Lesbian Studies disqualified itself from an analysis of gender and transgendered sexuality. Rubin's call was for political consideration to be given to those sexual minorities who might not be women and who have become a class of people that the state tries to control, criminalise and pathologise. Sexual minorities are not interchangeable with gay and lesbian and thus to propose that the proper object of Gay and Lesbian Studies should be sex is not feasible.

In essence, what Rubin was doing in "Thinking Sex" was developing a set of arguments to counter the views of Catherine MacKinnon and the anti-porn feminists. She feared that "well-intentioned feminists and other progressives would support abusive, oppressive, and undeserved witch hunts" (Rubin and Butler 1994:90). However, for Butler (1994) Rubin's work has had far-reaching implications that she was unaware of at the time. She could not predict how powerful anti-porn feminism would become in the 1980s and early 1990s, with many legal successes and massive media support. As a result, feminism came to be associated with anti-porn feminism in the popular view and, more importantly, "feminism ha[d] become identified with state-allied regulatory power over sexuality" (12). There was also a shift in public discourse in favour of anti-porn feminism which obscured those pro-sex feminist positions opposed to it which ironically, also included Rubin's position. The pro-sex position which questioned the consolidation of the state's regulatory

power and which had a tradition of coalitions with sexual minorities became barely legible as feminist (Butler 1994).

Butler (1994) argues that it is too dangerous and that the political costs are too significant to choose between feminism and radical sexual theory. Rather, what needs to be broached is the complex interrelation between these fields. Rubin agrees when she states that she is "sceptical of any attempt to privilege one set of analytical tools over all others, and all such claims of theoretical and political omnipotence" (Rubin and Butler 1994: 90). It was as a result of the conservative moralising of anti-porn and radical lesbian feminism (completely female-dominated) and the argument that sex should be the domain of Gay and Lesbian Studies (largely male-dominated) that a space for the emergence of queer theorising opened up. I suggest, following Butler, that Queer Theory offers a way in which to broach the complex interrelation of gender and sexuality by means of a "moving between" (Butler 1994: 22).

2.8 Queer and Queer Theory

Pejorative labels, for example, 'nigger', 'bitch', 'dyke', 'fag' and 'moffie', to describe the other—those who do not fit into the categories of sanitised white heteronormativity— have always had the power to hurt and degrade. The struggles around identity politics in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the reclamation (and reinvention) of many of these words as symbols of pride and recognition of the power of the other. Of course, some derogatory labels resist being co-opted and new ones constantly enter into circulation.

One such label was 'queer' which, well into the 1980s, still had the power to interpellate in a most negative way (and for many people and theorists still does: see the discussion of Cage (2003) in Chapter 3). Historically, the word 'queer' has been used in many diverse and sometimes derogatory ways. 'Queer' could refer to something strange; be connected to madness; be indicative of difference and strangeness; and be used as an abusive insult, often as an offensive descriptor of a person who was homosexual or perhaps acted like one (Sullivan 2003).

The reclamation of the word 'queer' occurred in the late 1980s in the United States and the resultant Queer Theory developed as a protest against mainstream identity

theorising. The queer movement was also a response to the impatience with the gay and lesbian movement's response to, and organisation around, the devastation of AIDS but also, crucially, a response to the "growing homophobia brought about by public response to AIDS" (Creed 1994: 152). The AIDS crises cut across the boundaries of sexuality, class, race and gender and called for a radical rupturing of conservative attitudes. 'Queer' was initially about an alliance forged "between erotic and relational adventurers" (Carter 2005:112) which made sexuality public in a direct challenge to the relegation of sexuality to the private sphere. It also provided a theoretically useful way to create a community that was not based on a conception of identity as being fixed by gender and to make space for thinking about how race and class connect to sexuality (Carter 2005). Thus, the political tone had been set and the time seemed ripe to start articulating new theoretical ideas about, and insights into, the contested issues of gender and sexuality.

Judith Butler is closely aligned with Queer Theory although she regards herself primarily as a feminist. Gayle Rubin has even called her "the reigning 'Queen of Gender'!" (Rubin and Butler 1994:97) In the very early days of Queer Theory in the 1990s Butler recalls this incident:

> I remember sitting next to someone at a dinner party, and he said that he was working on Queer Theory. And I said: What's Queer Theory? He looked at me like I was crazy because he evidently thought that I was part of this thing called Queer Theory (Osborne and Segal interview Butler 1994:1).

The phrase 'Queer Theory' was first used by Teresa de Lauretis in 1991 when she edited a special issue of the journal *Differences* entitled, "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities—An Introduction". However the first application of the phrase theoretically occurred only in 1995 in the article "What does Queer Theory Teach us about X?" by Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner. The brief for Berlant and M.Warner (1995) was to try to "pin the Queer Theory tail on the donkey" (343) and they argued that it could not be defined since it did not have a clear-cut bibliographic shape. Rather, Queer Theory attempted to challenge the pervasiveness of heteronormativity. In Chapter 5 I argue that a text such as *Defiant Desire* (1994) is unafraid in its documentation of the controversial aspects of gay and lesbian life in South Africa such as drag and gay male promiscuity as a challenge to the power of heteronormativity.

Berlant and M.Warner set the tone for the promotion of Queer Theory as something that resists rigid classification and that consistently interrogates heteronormativity. Subsequent theorists who have followed this approach to Queer Theory have added more subtle and nuanced understandings (Phelan 1997; Meyers 1997; Barnard 1999; Jackson 1999; Shephard 2002; Crimp 2002; Sullivan 2003; Marcus 2005; Carter 2005; Watson 2005; Quinn and Sinfield 2006; Kemp 2009).

Queer Theory is not a unified theory but is, rather, an approach that applies post-structural ideas to identity. It interrogates political rights based on liberal humanist notions that are attached to the progressive Enlightenment values of "freedom, truth, and rationality" (Halperin 1995:19). Queer does refer to sexual orientation, but also takes into account a diverse assortment of sexualities and sexual practices that are considered abnormal, strange or odd, many of which are not homosexual such as intersexuality, sadomasochism, bisexuality and transgender. In my analysis of *To Have and To Hold* (2008) in Chapter 5, I demonstrate how the Civil Union Act has been criticised for being limited to immutable gay and lesbian identities and for not taking into account the rich diversity of African same-sex practices. Queer also refers to people who are in other ways queer or other (for example groups that are traditionally marginalised in society) and people whose genders do not behave appropriately (e.g. ''boys who act 'like girls' and girls who look 'like boys'") (Kumashiro 2000: 26). As M.Warner (1999) argues

> [p]eople whose gender identity differs from the norm are despised, often violently, whether they desire those of their own sex or not. Nelly boys and butch girls can be fag-bashed or taunted, and being heterosexual will not protect them very much (37).

In my survey of *Male Homosexuality* in Chapter 5, I show how the authors argue that it is the queer people described above who infiltrate the gay sub-culture and cause gay men to have an identity crisis.

A Queer approach focuses on all sexualities, not just dissident ones, and explores the intersection of gender/sexuality with race/class to show how these operate to entrench gender oppression and heteronormativity. Queer Theory has expanded from being the antithesis of the investigation into the normal heterosexual biological family to include not only different ways of understanding sexualities but also tackles exactly what sexuality is and its relation to the construction of race and nationality.

The word ‘queer’ should be considered a verb rather than a noun or an adjective which allows a researcher to move from “human being to human doing” (Sullivan 2003:50) from inclusion to inquiry—a position that is available for a researcher to adopt. Many of the authors, who contributed to *Performing Queer* (2005), that I examine in Chapter 3, write from a queer point of view specifically drawing from the post-structural idea that gay and lesbian identities are performances (rather than categories with fixed attributes).

2.8.1 Queer in South Africa

When Queer Theory was emerging in the West at the beginning of the 1990s, the gay and lesbian movement in South Africa was facing a different set of challenges posed by apartheid. It was only starting to emerge as a movement that aligned itself with the broader ideals of the liberation struggle. As a result, it was politically imperative to show that gay and lesbian rights were an important part of the national agenda of equality (I will explain this in more detail in my exploration of *Defiant Desire* (1994) in Chapter 5). Queer political strategies such as public kiss-ins, die-ins, queer nights out and outing were not adopted by the gay and lesbian liberation movement in South Africa. Rather, political strategies were consistent with those of the liberation movement which included marches, picketing, pressure groups and lobbying.

Research into gay and lesbian issues at this time was presented in two ways: first, research was published in academic journals, and, second it was published in book form, often as anthologies consisting of academic articles and personal testaments. The focus of Gay and Lesbian Studies at this time was on legitimating homosexuality, illustrating the diversity of homosexual experiences and ensuring constitutional inclusion for homosexuals.

While references to queer were not present in academic articles, they were evident in gay and lesbian non-fiction writing at this time. However, the references were usually in relation to the reclamation of derogatory words akin to queer, such as ‘moffie’, rather than evidence of an awareness of the potential of Queer Theory to analyse identity in a different way.

> ‘[m]offie’, coined in the coloured communities of the Western Cape, has become the South African equivalent of ‘queer’… with extremely derisive connotations. Nevertheless … it has been reappropriated, with some pride, as a term of self-identity (Chetty in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:127).

It was not until 2005 that Queer Theory, as a tool of analysis, rather than as nomenclature, was actually critiqued by South African researchers as being a Western formulation that had little or no relevance to the different challenges in Africa. Morgan and Wieringa (2005) argue that

> [w]omen’s economic and political oppression and their sexual and erotic practices are different from men’s and cannot be subsumed under the general category ‘queer’…one of the major concerns we have is the tendency to essentialise and universalise human experiences by assuming the relevance of ‘Western’ categories to the lives of people elsewhere (309-310).

This critique of queer has many relevant points: the field did arise in the West; it is often associated with gay male activism; and it is seen by some as irrelevant to the specifics of homosexuality and homophobia in Africa. However, Marcus (2005) argues that there is a tendency for Women’s Studies researchers to reject Queer Theory as male dominated but that to do so “neglects women’s foundational work in the field that assumes a polarization between men and women that queer studies itself disproves” (199).

Queer theorists such as Judith Butler, Michael Warner and David Halperin take great care to emphasise that queer is not an identity, but is, rather, a position that can be adopted in order to present a particular critique of gender and sexuality that is more expansive than the identity politics paradigm that is so pervasive in Gay and Lesbian Studies. According to these theorists, the meaning of queer should never be stabilised in order to ensure that it can morph and change, resist assimilation and always remain subversive. (I will discuss this in more detail below.) The meaning of queer in the context of this thesis is as a critical hermeneutic which differs from Morgan and Wieringa’s understanding of it as an identity category.

This is an example of how contested but also how misunderstood queer is. Despite such misunderstandings, the critique by Morgan and Wieringa highlights some of the problems of Queer Theory in an African context in which a different set of sexual politics and realities operate. For example, in North American countries such as the

United States and Canada, and European countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom and Austria, gay rights have been legally entrenched since the 1970s. This is recent compared to the legalisation of homosexuality in France (1791), The Netherlands (1811), and Luxembourg and Belgium (both 1795) (*LGBT Rights in Africa* 2010:n.p.).

While there is no doubt that homophobia is still endemic in countries in which the legalisation of homosexuality has a long history, I would argue that homophobia in the African context is far more brutal and violent. The only country in Africa in which gay rights are recognised is South Africa and even this does not necessarily equate to acceptance. The rest of Africa has an atrocious record regarding their non-acceptance of homosexuality and their responses to issues of difference. In North Africa, Muslim countries such as Algeria, Libya and Sudan have completely outlawed homosexuality and in Sub-Saharan Africa highly popular charismatic churches wield significant influence not only on the promotion of conservative patriarchal values in society but also on politics. On the 20 July 2010 Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe was quoted as saying in an address to an Apostolic Church gathering that "[w]e say no to gay rights. We will not listen to those advocating for their rights in the new constitution" (Sapa-AFP 2010b:8). He is also quoted as saying, a week later, that same-sex marriage is "dog behaviour" (Sapa-AFP 2010c:16).

Enforced heterosexuality is more of a threat to a self-identifying black gay or lesbian person,[24] living in Harare than in London or New York, and, as a result, there is a different gay political agenda in Africa. Judith Butler (2004) critiques human rights as being an approach to politics that recognises only a human that fits in with its limited definition of a human (as I explained in Chapter 2 in the section Human rights and the constitution of a subject).

> [i]n a human rights framework, often gay and lesbian rights are not seen as 'human' rights because gay and lesbian people as well as sexual minorities are not seen as human enough because of their rupture or resistance to normal kinship relations by which humans become recognisable (15).

In the African context being a gay or lesbian human has yet to be recognised, and a human rights approach more often than not recognises other axes of oppression

[24] Such a threat is not absent for white gay and lesbian people.

such as gender and culture (which are without a doubt inseparable). Despite this, a human rights approach has been successful in securing gay rights and freedoms elsewhere (and in particular South Africa) and it is seen as the way to achieve gay and lesbian equality in the African context. Consequently, some elements of the queer post-structuralist critique of identity-style politics and human rights hold very little water for activists and gay rights groups in Africa at the moment.

Moving on from contextualising queer in the South African and African context I want, now, to offer a broader discussion of the fraught relationship between Queer Theory and Gay and Lesbian Studies.

2.8.2 Queer Theory and Gay and Lesbian Studies

The relationship between Gay and Lesbian Studies and Queer Theory is tense. Some Queer Theorists do not necessarily consider this to be a negative. Carter argues that "queer reflect[s] [a] rejection of old-style lesbian and gay identity, community, history, politics, and institution building" (Carter 2005: 112). However, O' Driscoll maintains that "[t]he existence of Queer Theory would be unimaginable without the preceding decades of work in Gay and Lesbian Studies and politics" (O' Driscoll 1996:30). The setting up of unsophisticated binaries between Gay and Lesbian Studies and Queer Theory undermines and simplifies the work that has been done in both fields. Despite this there has been a tendency for such polarisations to continue.

One of the strongest critiques of mainstream Gay and Lesbian Studies by Queer Theorists is that Gay and Lesbian Studies tended to understand sexuality as being constructed separately from race "as if each figuration of subjectivity could develop independently of the other" (Barnard 1999: 200). Theorists such as Anzaldúa (1987); Barnard (1997; 1999); Cohen (1997); Alcoff (2001) and Gopinath (2005) argue that mainstream gay and lesbian theorists have not only disregarded race but have white-washed the figure of the homosexual. As Sullivan (2003) observes,

> [t]hese race blind theorists have fantasised a community that is homogenous and alienates all of those who do not fit the figure of 'the homosexual' that is: non-whites, lesbians, disabled gays, working class gays and lesbians, transsexuals, intersexed etc. (65).

Often mainstream Gay and Lesbian Studies have simplified the connection between race and sexuality, which has led to the canonisation of black gay and lesbian relations at the expense of other inequities that may be present between people of the same race. Categories that have been created and reified in the matrix of intelligibility are not autonomous, but are, rather, interwoven. As Barnard (1999) argues

> [r]ace and sexuality are not two separate axes of identity that cross and overlay in particular subject positions, but rather, are ways to circumscribe systems of meaning and understanding that formatively and inherently define each other (200).

The debates that have occurred between mainstream Gay and Lesbian theorists and Queer Theorists about the relation between the political and the theoretical have not only exhausted energy but have also resulted in such animosity that the strategic operation of terms such as ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’ and ‘queer’ has been ignored (Halperin 1995).

Butler has written a great deal about Queer Theory and queer, always emphasising that queer should not be stabilised because “normalizing the queer would be, after all, its sad finish” (Butler 1994: 21). Butler produced one of her most nuanced critiques of queer in the article “Critically Queer” (1997a).

In this article Butler claims that the term ‘queer’ has operated historically as a performative act used to shame not only the subject that it names, but also to produce shame by naming a subject as such. The term ‘queer’, she argues, has become powerful by the repetition of it as an insult and, as a result, it has become a social bond formed over time by homophobic communities. To be insulted by being called queer is hurtful because such naming resonates with a prior act that has accumulated authority through repetition. In other words a performative works because it draws on those accumulating elements that have shaped it.

‘Queer’, which was originally used as an insult, can be turned against those very homophobic discourses that formed it. For Cage, as I make clear in my analysis of *Gayle* (2003) in Chapter 3, the word ‘queer’ will always be an insult for gay and lesbian people in South Africa and the potential for its re-appropriation is not realistic because it indicates self-loathing. For Butler, however, as for me, in re-signifying the

term ‘queer’ it is important that it does not come to be seen as a tangible identity category because, like other identity categories, it is not possible to sustain (Butler 1997a). If the term ‘queer’ is to become a site of protest it will have to remain flexible and there needs to be awareness that it could be superseded by a term that is more useful for political organising. The concept of queer should continue to be broadened and expanded in order to make people stringently interrogate why it has become a term to organise and theorise around. In addition, even if the term ‘queer’ claims to be inclusive, it is used differently by different groups in different contexts and it is for this reason that Butler argues that “[t]he term ought to be revised, dispelled, rendered obsolete to the extent that it yields to the demands which resist the term precisely because of the exclusions by which it is mobilized” (15).

Affirming queer as a strategic interim measure endows it with the potential to develop into a locale of challenge and modification and, perhaps, allows it to mean different things in the future that cannot yet be identified. It is by preserving the potential future meanings of the sign, which can always be reshaped, that could determine its democratic promise (Butler 1991). If queer politics and theory is to survive, Halperin argues that

> [t]he first step in this procedure will be to try and preserve the function of queer identity as an empty placeholder for an identity that is still in progress and has as yet to be fully realized (Halperin 1995:113).

In addition to the assertions by Butler and Halperin that it is imperative to keep the sign ‘queer’ open, queer has also been criticised for its perceived lack of politics. Queer Theory is seen as a theoretical project that it based in post-structural thinking that does not have a public audience outside the academy (Berlant and M.Warner 1995). It has also been censured for assuming that queers have access to the same social capital as heterosexuals. Meyers argues that the binary nature of sexuality has been interrogated by queer theorists to the point where homosexuality is so dispersed that “it is located everywhere and thus nowhere in particular” (Meyers 1997:172-73).

Furthermore, simply locating the term ‘queer’ in discourse does not make it inherently progressive or revolutionary and this has led to the concern that Queer Theory endorses risky and flippant avenues of research. In the late 1990s queer was

also strongly challenged by transgender activists who argued that the aim of transsexuals is to access the opportunity to be the gender they really want to be. However, debate did lead to consensus among some transsexuals that gender is a process that can never end by emphasising "the *trans* element in their sexuality" (Quinn and Sinfield 2006: 146, original emphasis).

It is evident that, while Queer Theory is a highly contested field, the critiques that are being advanced are being incorporated into, and are shaping the development of, what is becoming a transgressive method of investigating the pervasiveness of normative ideas about gender and sexuality. The boundary-pushing work that is being conducted in the realm of Queer Theory and the interrogation of such work is being carried out by theorists who understand that queer is always changing, morphing, being revised, resisting being co-opted, and that queer theorising should always be underpinned by a radical agenda.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a detailed overview of the various theoretical standpoints (gender, sexuality, feminism, radical sexual theory and Queer Theory) that I will be using in my analysis of six South African non-fiction gay and lesbian books. I have traced the trajectory of these various theoretical standpoints and located them within the debates and developments that have occurred in the fields of feminism, Gay and Lesbian Studies, and cultural theory in the past 30 years. In this thesis I draw on various conceptual tools from Queer Theory to investigate the complex interrelationship of gender and sexuality in order to re-examine the paradoxical nature of gay and lesbian politics in a post-apartheid South Africa. Butler, Foucault and Rubin are, therefore, key in this endeavour since they argue that there is no truth about sexuality. Sexuality is seen, rather, as a discursive production that always exceeds its narrativisation.

In the next chapter, Chapter 3, "Confessing to Homosexuality: Politics, Identity and the Problem with Disclosure", I suggest that the political and social imperative to confess to the truth about oneself by coming out is actually more harmful than beneficial. I also consider whether coming out is the most effective political strategy to undermine homophobia, and finally, I question the connection between coming out and the promotion of an authentic gay or lesbian identity.

Chapter 3

Confessing to Homosexuality: Politics, Identity and the Problem with Disclosure

Heterosexual people never have to come out because heterosexuality is considered to be *the* true and real sexuality. This is but one of the privileges associated with naturalised heterosexuality. Coming out, therefore, is a dilemma only for homosexuals. How do you know that a person is homosexual? Is it the way they talk or the way they walk? While various verbal and non-verbal clues are used as an index of homosexuality, these signs can never categorically prove the truth since anyone can walk or talk gay. A person who is suspected of being homosexual is required to come out and to confess (with all the religious connotations of owning up) to the truth of his or her sexuality. This has become a norm and Foucault goes so far as to argue that "[t]he confession was, and still remains, the general standard governing the production of the true discourse on sex" (Foucault 1978:63).

The experience of coming out differs from person to person and evokes strong emotions and reactions from friends and family that can range from exhilaration to scorn. It sanctions a person's self-identification with gay people, a gay lifestyle and, if he or she chooses, gay politics. Coming out is widely considered to be a positive and empowering process and it is an established political strategy in the gay and lesbian rights movement. The idea of coming out and its relationship with notions of homosexual identity and politics is my focus in this chapter.

My approach to this chapter is influenced by the queer critique that coming out, rather than being liberating, can lead to individuals being tied "more closely to their sexual subjectivities" (Turner 2000:65). In this chapter, I will investigate the way in which the coming out narrative has been presented by various gay and lesbian theorists. Then, drawing on Foucault (1978), I will provide evidence to support the assertion that confessing to the truth about one's sexuality needs to be challenged. Using the work of the Queer Theorists Butler (1997b; 1997c) and Kopelson (2002), I will illustrate how Foucault's insights have influenced a different way of theorising coming out. Finally, I examine how the coming out narrative and its associated tropes of secrecy and disclosure intersect with politics and identity in my identified

texts*: Male Homosexuality* (1992), *Defiant Desire* (1994), *Gayle* (2003), *Tommy Boys* (2005) and *Performing Queer* (2005).

Since the American Psychiatric Association's removal of homosexuality as a diagnostic category from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in 1973, gay and lesbian researchers have theorised coming out as an imperative in the journey to healthy homosexual identity formation (see Plummer 1975; Cass 1979; Coleman 1982; Cain 1991; Rust 1993; Phelan 1993; Gagné et al. 1997; Elliot 1996; Hubbard and De Welde 2003; Rasmussen 2004—a limited selection in a vast bibliography). The binary tropes of secrecy (the closet) and disclosure (telling the truth) are at the heart of such theorising. On the one hand, to be in the closet refers to not acknowledging one's homosexuality, and is associated with being in denial and being a coward. On the other hand, coming out refers to acknowledging that one is homosexual, and then disclosing this to others, and is aligned with discovering one's true essence and public persona. In my overview of Butler's (2004) argument of human rights and its relationship to subject formation in Chapter 2, I discuss her problematising of a true but repressed subject that needs to be liberated. However, for the theorists listed above, a homosexual identity has a true essence and Rust (1993) encapsulates this point of view when he writes that

> [c]oming out is a process of discovery in which the individual sheds a false heterosexual identity and comes to correctly identify and label her own true essence, which is homosexual (53).

Furthermore, these theorists usually conceptualise coming out within a model of identity formation. In the 1970s these models were linear in their construction and coming out was viewed as a single event. However, subsequent models developed in the 1980s view coming out as a process that usually follows specific psychological and social stages or elements but not necessarily in the same order or at the same pace. This coming out process usually starts with a suspicion that a person is gay, progresses to finding a gay or lesbian community and ends when he or she has an intimate homosexual relationship (Rust 1993).

David Halperin (1995; 2002) provides a different approach to coming out that is not based in a model of identity formation. For him, coming out, rather than being an exhilarating act of liberation, means having to submit to a distinctive set of dangers—

homophobic people can vent their fantasies on one, and one's body is marked and evaluated as a result of openly admitting one's homosexuality. This needs to be combated at every instance. He argues, therefore, that "[c]oming out is an act of freedom, then, not in the sense of liberation but in the sense of resistance" (Halperin 1995:30). Furthermore, to be in the closet is, for Halperin, not simply about denial or cowardice. He draws on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *The Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) in which the closet is conceptualised as a paradoxical situation. The success of being in the closet is difficult to ascertain according to Sedgwick: are people assuming that you are heterosexual because you have succeeded in tricking them or are they treating you as heterosexual because they know you are gay and they are enjoying "the epistemological privilege that your ignorance of their knowledge affords them?" (Kosofsky Sedgwick cited in Halperin 1995:34) People who have the "epistemological privilege" (they know you are homosexual, but you do not know that they know) refuse to give up this special knowledge and continue to construct your sexuality as a secret to which only they are privy.

Coming out is viewed by the gay and lesbian community as a milestone or landmark in the gay experience and is associated with empowerment and the combating of prejudice, discrimination and violence against sexual minorities. It is thus viewed as being both psychologically advantageous to an individual and politically beneficial to the gay and lesbian community. But is coming out as empowering and beneficial as it is made out to be? Kopelson (2002) following Foucault argues that

> [s]peaking the 'truth' of one's sexuality, although pervasively viewed as an act of liberation from repressive cultural constraints, more often simply obeys societal mandates to name and confess one's self/sins, and, in so doing, inducts our sexuality into the cultural machinery that can then further constrain and manage it (21).

In Chapter 2, I elucidate how Foucault traces the classification and control of sexualities in the West between the 17th and 19th centuries despite widely held misconceptions that this was a time during which sexuality was repressed. I am interested in showing how this classification is linked to confessing to the truth about sex. My argument is that Foucault's insights into the problem with confessing to the truth about sex makes it necessary to re-visit the practice of coming out and to question whether it is actually more harmful than beneficial in challenging normative

ideas about sexuality. I start by providing a brief overview from Foucault (1978) of how confessing has shifted from a religious to a secular practice.

The practice of the confessional was established in 1215 by the Roman Catholic Church and became pivotal in civil and religious life in Europe. The Roman Catholic confessional gradually ceded its pervasiveness with the advent of the Counter-Reformation, changes in education in the 18th century and medical advances in the 19th century. However, the power of the confession continues into contemporary society: a person is compelled to confess with solemnity that which is the most troublesome to tell in a range of confessional practices from psychotherapy to criminal justice (Foucault 1978).

Foucault (1978) traces the growth of the power of the confessional to the 18th century when there was a compulsion to speak about sex. It was during this time that the confession

> [a]ttributed more and more importance in penance—to all the insinuations of the flesh: thoughts, desires, voluptuous imaginings … all this had to enter, in detail, into the process of confession and guidance (19).

Not only did every aspect of sex have to be disclosed, but there was also a shift from admitting to acts of carnal delight to confessing and then to fantasising about them. The confessional, which had been the domain of a monastic setting, became "a rule for everyone…for every good Christian" (Foucault 1978: 20-21). The confession is revealed in a relationship of power in which the interrogator not only decides on the boundaries for the confession but also listens to and comforts the person confessing. The interrogator finally intervenes in the form of a judgment which incorporates both punishment and forgiveness. The confession is expected to produce fundamental changes in the person confessing since "[i]t exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation" (62).

Confessions about sex, although initially confined to the church, soon became maintained, administered and managed by other instruments of power such as law, medicine and psychiatry. Foucault (1978) maintains that "[w]hether in the form of a subtle confession in confidence or an authoritarian interrogation, sex … had to be put in words" (32). In the Middle Ages discourses about sex were quite uniform for they were based on the "theme of the flesh" (33). During this time, according to

Foucault, the church believed that sex was outside of discourse and only by confessing to it could the burden of guilt be liberated. However, between the 17th and 19th centuries such uniformity was shattered into a diverse array of discourses. The irony here is that sex was relegated to a shadow existence whilst, at the same time, people "dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum" (35). The reason for this dichotomy, according to Foucault, is that sex is characterised as a crisis about the truth. In my analysis of *Male Homosexuality* (1992) below I show how the authors argue that when a person does not admit to the truth of his homosexuality this leads to an identity crisis.

It is in the confession that sex and truth merge. Foucault (1978) argues that

> [o]ne confesses in public and in private, to one's parents, one's educators, one's doctor, … in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell anyone else (59).

A person usually confesses without being coerced. However, if a person resists, a confession is then often extracted violently. It is no wonder Foucault contends that, since the Middle Ages, torture has accompanied the confession like a plague. Today the haphazard methods of extracting a confession have been replaced by an array of scientific methods, a "confessional science" (Foucault 1978:64). Although torture is no longer part of the contemporary confession (except in military and police interrogations in some parts of the world), the compulsion to confess is so endemic that it is no longer even viewed as the result of some controlling power. Rather, confessing is seen to be a process to uncover a truth that is hidden that needs to be set free and liberated. In examining *Male Homosexuality* (1992) below I point to the authors' insistence of the necessity of coming out publically in order to be fully liberated as a homosexual.

Queer Theorists such as Butler (1997) and Kopelson (2002) argue that the coming out narrative is actually counterproductive because it forces a person into an already established identity category. The identity category 'homosexual' is supported by a set of narratives that makes sense only by being what the binary heterosexual is not. From a queer perspective, coming out, therefore, strengthens the regulation of sexual categories. Butler (1997c) refers to coming out as "exhausting" because

whatever you say or do is “seen as a subtle manifestation of your essential homosexuality” (93).

Further, Kopelson (2002) argues that the coming out narrative has been reduced to a “cultural cliché” (22) that is swiftly losing its power. Coming out, she maintains,

> [i]s hardly scandalous or ‘spectacular’ but is sanitized and assimilated into the dominant culture to the extent that it disturbs nothing, and may even serve to ‘disguise’ more than it reveals about the complexities of sexual identity (22).

It is, according to her, an act of “simplistic re-presentation” that falls short of disturbing normative identity categories because coming out, she argues, is actually complicit in the continual reconstitution of these categories (Kopelson 2002: 23). Coming out also makes it impossible to disrupt the binary logic of sexuality and its system of benefits and punishments. The queer theorist Milano (2011) adds to this line of though when he argues that:

> [e]ven when mobilized towards the achievement of an emancipatory agenda, too much focus on sexual identities can, in the best of cases, only lead to a temporary re-calibration of power inequalities – something that however leaves the homo/heterosexual binary intact (21).

When a person comes out he or she enters into a fixed and sanctioned binary system which is incapable of questioning the supposed naturalness of heterosexuality. Later on in this chapter in my investigation of *Tommy Boys* (2005), I show how this queer critique of coming out has little relevance in the African context because the category ‘lesbian’ has virtually no recognition. It is, therefore, imperative according to the editors of *Tommy Boys* (2005) for lesbians in Africa to take the risk of coming out in order to build a critical mass so as to agitate for rights and an end to homophobia.

According to Kopelson (2002) the role of homosexuality has been to bring together a divergent assortment of norms and practices, and whilst heterosexuality is not static, “[t]he project of heterosexuality succeeds because it convinces us that heterosexuality *is* singular and all-encompassing” (22, original emphasis). The institutions of heterosexuality operate to disseminate it as comprehensive and dominant in its significance whilst concurrently diminishing homosexuality as deviant and unimportant. To come out as a homosexual means to become part of an existent and controlled identity that strengthens heterosexuality as unitary and

normative. Furthermore, being defined as homosexual means that heterosexuality is discarded and, with it, the chance to disassemble heterosexual supremacy. Butler suggests risking "the *incoherence* of identity" in order to work on "the weakness in heterosexual subjectivation" rather than coming out (Butler 1997b: 259-260, original emphasis).

In Chapter 2, and drawing from Butler (1990), I argue that in order to replicate its power, heterosexuality insists on identity classifications that neatly slot into the matrix of intelligibility, which is the logic that maintains heteronormativity. These classifications permit easier control and monitoring of identities. Heterosexuality becomes panicked, anxious and threatened by those who refuse to be named and, consequently, classified. This is evident in how bisexuality flusters heterosexuality for being neither of the established binary sexual categories. As a result bisexuality is not made sense of as a real choice and is associated with fleeting risk and confusion. The "weakness in heterosexual subjectivation" (Butler 1997b: 260) that Butler is alluding to above is exposed when a person refuses to identify with a specific sexual category. Such refusal is risky because it means resisting the powerful regimes of normality that govern what is sane and intelligible and what is not. Butler (2004) argues further that

> [t]o be oppressed means that you already exist as a subject of some kind, you are there as the visible and oppressed other for the master subject, as a possible or potential subject, but to be unreal is something else again (30).

In Chapter 1 of this study I observed that Queer Theorists are interested in what happens to those non-normative sexualities and sexual practices that are still illegitimate, and noted that they might ask the question: "Will the illegitimate ever be eligible for legitimation?" Keeping this in mind and taking the queer critique of coming out into account, I move onto an analysis of the coming out narrative in my selected books.

3.1 *Male homosexuality in South Africa: Identity Formation, Culture and Crises* (1992)

Although homosexuality was illegal when *Male Homosexuality* was published in 1992, homosexual issues were being put on the national political agenda. The editors of the volume, Isaacs and McKendrick, therefore, engage with the question:

"What is male homosexuality in South Africa?" As a result *Male Homosexuality* functions not only as an educational text but also as an activist one. Isaacs and McKendrick are concerned with providing in-depth and unprejudiced information about male homosexuality in order to contribute to a positive political profile of homosexuality in South Africa. It must be noted that the terms 'homosexual' and 'gay' in this chapter refer to white middle-class men only since this is the population that was scrutinised. As I noted in Chapter 1, the authors of *Male Homosexuality* make clear the limitations of researching a mainly white gay population and are politically progressive in their approach to gay and lesbian identity and politics in South Africa.

Male Homosexuality is regarded by some as a South African academic classic, comparable to *The Homosexual Matrix (*1975) by the American academic C.A. Tripp. Moreover, it is the most influential and most cited text on male homosexuality in South Africa (as I mentioned in Chapter 1). For example, as recently as 2005, Charl Hattingh quotes the definitions for coming out and being closeted directly from *Male Homosexuality*.

> The term 'out of the closet' refers to a gay, lesbian or bisexual person who acknowledges his or her sexual orientation to others and 'being closeted' refers to a person who has, or who is thought to have homosexual tendencies, and who has not acknowledged them (Isaacs and McKendrick cited in Hattingh in van Zyl and Steyn 2005: 232).

Taking into account the contribution that *Male Homosexuality* has made to gay and lesbian studies in South Africa my analysis below attempts to excavate the way the book presents the coming out narrative. Since Isaacs and McKendrick approach homosexuality from the disciplines of psychology and social work, the coming out tropes of secrecy and disclosure operate alongside those of normal and abnormal sexualities. In Chapter 2, drawing from Foucault, I trace the construction of normal (hetero) and abnormal (homo) sexualities. Until the end of the 18th century the regulation of sexuality concentrated on the married couple. A deviant act such as sodomy was punished in the same way that adultery was. The shift in the control of sexuality from the church to more secular discourses in the 17th and 18th centuries changed the focus of regulation from the married couple to children, sodomisers,

criminals and the insane. The distinction between normal and abnormal people and sexualities was, therefore, established.

Isaacs and McKendrick present a homosexual identity that is a fragile, unpredictable, unstable and uncontrollable entity which is always bordering on collapse when compared to a heterosexual identity. This is a result of numerous factors such as prejudice, self-hate and alienation. It is the mission, therefore, of Isaacs and McKendrick to offer "helping professionals" (206) the tools not only to deal with such potential collapse but also to prevent it. According to Isaacs and McKendrick, if a person has not successfully negotiated the various stages of gay identity formation, which include coming out and having a stable relationship, then a "whole sense of self" (188) cannot be achieved. Instead, as the subtitle of the book (Identity Formation, Culture and Crises) confirms, turmoil and disorder are incipient.

Gay rights, Isaacs and McKendrick argue, are essential in order to authenticate and actualise a gay identity and are an important part of the coming out process. They argue that

> [u]nlike the North American situation, where the homosexual liberation movement contributes to the coming out process … collectively homosexuality in South Africa is still in the embryonic stages of development in respect of public coming out (183).

In *Male Homosexuality* 74 pages out of 231 refer to the different aspects of coming out and 23 full pages are devoted specifically to coming out. The authors draw on a vast array of psychological literature in order to develop their argument about the personal and political necessity of coming out (for example Lee 1977; Coleman 1981; Miller 1981; Cass 1984). Coming out is seen, in keeping with the prevailing academic paradigm, as a process with a number of stages that need to be completed in order for a gay identity to be achieved. The stages include:

- Step 1: First debut
- Step 2: Regular at bars
- Step 3: Coming out to heterosexual friends
- Step 4: Coming out at work
- Step 5: Coming out in a gay liberation group

(Isaacs and McKendrick 1992:198, adapted from Lee 1977)

The coming out process can occur unevenly and at any age "[t]his age-spread (16-64) represents the most crucial years for the attainment of a homosexual identity" (Isaacs and McKendrick 1992:90). For Isaacs and McKendrick, coming out is the most important event in the development of a healthy gay identity; they emphasise its significance by describing it as a "rebirthing experience" that is "imprinted in the person's psyche" (202). In my explanation of Foucault's (1978) deconstruction of the power of confessing above, I show how sex is characterised as a crisis about the truth. For Isaacs and McKendrick not to come out represents denial which leads to crisis:

> The debilitating features of a dual existence and 'closet' behaviour should be emphasized, since they foster a form of emotional fraudulence that perpetuates a sense of prolonged or incipient crisis (178).

Such a crisis can be averted, it is asserted, if a person comes out. Isaacs and McKendrick (1992) argue that "[t]he root of the experience is that *coming out implies admitting that one is homosexual*" (182, original emphasis). Further evidence of the fraudulence of being in the closet is camp behaviour, which Isaacs and McKendrick associate with "private fantasy experiences" (108). Such camp behaviour disappears once a person comes out. They also make a distinction between coming out and "going public" (159). For them, coming out is the admission to the self of homosexuality, going public means telling other people. Going public for them "indicates an overall *ownership of identity*" which moves beyond the private (159, original emphasis). Isaacs and McKendrick emphasise the necessity of coming out to parents, friends and work colleagues in order to complete identity formation. In my discussion above of Foucault's (1978) argument about the compulsion to confess, I demonstrate how confessing is expected to bring about fundamental changes to the identity of the person confessing.

Isaacs and McKendrick's promotion of coming out was in line with the gay political strategies of the context in which they were writing in South Africa. It must be taken into account that in the late 1980s and early 1990s coming out as gay was still seen as transgressive and politically risky. Sodomy was still outlawed and homosexuality was seen by hardline struggle[25] activists as a bourgeois frivolity. Therefore, Isaacs

[25] The 'struggle' refers to the political struggle for liberation in South Africa from apartheid

and McKendrick needed to provide credible evidence of the political and personal necessity of coming out. Such evidence would show first, how coming out is linked to gay liberation and second, how coming out is essential for healthy and normal homosexual identity formation given that homosexuality was viewed as abnormal at the time.

3.2 *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (1994)

Defiant Desire aims to expand the narrow definition of gay identity in South Africa beyond the white male middle class perspective. Homosexual issues are presented as being equivalent to the race, class and gender struggles that were taking place in South Africa at the time. Like *Male Homosexuality*, *Defiant Desire* replicates the major arguments about coming out that were prevalent in the early 1990s. However, the emphasis here is on coming out as a tactic for mass political mobilisation of homosexuals compared to *Male Homosexuality*, which argues that coming out is essential to prevent psychological crisis. However, akin to *Male Homosexuality*, *Defiant Desire* also perceives coming out as a process rather than as a single event. For example, in the chapter "Ivan Toms is a Fairy?" Ivan Toms writes that "[f]or lesbians or gays, coming out of the closet is not a once-and-for-all experience…it remains a drawn out, exciting (and exacting) process of self-acceptance as well" (Toms in Gevisser and Cameron 1994: 263).

A significant concern at the time, which is addressed by a number of chapters in *Defiant Desire*, concerns the problems with the gay and lesbian movement, first being historically white and, second, not being broad enough to "defeat homophobia, backwardness and bigotry" (McLean and Ngcobo in Gevisser and Cameron 1994: 182). For John Pegge gays and lesbians do not have the, "collective courage to stand together and be counted" (Pegge in Gevisser and Cameron 1994: 301). The remedy for this, it is argued, is for more and more gay people to come out of the closet in order to develop the gay and lesbian movement. In my outline of those theorists (Plummer 1975 et al.) above who encourage coming out, I illustrate how confessing to the truth of one's sexuality is viewed as politically beneficial to the gay and lesbian community. Gay people who are still in the closet and have not stood up to be counted are viewed as having a false consciousness for many authors in *Defiant Desire*. For example, Jack Lewis and Francois Loots, argue in the chapter

‘‘Moffies en Manvroue’: Gay and Lesbian Life Histories in Contemporary Cape Town” that coming out will not only “produce a growth in consciousness” but that it could also “change anti-homosexual prejudice and intolerance” (Lewis and Loots in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:140). In Chapter 2, again drawing from Foucault (1978) as well as Butler (2004), I raise questions about the effectiveness of a human rights discourse which endorses consciousness raising to facilitate liberation which should then mean that an individual is no longer oppressed. It is clear from Lewis and Loot’s argument above that at the time when they were writing in the early 1990s this was not a consideration because a rights based discourse had been proved to be the most effective political strategy in other liberation struggles and was, therefore, viewed as the most appropriate in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Defiant Desire is an example of a text that provides information on homosexuality and identity issues from a left-wing perspective in order to counter hateful, right wing understandings of homosexuality which were often linked to the narrow-mindedness of apartheid. Liberationist-style political tactics (such as coming out) are presented as the most reasonable way to ensure the liberation of the homosexual minority. At the time *Defiant Desire* was written this would seem to have been the most efficacious method to ensure freedom for a minority that had suffered legislated right-wing discrimination and abuse for nearly 40 years. Furthermore, the broader aims of the struggle were envisaged as facilitating a more equitable, fair, encompassing and liberal (if not radical) way of life for all South Africans. Therefore, in *Defiant Desire* a united front of left-wing thought permeates all the chapters; there is little space for analysing or presenting queer lives that are not accommodated within such a perspective.

3.3 *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens: A History and Dictionary of Gay Language in South Africa* (2003)

Gayle differs from the other books that I analyse since it is a dictionary of gay language, as I indicated in the introduction. *Gayle* was written nine years after the advent of democracy and the legalisation of homosexuality (and also nine years after *Defiant Desire*) and is, therefore, not an activist text, but is, rather, one that concentrates on theorising about the nuances of gay life (such as gay language) now

that “[t]he new constitution [had] effectively legalised gay existence” (Cage 2003: 15).

Although *Gayle* is a more recent work (2003), it shares a similar approach to the political strategy of coming out as one of its predecessors written eleven years previously—*Male Homosexuality*. Closeted homosexuality leads to psychological deficiency in *Male Homosexuality* and linguistic deficiency in *Gayle*. Cage (2003), like Isaacs and McKendrick, views coming out as a process that starts with the admission of homosexuality, first to oneself and then publicly. He argues that such a process is “limitless” and that each disclosure means a movement “one step further from the closet” (8). For Cage, the more closeted a person is the more incomplete that person’s gay identity is. A complete gay identity is possible only if one has traversed the various stages of disclosure (see diagram below).



Figure 3 The coming out process (Cage 2003:6)

Cage (2003) views the public disclosure of gay identity as the pinnacle of identity formation, and regards individuals who do not come out publicly as “emotionally stunted” (9). In 2003 (when *Gayle* was published) homosexuality had been legal for nine years, and, for Cage, this meant that homosexuals no longer had to use the linguistic by-products of the closet—gay or camp language. Cage explicates in great detail how the language of gay people has changed as a consequence of legality. For him the use of a “caustic tongue” (31) is a direct result of the inferior status of homosexuality in South Africa prior to 1994.

Such linguistic bitchiness is considered part of the closet behaviour that forced gay people into self-destructive and defensive behaviour as a coping mechanism. A linguistic example of such behaviour is the use of hateful homophobic words such as

"moffie", "queen", "auntie"[26] and "lettie" (Cage 2003:37).[27] These words, Cage argues, function to dehumanise other gays and to entrench "negative attitudes and stereotypes" (37). Further examples include "piece", "fuck", "stuk"[28] and "pomp"[29] (31) which further associate gay people according to Cage with "transient sexual relationship[s], and are not words that many people would like used in reference to themselves or their position in a relationship" (39). It is clear here that Cage is providing evidence to counter the perception of gay people as deviant. Such a perception is based on heterosexuality being seen to be a blessed sexuality and, therefore, according to Rubin's (1993) diagram, fit to occupy the inner recess of the Charmed Circle, while homosexuality is banished to the outer limits (see Chapter 2). In addition to the "caustic tongue" (Cage 2003:31), Cage also identifies camp as a linguistic coping mechanism that should "die out" since it is "no longer needed today" (9). Before 1994, Cage asserts, camp gave repressed gay people "minority group coherence" (10) but now that gay people have rights**,** there is no need for such self-destructive language.

Linguist Queer Theorists such as Cameron and Kulick argue that camp is not the exclusive property of gay people and can be a language resource for anyone to use; a "[l]anguage like camp [consists] of a set of resources that are available to all speakers of a language, in the same way that something like 'expert talk' [is]" (Cameron and Kulick 2004: 102). However, for Cage, camp talk is exclusively and negatively linked to a stereotyped homosexual male, who is secretive and self-loathing. Legality eliminates the need for a gay person to use such negative linguistic coping mechanisms and allows him[30] to come out in a less fraught way.

Cage (2003) views the gay person completely differently in comparison with the authors of the other books that I analyse in this chapter; he is the only author who

[26] An effeminate gay man
[27] A lesbian
[28] Literally, 'piece' as in 'piece of meat' (a gay man)
[29] Literally, a 'fuck'
[30] *Gayle*, "aims to be the most comprehensive collection of words used by gay men and women in South Africa published to date" (Cage 2003: 51). On closer inspection however, the overwhelming majority of these lexical items refer only to those used exclusively by gay males: "in the case of Gayle, the speaker and listener generally both have to be male and both have to be gay, and to have to be known (by each other) to be gay" (27). Moreover, these gay males are predominantly white English and Afrikaans speaking, which Cage justifies: his research focus is on "non-African language speakers" (11) since "only Indo-European-speaking (English and Afrikaans) gay men use Gayle" (23). In addition, although claiming to include items by gay women, *Gayle* includes fewer than ten (most of which are only derogatory descriptions of lesbians such as: "cunt muncher"(63); "box biter"(59);"bush licker"(60) and "diesel dyke"(66).

regards identity as biological. For him a person is born gay; it is an innate biological fact. This perspective is evident when he writes that "[being gay] is an integral part of the DNA composition of the individual" (16). Having established homosexuality as biological, he then proceeds to provide evidence in support of gay respectability in order to dissociate it from the stereotypes of the over-sexualised male homosexual, the feminine male homosexual and the homosexual paedophile. In order to do this Cage clearly sets out to define a respectable gay person. He begins by arguing for the separation of sex from identity. For him to be homosexual is nothing more than a "physical sexual act" (5) whilst to be gay "is more about developing a 'gay identity' than about sexual activities" (6).

There is a great deal of evidence in *Gayle* that illustrates how Cage creates the distinction between the terms 'gay' and 'homosexual'.[31] The purpose of highlighting this distinction is to bring to the fore the sub-text of *Gayle* which, I argue, removes the link between sex and homosexuality in order to advance the idea of a respectable gay person. Such a respectable gay person, for Cage, always discloses his or her sexuality. The reason for this is so that identification is possible with other gay people in a gay sub-culture and in a gay community. The upshot of this is that recognition as a member of a repressed minority means being eligible for political rights. In Chapter 2, using Foucault (1978), I explain how the workings of power aimed not to eradicate a deviant sexual category such as homosexuality but rather to give it a more noticeable reality. Confessing to being a homosexual meant to become part of an injured minority that could agitate for political rights.

Cage (2003) defines homosexuality in a limiting way. According to him it is "a clinical word usually referring only to a sexual liaison between two persons of the same gender"[32] (4). Deciding to approach the issue of homosexuality from such a fixed position ultimately confuses Cage.

> How many same-sex acts must be committed before a person can be classified as 'homosexual'….Classifying a person only by his/her sexual

[31] A queer perspective on narrow definitions is succinctly articulated by D.N. Warner (2004):"[f]rom a queer position…none of these terms...ranging from MSMs (men who have sex with men), to the familiarly deprecatory 'Fairy Queens', 'Homos', and 'Fag Hags'...has a clear, unambiguous referent [and it is the] terms' definitional rigor that is under investigation" (D.N.Warner 2004: 325).

[32] What Cage means here is sex rather than gender, of course.

> activities, makes it difficult to decide who is and who isn't homosexual or heterosexual (4).

The irony here is that Cage (2003) classifies a homosexual person only according to his or her sexual activities which precludes the many meanings that can be associated with not only homosexuality, but also with heterosexuality. Such a narrow and negative definition of homosexuality reinforces the heteronormative link between homosexuality and gay male promiscuity whilst simultaneously providing virtue to a gay identity that is associated with normality and respectability. Such normality and respectability is linked by Cage to the inevitability of gay marriage: "[i]t will be interesting when same-sex marriages become legal in South Africa to see what titles the participants at the nuptials will use" (38). Same-sex marriage excludes homosexuals because they are abject creatures, associated with sickness, perversion, deviancy, sleaziness and loneliness. For Cage the figure of the lonely or melancholic homosexual is an ever present reminder of the potential misery of homosexuality. He writes

> [t]he reason why so many homosexuals of old were unhappy and committed suicide might often have been because ... of their perceived 'perverted' sexual tendencies (5).

In contrast, Cage (2003) provides great detail about the many desirable qualities of a gay identity which involves a "particular perspective of reality which goes way beyond the bedroom" (5). A gay person is consciously in control of his (or her) identity and lifestyle and is part of a vibrant gay community that is cohesive, fun, holistic and, most importantly, one that is filled with pride and self-love. But above all, for Cage, the word 'gay' is not only what most homosexuals prefer to be called, or identify with, but it is also an international standard. It is, he argues, the "most widely-accepted and widely-used term for people with same-sex attraction in communities throughout the world" (5). Finally, Cage argues that

> [t]he word 'gay' is also associated with Gay Pride, and implies a positive self-image…unlike 'homosexual' which is often pejorative and disempowering … [it] conjures up images of dirty, old men (5).

Cage (2003) further dissociates a gay identity from what he calls the "minority alternatives like the confrontational 'queer'" (5). For him 'queer' is still a term of derision and insult that will never be re-appropriated positively as a result of its

historical usage as a term of insult and scorn for gay people in South Africa. Butler (1997a) would disagree. The word ‘queer’, she argues, has become powerful through its repetition as an insult and has become, consequently, a social bond for homophobic people. But she adds that the word ‘queer’ can be turned against those very homophobic discourses that formed it.

However, for Cage (2003) ‘queer’ is as negative a term as ‘homosexual’ and there are many instances in *Gayle* where the two terms are linked with a common association of inappropriateness and confrontation with decent gay people. He is shocked that many gay people refer to themselves or other gay people as queer which, he argues, “suggests perhaps a deep-seated inferiority complex for which the speaker is trying to compensate” (31). As I have shown above, Cage prefers the term ‘gay’ which is considered to be respectable and universal. This understanding clearly positions him within an approach to gender and sexuality that is based on identity politics. I would even go so far as to argue that Cage is located to the right of identity politics since he is a promoter of biological determinism. Therefore, in *Gayle* the disclosure of homosexuality is essential because it represents a logical step in the process of being born gay. It is only once a homosexual person starts the coming out process that he (or she) can interact with the world as an authentic and recognisable person. Furthermore, in *Gayle* there is no acknowledgement of perspectives that criticise biological determinism or the limits of bounded identities.

3.4 *Tommy boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa* (2005)

A widely held myth in Africa is that homosexuality is a Western import and a product of colonialism. The origin of this myth most probably lies with Richard Burton who excluded Africa from his map of the Stotadic Zones in which homosexuality is practised. According to Bill Stanford Pincheon (2000) this “denial, promulgated by [Burton], has contributed to lingering ideas that same-sex sexual activity, and now a homosexual identification, were not present on the continent” (50-51). *Tommy Boys* aims to counter this misconception by providing anthropological evidence that there was tacit acceptance and acknowledgement of female sexuality practices such as homo-erotic play, bond friendships and women marriages in pre-colonial Africa that would not be considered normal or acceptable in contemporary Africa.

Therefore, *Tommy Boys* is an important intervention that attempts to combat homophobia and the lack of recognition for lesbians in Africa, and is the first gay and lesbian non-fiction book (of those I have targeted for discussion) that deals exclusively with lesbianism in an African context. Alongside the anthropological evidence presented in *Tommy Boys* are the personal testaments of lesbians in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa which have been captured by women activists. *Tommy Boys* highlights the enormous difficulties of living the life of a lesbian in Africa and also clearly indicates how this also constitutes powerful resistance to heterosexual norms. As I noted in Chapter 2, in my analysis of Butler (1991), resistance to heterosexualised genders by being, for example, a lesbian, shows the fiction of the originality of heterosexuality.

In *Tommy Boys* disclosure is linked not only to the contemporary notion of coming out but also to revealing the hidden truth about pre-colonial female same-sex practices in Africa.

Similarly to its presentation in *Male Homosexuality*, *Defiant Desire* and *Gayle*, coming out in an African context in *Tommy Boys* is also presented as a political necessity which, Morgan and Wieringa argue (2005), is far more complex than it is in a Western context. They argue that "[t]he silence in which most African women in same-sex relations live their lives causes their marginalisation from society" (19). Further, they argue that coming out in Africa is "very dangerous" and the prevalence of the extended family system means that out lesbians "may lose whatever support their families afforded them and may be evicted from their homes" (19).

Morgan and Wieringa consider coming out to be a necessary step in the development of a gay identity and their approach to identity issues is similar to that adopted in *Defiant Desire*. They aim to expand the narrow definition of Western homosexuality, particularly as it relates to lesbianism in an African context. Consequently, they would concur with the queer Indian scholar Gayatri Gopinath (2005) who argues that Western-centric understandings of identity "replicate a colonial narrative of development and progress that judges all other sexual cultures, communities, and practices against a model of Euro-American sexual identity" (11). Therefore, in *Tommy Boys*, Morgan and Wieringa aim to counter Western-centric

understandings of identity by providing evidence from the lives of lesbians in different parts of Eastern, Western and Southern Africa.

Morgan and Wieringa (2005) make it clear that Western approaches to identity are problematic in the African context. They argue that "[o]ne of the major concerns we have is the tendency to essentialise and universalise human experiences by assuming the relevance of 'Western' categories to the lives of people elsewhere" (309). They argue that such Western categories are associated with white middle-class urban lesbians and thus cannot account for the different set of challenges that confronts black rural and urban working-class lesbians in Africa. Another problem for Morgan and Wieringa is that Western understandings of homosexuality cannot account for, and are "far removed from the life of the Lovedu [33] rain queen with her hundreds of wives" (281). They promote a local rather than a global understanding of homosexuality and thus demonstrate how homosexuality has been practised differently in different African contexts. This point would fits well with the idea of the danger in totalising identities that I elaborate on in Chapter 2 when, drawing from the work of Foucault (1978) and Butler (2004), I show that identities are performed differently in different contexts and under a different set of enablers and restraints.

It is for this reason that Morgan and Wieringa (2005) do not use the term 'lesbian' to describe pre-colonial same-sex relations. However, in a contemporary setting, they use the term if participants in their research project described themselves as lesbians. Morgan and Wieringa found that coming out and claiming the identity descriptor 'lesbian' was more prevalent in research participants from South Africa. They argue that this is "probably as a result of the progressive constitution that prevents discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation" (322). Morgan and Wieringa suggest that more people would be comfortable coming out as lesbian if gay rights were extended in Africa.

Many of the researchers in their research project had a narrow understanding of the word 'lesbian', with its Western denotation and connotations and, therefore, all researchers attended training on female same-sex practices in Africa. Morgan and

[33] The Lovedu rain queen is the matrilineal queen of the Balobedu people of the Limpopo Province in South Africa (Krige and Krige 1981).

Wieringa (2005) observe that “it was fascinating to see how naturally and quickly the women began to shift their thinking and their own categories of what a lesbian may be” (14). It was important for them that their researchers should forge an understanding of lesbianism that is rooted in an African context in order to become full sexual citizens of their various countries. They further encourage African lesbians to challenge the homophobia of people in their community by using the political tactic of “consciousness raising” (22). For Morgan and Wieringa, a human rights strategy is the most appropriate way in which to create the political conditions for lesbians in Africa to come out. Self-identified lesbians could act as proof, as it were, to combat the pervasive myth that homosexuality is un-African and a Western import.

Morgan and Wieringa use the work of ethnographers such as Karsch-Haack (1911); Falk (1925); Schapera (1930); Herskovits (1937) and Evans-Pritchard (1951) to provide evidence of same-sex practices and marriages between women in pre-colonial Africa. The presentation of these practices functions as evidence to counter the myth that homosexuality is a Western import and that it is un-African. According to Morgan and Wieringa, African politicians, administrators and lawmakers ignore the ethnographic evidence of pre-colonial women marriages.[34] For example, when family law was being reformed in Benin in 1996, Wieringa asked the drafting committee if it planned to sanction women marriages and the response was “that this was absolutely not going to happen” (Morgan and Wieringa 2005: 18). The reason for this, according to the committee, was because when Herskovits was doing research on women marriages in Dahomey (now Benin) in the early 1930s he did not understand the indigenous language and, therefore, misunderstood these form of relations.

The evidence provided by Karsch-Haack et al. is very unclear as to whether or not women marriages or same-sex practices such as the female puberty rites of labia elongation had a sexual component. However, by making known the potential phallocentric bias of these early ethnographers, and by drawing on evidence from a contemporary ethnographer such as Kendall (1999) Morgan and Wieringa show the feasibility of a sexual component in women marriages and same-sex practices.

[34] Morgan and Wieringa (2005) choose to use the term ‘women marriages’ because “it involves the legalised union between two women” (299).

Morgan and Wieringa (2005) argue further that these same-sex marriages and practices were fully accepted by different African societies: “[t]he traditional women marriages … [were] fully institutionalised in their societies and thus can be seen as normative, non-disruptive same-sex patterns” (319). Morgan and Wieringa’s emphasis that same-sex couples lived harmoniously side-by-side with heterosexual couples functions to show how much more open minded pre-colonial Africa was. They reveal how the situation of two women living together was normal and not disruptive at all, since female husbands were real women; they were not, Morgan and Wieringa contend, “acting out a drag scene” (320). In other words, the partners in a women marriage did not adopt specific masculine and feminine roles role as required by the heteronormative approach to marriage. At no point are they critical of how such women marriages were complicit in upholding the status quo at the time. Elsje Bonthuys (2008), a customary law expert, argues that the historical tolerance of these women marriages is “limited by the implicit understanding that such relationships should not question or undermine patriarchal gender roles and heterosexual family structures” (Bonthuys in Judge et al. 2008:178).

It could be that the lack of critique by Morgan and Wieringa of pre-colonial women marriages is a political choice. They need to show that female same-sex practices have always existed in Africa in order to help combat violent homophobia and to lobby for political rights for same-sex relationships in contemporary Africa. In *Tommy Boys* Morgan and Wieringa explain the complexity and danger of coming out as a lesbian in an African context. They also explain how coming out is a necessary political strategy in the fight for political rights and how it functions in preventing black lesbians from being further marginalised in society. The queer critique of coming out that I offer at the beginning of this chapter, drawing on the point of view of both Butler (1997) and Kopelson (2002) that coming out rather than being an act of liberation is complicit in the reproduction of the categories heterosexual and homosexual, therefore has very little relevance in an analysis of *Tommy Boys* because the category ‘black lesbian’ is still not a recognisable category in 20 countries in Africa.

3.5 *Performing Queer: Shaping Sexualities 1994-2004 Vol.1* (2005)

In terms of the path of the gay and lesbian non-fiction books that I investigate, *Performing Queer* represents a shift in the approach to the issues that relate to sexual and gender minorities in South Africa. The title incorporates two of the words that best describe the theoretical shifts that have occurred in gender and sexuality studies since the early 1990s and that I trace in detail in Chapter 2. 'Performing' suggests an approach to issues of identity that contests biological and static understandings, and 'queer' suggests the reclamation of a derogatory word for homosexuals as well as a potentially transgressive approach to issues of identity. Although not all the chapters in the book have a queer look at sexuality in South Africa, many do: *Performing Queer* represents a developing maturity in the theorisation of sexual difference. As I note in Chapter 2, the queer theorist Sullivan (2003), argues that the word queer should be considered a verb rather than a noun and adopting such a queer approach helps a researcher to move from inclusion to inquiry.

In the introduction, "Shaping Sexualities—Per(trans)forming Queer", Mikki van Zyl makes the aims of the text clear when she says that it investigates sexualities "that do not perform straight" (van Zyl in van Zyl and Steyn 2005:19) and also shows how identities "can become fixed by processes such as mainstreaming discrete categories which foreclose other possibilities for performing diverse sexual values" (31).

Despite this theoretical roominess which is a mark of queer theorising that I allude to in Chapter 2, the coming out narrative remains central to *Performing Queer*. There is no engagement with the ramifications of coming out in perpetuating institutionalised sexuality. Rather, Van Zyl, as editor, argues that "'coming out', [allows gay people to] identify with others whom we perceive to be 'like us'" (van Zyl in van Zyl and Steyn, 2005:22). Specific chapters are dedicated to specialist areas of coming out in the workplace, as a Christian, with HIV or as a black lesbian or black gay man. Van Zyl argues that coming out as a black lesbian or black gay man is far more complex because of the urban/rural divide that results in white middle class urbanised gays feeling safer "to come out and identify as lesbian or gay, [and] fight for their rights under the Constitution" (31). In her article about black lesbians Cheryl-Ann Potgieter

argues differently from van Zyl when she maintains there is an incorrect assumption that coming out as a lesbian in black communities is more complex than in white communities because homophobia is rampant in black communities. This, she claims, is a "racist stereotype" [since there is] "no one response to coming 'out' in the black community" (Potgieter in van Zyl and Steyn 2005:187).

In addition to highlighting the uniqueness of each coming out experience, *Performing Queer* also puts forward the idea that coming out is a process and not a single event which is the point made, too, in *Male Homosexuality*, *Defiant Desire* and *Gayle*. As Hattingh observe*s*, "the achievement of higher levels of authenticity [via coming out] is a life-long project to attain an ideal" (Hattingh in van Zyl and Steyn 2005: 212). Furthermore, a common thread in many of the chapters is the idea that when a person comes out he or she is protected by the constitution and it is therefore imperative that this person understands the importance and responsibility of having rights. "Freedom also implies that we have a responsibility to take authorship of our lives and to act courageously" Hattingh writes (Hattingh in van Zyl and Steyn 2005:229). It is also intimated that failing to use the right to be gay is a shameful and cowardly act. Such an idea would be in agreement with those gay and lesbian theorists such as Plummer (1975) et al. whose ideas about coming out I discuss in the beginning of this chapter. For example, Juan Nel, in his article on mental health considerations for gays and lesbians, claims that only "'out' lgtbi individual[s] [can] empower the community" (Nel in van Zyl and Steyn 2005: 295). In the context of this article the individuals in question refers to psychologists and, therefore, a psychologist who is not out is dishonourable and ineffectual since she or he cannot be an empowering role model. In passing, it is worth noting here that according to Kopelsen (2002) the idea that coming out can undermine homophobia is being revisited by queer theorists because it allocates to the out person "sole responsibility for this work" (20). We see this quite clearly in Nel's chapter. Instead, suggest Conrad and Crawford (1998), the work of trying to undermine homophobia should be re-assigned away from the out person as "native informant" and towards a discussion of society's organisation of "sexuality and everyone's implication in [it]" (160).

As I highlighted above, the most important step in the coming out process for gay and lesbian theorists such as Plummer et al. (1975), is that the out person should go public. Hattingh discusses gay and lesbian people who are closeted at work but out in private in an article tellingly entitled “Struggles of Authenticity”. For a gay or lesbian person not to go public about her or his sexuality means, for Hattingh, that she or he is inauthentic. It also means that such people have not used the “[t]he opportunities offered by the constitution [which] represent a call to authenticity” (Hattingh in van Zyl and Steyn 2005: 229). Hattingh claims that coming out without carefully thinking of the consequences of such a choice could be read as an act of “blind rebellion” which, he claims, points to an inauthentic gay person because coming out as a real gay person “requires ownership of choice and responsibility” (212). The notion of an authentic gay identity as put forward by Hattingh is diametrically opposed to the way that Foucault (1978) and Butler (1997c) understand identity, as I demonstrate in Chapter 2.

Even though *Performing Queer* signals the beginning of a substantive engagement with Queer Theory, the coming out narrative remains an important political strategy. This is made evident by the detail that is found in many chapters about coming out as it relates to all areas of life such as work, health, religion and political rights. It is argued that disclosure is a political necessity if the gay community wants to take full advantage of the rights promised by the constitution. This highlights the fact that coming out is still viewed with importance and promise in a post-apartheid South Africa. A book like *Performing Queer* is an example of how some elements of Queer Theory (for example, the refusal by some writers to view identity as essential) can be successfully used as analytical tools but others (such as the critique of the coming out narrative) have very little relevance.

3.6 Conclusion

The concern of this chapter has been to re-evaluate the coming out narrative in five of my selected books using a queer perspective which questions whether coming out binds individuals more strongly to their subjectivities or whether it liberates them. Such an approach is framed by the awareness that disclosure is linked only to homosexuality and that people with a heterosexual identity are exempt from this requirement. The work of Foucault (1978) is key in this chapter since he uncovers

the problems associated with confessing to the truth about sex. This includes how heterosexuality is reinforced as unitary and normative. In addition, the work of Butler (1991; 2004) in showing the fiction of the coherent and real subject has also been crucial. Despite the problems with coming out in upholding rather than challenging institutional sexuality, there is still a desire for many homosexuals to voluntarily come out in order to show the authenticity of what they think of as their identity.

In this chapter I have tried to uncover the tension that exists between coming out and not coming out. In order to do this, I analysed the coming out narrative in five of my targeted texts. I have demonstrated how important the coming out narrative is in books like *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and *Defiant Desire* (1994). When these books were published in the early 1990s, homosexuality was still illegal so coming out is linked directly to the fight for gay rights in that a person needs to admit he or she is homosexual so that he or she can be counted as part of a repressed minority. Additionally, Isaacs and McKendrick argue in *Male Homosexuality* that coming out is imperative for normal healthy psychological development in South Africa where homosexuality was still seen to be abnormal.

In the context in which *Gayle* was published (2003), gay and lesbian people had experienced nine years of rights. Therefore, for the author of *Gayle*, not coming out as a homosexual is seen to be fraudulent behaviour. Cage argues that gay language (especially camp language) is a by-product of oppression, discrimination and self-loathing and now that gay people are liberated in South Africa, such a language is no longer a necessity. It is the weakness inherent in Cage's biological approach to identity combined with his structuralist account of language and the delineation of bounded homosexual and gay identities that enables a particularly harsh queer critique of the coming out narrative in this text. Quite the opposite occurs in my analysis of *Tommy Boys* (2005) which carefully explains the lack of lesbian rights, and the violent homophobia which is legislated and deemed acceptable in the whole of Africa bar South Africa. Such realities elevate the acts of coming out as the most effective political strategy in fighting for lesbian rights in an African context, and invalidates the queer critique of coming out as selective recognition—in an African context the category 'lesbian' is quite unrecognisable. Finally, my analysis of *Performing Queer* shows the possibility of selecting from Queer Theory those tools

(such as a post-structural critique of identity) that are relevant and those that are not relevant (the queer critique of coming out).

In Chapter 4, “The Price We Pay”: Compromises in the Fight for Gay Marriage” I analyse the ambivalences around gay marriage in a racially divided and class conscious South African context. I do this by outlining the arguments for and against gay marriage and then provide a critique of these arguments and, further, consider what the consequences of gay marriage are for other sexual minorities, single people, and for the field of gender and sexual inquiry in general.

Chapter 4

The Price We Pay: Compromises in the Fight for Gay Marriage

The LGEP is a large and sprawling coalition of organisations that accommodates many different political positions, but what is clear is that, as I have already mentioned, it aligns itself with a radical political agenda by being "progressive, anti-homophobic, anti-racist, feminist, and anti-capitalist" (LGEP 2011:n.p.). How did such a radical collection of organisations come to a consensus on the most normative of society's institutions—marriage?

In this chapter I explore the compromises in the fight for gay marriage in South Africa. In order to do this, I first delineate the objections to gay marriage as made by homophobic people. Second, drawing from Kaplan (1997), I outline the arguments in favour of gay marriage. I then present Michael Warner's (1999) criticism of these arguments. Finally, I investigate the representation of the gay marriage discourse in *Tommy Boys* (2005) and in *To Have and to Hold* (2008) in order to provide evidence that a price has to be paid when anyone asks the state for legitimation.

For many gay and lesbian activists in the South African context, exploring the compromises in the fight for gay marriage would appear to serve no purpose at all since gay marriage is legal. However, my investigation in this chapter has five different aims.

First, I uncover whether there are any consequences for those gay and lesbian people who choose not to marry. Second, I reflect on the potential of homosexual normalisation as a result of gay marriage. Third, I investigate if the state's power is extended by legitimating gay marriage. Fourth, I consider what it means to be selectively legitimated by a state norm that was formulated to consolidate heterosexuality by excluding difference. Finally, I explore whether it is possible to oppose homophobic arguments against gay marriage "without embracing the marriage norm as the exclusive or more highly valued social arrangement for queer sexual lives?" (Butler 2004: 5)

4.1 Objections to gay marriage by homophobic people

Marriage has incalculable power and significance in society. This is why homophobic people and religious fundamentalists present so many objections to extending the right of marriage to gay people. Such objections are usually based on three beliefs. First, homophobic people believe that gay people's aspiration to marry trivialises heterosexual marriage because gay people, for them, are not normal. Second, most religions in the world believe that marriage is a holy institution, but for religious fundamentalists it has taken on an even more elevated sanctity; gay marriage is seen to be a desecration of this sacredness. Third, it is argued that gay marriage will encourage a proliferation of homosexuality in society and, taken to extremes, the argument is that if everyone were gay the human race would die out.

It is ironic that so many homophobic people should be opposed to gay marriage since one would expect it to be seen, rather, as the ultimate act of compliance with heterosexual norms. However, many homophobic people see marriage to be something so privileged and sacred that it should be accessible only to heterosexual people. For them it is anathema that gay people be permitted, even, to use the word 'marriage' in relation to themselves (M.Warner 1999). These are the homophobic arguments that the LGEP was combating in arguing for gay marriage.

4.2 Arguments for gay marriage, and a critique of them

Kaplan's (1997) article "Intimacy and Equality: The Question of Lesbian and Gay Marriage" accurately represents the most important arguments in favour of gay marriage presented by the gay and lesbian rights movement in the United States. He argues that true equality for gay and lesbian people means the legal recognition of their relationships—in other words, the right to marry—so that gay people can be part of "human flourishing on equal terms with straight citizens" in order to achieve "human happiness" (206). That gay people are now able to make such a demand is based on, first, the "political overcoming of the closet" (202) and second, the shift in the priorities of the gay and lesbian rights movement from the "defensive fight for survival" (206) to the fight for the legal recognition of relationships. He argues that

> [s]hifting ground from sexual freedom to the recognition of lesbian and gay partnerships and families asserts a commonality with the professed

> aspirations of the heterosexual majority and undercuts the construction of queers as sexual subversives (204).

According to Kaplan (1997), marriage is the only institution that joins people together and that obliges the state to provide specific subsequent benefits. In addition to state-sanctioned benefits, there are also numerous financial, material and symbolic benefits offered to spouses including employee benefits, access to hospital rooms and nursing homes, participation in life and death decisions, and the right to adopt a child (205). Ultimately, for Kaplan, gay marriage is about the legitimation of gay and lesbian people in the eyes of the community, families and "even themselves" (205). That marriage is a "troubled institution" means that the traditional notion of the nuclear family is "already a fiction" (221) and he claims that gay and lesbian marriage has the potential to challenge such conservativeness and "transform available possibilities" (222).

Kaplan's (1997) arguments in favour of gay marriage in the American context: the equal right to marry; "human happiness" (206); respectability (because marriage "undercuts the construction of queers as sexual subversives" (204)); and legal and social benefits—are similar to those made in the South African context. This parallel is evident in the article, "The right to commit" (see below). The only difference is that, in South Africa, gay marriage is legal and the Civil Union Act "to all intents and purposes, affords the same rights as does the Marriage Act" (Fisher-French 2009: 35). Erasmus Louw and Renier Prinsloo, the couple discussed in the article below, had been together for 12 years and felt that it was time to "take the plunge" for four reasons: they have the "right to commit"; they "love each other"; "[they] are seen as role models within [their] gay community and [they] wanted to set an example". Also, they wanted to marry because of "legal concerns". For example, they would now "be able to adopt as a couple" and "people who are not formally in a civil union have to prove to SARS[35] that they treat one another as spouses" (Fisher-French 2009: 35).

[35] South African Revenue Service



The right to commit

The Civil Union Act gives gay couples the same rights as a marriage, writes

After 12 years together, Erasmus Louw and Renier Prinsloo decided to take the plunge and were married this week.

"We made the decision firstly because we love each other but there were also legal concerns," says Prinsloo. One of the biggest concerns was that despite being partners for 12 years they were not considered next of kin. "If something happened to Renier and he was incapacitated I would have no say. They would still have to ask his parents' permission," says Louw.

In December 2006 South Africa became the 14th country in the world to permit gay marriage, under the Civil Union Act. As with any couple living together, having a contract and the rights that it provides offers a great deal

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Figure 4 The right to commit: The Civil Union Act gives gay couples the same rights as marriage (Fisher-French 2009:35)

In "The Trouble with Normal" (1999) Michael Warner critiques the four major arguments that the gay and lesbian rights movement makes in favour of gay marriage: choice; love; respectability; and legal benefits.

According to the first argument, gay marriage is seen to be a personal choice and a fundamental human right. If the right to marry is not conferred, it is argued, gay and lesbian people will be relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Marriage per se might be problematic for the gay and lesbian rights movement, but nevertheless, they argue, each individual should have the choice to make a decision about this issue. Therefore, the right to marriage must be extended to allow this choice to be made. "Marriage is an important personal choice and a basic human right. Whether gay people decide to get married or not, it should be our choice" (Lobel cited in M.Warner 1999: 95). But the argument for gay marriage as being only about choice masks other concerns that should be taken into account by the potential marrying couple. These include the problems associated with the normativity of marriage,

whether marriage is a good political tactic and what the implications of increased state control would be. Marriage is not just a private act or a choice that does not affect those who do not marry. The description of marriage as a simple choice would be accurate only if it did not possess the very advantageous association with legitimacy that makes people want to get married in the first place.

The claim that marriage is a private choice would, further, be accurate only if the choice to marry could be made sense of without allusion to the power of the state in the legitimation of marriage. This centrality of the state in marriage is a relatively recent development since common-law marriages were the rule rather than the exception before the 18th century in the Western world. It is only from this time that the parish registry became commonly used to officially document nuptials (M.Warner 1999). Since the 20th century marriage has become enmeshed with the state. If marriage were separate from the state (as it once was), M.Warner argues, "it would be easier to urge the state to recognise single parents and other nonstandard households" (125). As long as people continue to marry, the lives of those who do not marry will be disadvantaged. It is, therefore, short-sighted to think of marriage as simply a choice that can be made behind closed doors without detrimental effects on anybody else.

The second major argument in favour of gay marriage is that it is primarily about love and human happiness and that societal and institutional considerations are secondary. According to Bishop John Shelby Spong, gay marriage will be "marked by integrity and caring and … filled with grace and beauty" (Spong cited in M.Warner 1999: 113). According to this perspective, marriage is about two people who love each other, who are making a statement: it has nothing to do with those who choose not to marry, the state or transforming cultural norms. In agreement with this, Wolfson argues that "[t]oday marriage is first and foremost about a loving union between two people" (Wolfson cited in M.Warner 1999: 98).

In the argument based on love, the involvement of the state vanishes and gay marriage is not seen as having any unpleasant effects on others or any detrimental consequences. Rather, it is seen to be transformative and "radically egalitarian" (M.Warner 1999:127). Furthermore, love is not considered to be open to critique since it is based on an "inner truth"—on the heart—and is above politics and conflict

(100). This is not only, according to M.Warner, a phony romanticisation of love, but to fail to criticise love for being above those unpleasant aspects of life diverts people's attention away from the realities of life. The institution of marriage cannot be reduced to such simplicity: "[m]arriage, after all, is a concrete personal benefit imbued with intense affect and nearly universal legitimacy" (105). Additionally, marriage cannot be reduced to something private that happens between two people who are in love, since marriage is a public tradition the significance and effects of which often extend beyond the meanings attached to it by the two individuals who are getting married: "[i]ts ramifications reach as far as the legal force and cultural normativity of the institution" (107).

The third major argument advanced by the gay and lesbian rights movement in favour of gay marriage is that it will make gays respectable since it would normalise queer behaviour by undercutting the "construction of queers as sexual subversives" (Kaplan 1997: 204). This appears to be based on a form of behaviourism which aims to change the sexual mores of gay men. Erasmus Louw and Renier Prinsloo (whose marriage is reported in the article above) exemplify this position. They make it clear that they are not average gay males who are associated with one-night stands and promiscuity. They got married in order to reinforce their position as role models for the gay community. M.Warner (1999) argues that the 'respectable gay' reason for gay marriage is derived from homophobic stereotypes which portray homosexuality as immoral and as being only about "gay bars, pornography, and one night stands" (113). However, the gay marriage arguments based on the construction of the respectable gay should rightly be seen as "anti-queer" (114) rather than strictly homophobic. It is unlikely that marriage will produce respectable gays for they are just as likely to "divorce,[36] cheat, and abuse each other as anyone else" (114).

The fourth major argument in favour of gay marriage is that gay people should be entitled to the legal benefits of marriage.

[36] An example of this in the South African context is the divorce of renowned HIV/AIDS activist Zachie Achmat from his partner Dalli Weyers in June 2011 after only three years of marriage (Huisman and Makwabe 2011).

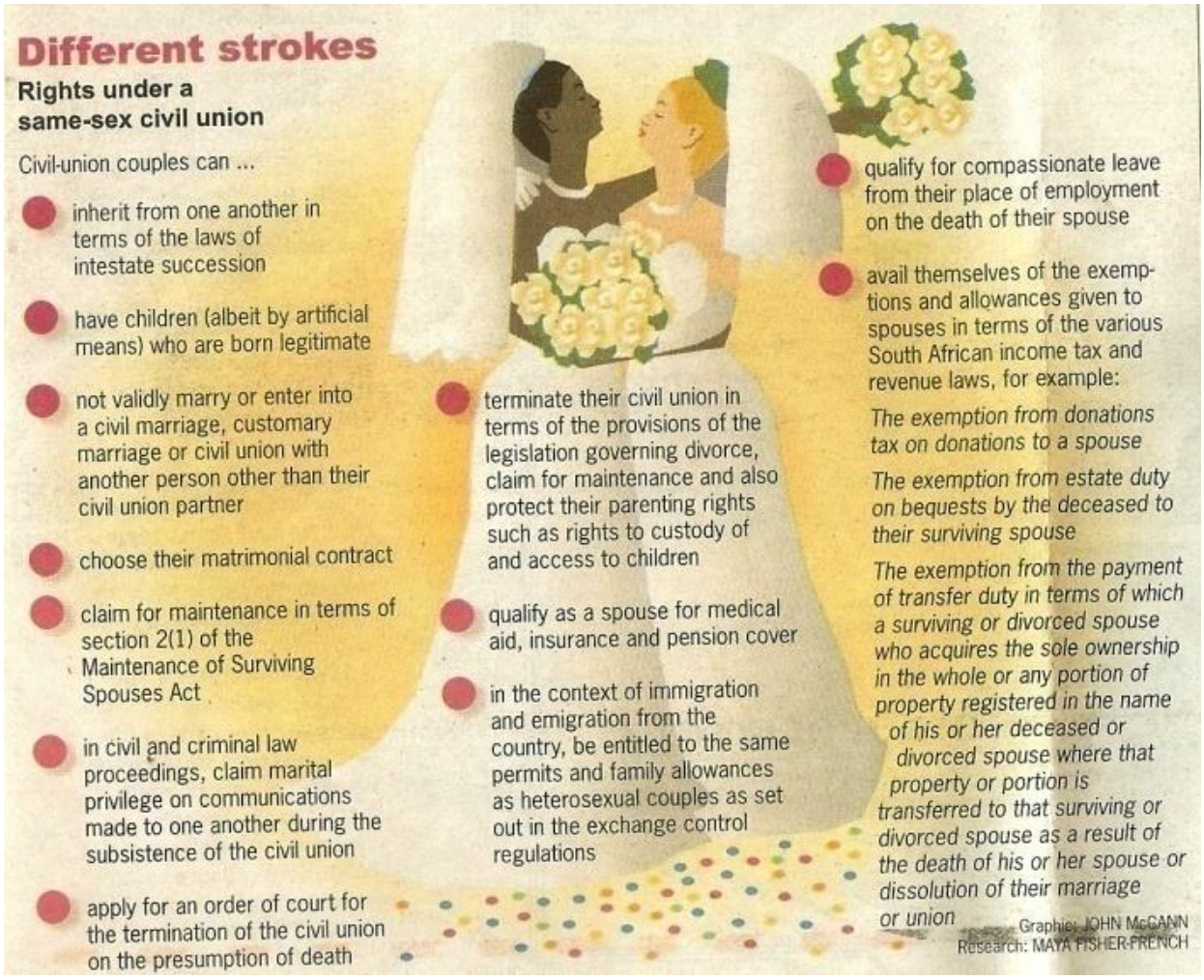


Figure 5 Different strokes: Rights under a same-sex civil union (Fisher-French 2009:35)

In the article “Different strokes: Rights under a same-sex civil union” (see above), the 15 legal benefits of gay marriage in South Africa are clearly outlined. (I will provide more detail about these later in this study in my analysis of *To Have and To Hold*.) However, according to M.Warner (1999) many other privileges not tied to the state, such as hospital visitation and medical decision making, accrue as a result of marriage. Additionally, numerous benefits are bestowed by civil society, “not to mention the trousseaux, or the power to make all your friends and relations fly hundreds of miles to see you [and] wear expensive costumes” (118). According to the ‘legal benefits’ argument, gay marriage is seen to be a route to obtaining these privileges. However, there is no questioning of these benefits that do not necessarily have an intrinsic link to each other or to marriage. Will this collection of privileges

become more fixed and further affirm the significance of spousal status? M.Warner questions whether this would leave “unmarried queers looking more deviant” (121).

The four primary reasons that the gay and lesbian rights movement promotes for gay marriage are, without a doubt, drawn from the experiences of ordinary gay and lesbian people who have been discriminated against and treated as second-class citizens. This M. Warner does not deny and he emphasises how allowing only heterosexual people to marry is a form of prejudice. However, he does question whether gay marriage should be the gold standard for all queers, whether gay marriage is really a good political tactic and if the arguments for gay marriage being only about choice and love are as simple and commonsensical as they seem.

In this Chapter I draw from Kaplan (1997), M. Warner (1999) and Butler (2002) in my analysis of the gay marriage discourse in *Tommy Boys* (2005) and *To Have and To Hold* (2008). I explore whether or not the reasons for gay marriage in the South African context are the same as those in the United States. I also investigate whether the critiques of these reasons for gay marriage by M. Warner are relevant. Finally, I draw from Butler’s analysis of the gay marriage debate in the American context that I have outlined in Chapter 2 in the section “Being critical of the political—problematising gay marriage” and use those points that have the most relevance in my examination of *Tommy Boys* (2005) and *To Have and To Hold* (2008). The specific points that I have isolated from Butler’s argument for discussion concern: the necessity to move beyond a simple for or against position with relation to gay marriage; the belief that asking the state for legitimation should not mean that questions cannot be asked about the state or about legitimation; the fact that gay marriage legitimates married gay people and the sexual relations that fall outside of conjugal relations become excluded and finally; the recognition that to be critical means that thinking about how a sexual field is established is followed by a deconstruction of that very field. With all this in mind, I now move onto my analysis of *Tommy Boys*.

4.3 *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-Sex Practices in Africa* (2005)

In the African context heteronormativity and the matrix of intelligibility (Butler 2004) are very powerful. In addition, there has also been a development of laws to monitor deviant sexualities (specifically in countries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi and Uganda) in an unreasonable way (see Rubin's discussion of sex negativity in Chapter 2). As a result of this, lesbians in Africa (bar South Africa) have no rights. As does happen, too, in South Africa, they face the risk of violence. Morgan and Wieringa would like equal rights, including the right to marry, to be extended to lesbians in Africa. This would be in accord with the first argument in favour of gay marriage that I outline above (see Kaplan 1997). However, seeing gay marriage as being only about rights masks the problems with marriage, which include increased state interference and regulation for the potential marrying couple.

In Chapter 2 I refer to Butler (2002) who argues that not to be recognised by the state has real consequences and makes it difficult, "to sustain [ones]self over time" (25). I, therefore, concur with Morgan and Wieringa that lesbians in Africa need recognition. But, I would like to question whether marriage should be the preferred social arrangement for non-normative sexualities in Africa. Given that many forms of kinship in Africa are not based on marriage, is this the most appropriate political tactic to pursue for gay and lesbian people? In order to try to answer this question, I present an analysis of *Tommy Boys*.

In *Tommy Boys*, Morgan and Wieringa (2005) argue not only for the rights of gays and lesbians in Africa to be recognised, but argue, further, that "[t]hese rights need to extend into the public sphere, such as the acceptance of gay marriage" (20). They observe that the participants[37] in their project are in "loving, caring and enduring same-sex relationships" (313) and that "many of [them] expressed the wish to be able to marry their lovers" (18). This would be in agreement with the second argument in favour of gay marriage offered by Kaplan (1997) that I discussed above.

[37] These participants are the lesbians in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa whose testament was collected by women activists (as I made known in section 3.4 in Chapter 3).

In this argument love is seen to be superior to politics and conflict and, therefore, beyond critique. However, for Morgan and Wieringa the evidence of loving lesbian relationships is important in their argument for gay marriage. Therefore, they contrast homophobia and the unavailability of same-sex marriage in contemporary Africa (barring South Africa) unfavourably with pre-colonial women marriages in 18th and 19th century Africa in which marriage partners "had full rights as citizens of their communities before colonial powers intervened and introduced their own Victorian norms and legal apparatus" (18).

One of Morgan and Wieringa's (2005) aims in *Tommy Boys*, therefore, is to provide evidence from pre-colonial Africa to illustrate that women marriages were an accepted norm in order to argue for gay marriage and an end to homophobia in a contemporary African setting. They argue that

> [h]omophobia [in Africa] is based on the perception that same-sex relations are alien to African culture and an import from the depraved West. This perception is based on current African leaders being ignorant of the fact that a range of same-sex practices in Africa have existed for a long time (17).

To prove the existence of such same-sex relations, Morgan and Wieringa use the anthropological writings of Karsch-Haack (1911); Falk (1925); Schapera (1930); Herskovits (1937) and Evans-Pritchard (1951). They argue that anthropologists such as Karsch-Haack, Herskovits and Evans-Pritchard, observed that women marriages "were fully embedded in the particular social structure of the ethnic group in which the partners lived" (Morgan and Wieringa 2005: 298).

Using anthropological sources to support an argument about the pre-colonial existence of women marriages is, however, not unproblematic. In "An Ethnography of Silence: Race, (Homo) Sexualities, and a Discourse of Africa", Pincheon (2000) argues that the study of homosexualities in Africa abounds with examples of a "limited and unilinear approach" (40) which reinforces social categories. He claims that theorists who research homosexuality in Africa (such as Dynes 1982; Staples 1982; Dunton 1989; O Murray 1990; O Murray and Roscoe 1998) resort to a "circular cluster of arguments" (40) to refute the ahistorical without questioning how such arguments are invoked. For example these theorists refer to Africa as a "cultural, social, and political unity" (41). Further, different periods in African history such as the pre-colonial, slave trade, colonial and independence movement periods are

referred to in a brief and generalised way. The argument about the pre-colonial existence of homosexuality in Africa, Pincheon argues, may never be "proved or disproved" (41), yet such arguments are constantly invoked and will never be exhausted if they remain circular.

Pincheon (2000) argues that Dynes et al. who write on homosexuality in Africa use ethnographic writings uncritically to support their arguments. He claims that they do not critique these ethnographic writings beyond the category of homosexuality or the Western historicity of such writings. The aim of researchers such as Dynes et al., he says, is to map homosexuality around the world, using homosexualities or same-sex practices as a "unifying principle through which to view past and contemporary African sexuality and society". There is no critique of the anthropological discourses that surrounded the "collection and analysis of data" (44). Anthropological claims of instances of homosexuality in traditional African cultures rely on observations and field data produced during the 18th and 19th centuries. This is problematic because the accounts by ethnographers rely on the convincing assertion that

> 'I was there'. This is the case even though scholars have long lamented that they are usually denied access to, or entry into, the most personal domain of the people they study, and thus they usually are unable to observe ... actual sexual practices of non-Western peoples (45).

The field of anthropology, Pincheon (2000) continues, has developed a critique of its early models, but researchers into human sexuality have failed to take into account these "counter hegemonic perspectives". Furthermore, researchers such as Dynes et al. use data to support their theories of sexuality without "analyzing the historical relations of domination" in which the observations were made. For Pincheon, such ethnographic data tells little about the actual people studied and more about the "axiological nature of Western thinking" (45).

Although Pincheon's argument provides a critical perspective on Morgan and Wieringa's approach to homosexuality in Africa, it must be remembered that *Tommy Boys* is the first lesbian non-fiction book that brings to light the fact that women marriages were part of pre-colonial Africa. The critiques offered by Pincheon could inform any research that builds on Morgan and Wieringa's study. As Epprecht (2006) makes clear

> [u]ntil now, research on lesbian-like relationships among African women has been quite rare, often speculative and often marred by the clumsy application of Western assumptions about and models of female sexuality. [*Tommy Boys*] makes a huge contribution to correcting those problems (Epprecht 2006: 383).

Morgan and Wieringa provide recorded evidence for women marriages in forty societies in four regions of Africa (Southern Sudan, Kenya, Southern Africa and Nigeria). They present two types of women marriages: independent (in which rich women married each other) and dependent (in which a marriage was contracted on behalf of a male). In both cases, the reason for such marriages was either because the husband was dead, or because the wife did not give birth to a son. Morgan and Wieringa (2005) emphasise that all the women who engaged in such marriages were rich and powerful, and did so in order to ensure a male heir. "Status, wealth and thus economic independence, are critical preconditions for women to become female-husbands" (300) and "[w]omen marriages …occurred between powerful women such as rain queens and traditional healers (sangomas)" (17) and "[w]omen marriages … concerned the continuity of the patrilineage and status" (307). In addition, such women would choose wives who were hard working and fertile—"[c]haracteristics that might make young women good workers and fertile mothers will definitely have played a major role among the factors determining the choice of female-husbands" (302).

Morgan and Wieringa (2005) do not attempt to consider some of the reasons why these marriages were instigated only by the rich and powerful and imposed on the hardworking and fertile. They certainly conceive of the power in a marriage to be a binary rather than a fluid and omnipresent relation, as I explained in my exposition of Foucault's (1978) notion of power (see Chapter 2). It is also evident that in their analysis of pre-colonial marriages they do not take into account inequalities of power and the potential for exploitation. Furthermore, they do not interrogate why the motivations for such marriages were often for female-husbands to secure the service of a daughter-in-law or for female-husbands to rent out their wives to male sexual partners (300). They also argue that pre-colonial women marriages were preferable compared to pre-colonial heterosexual ones because beatings seldom occurred and the sexual division of labour was more equal (302). Morgan and Wieringa (2005) make it known that "colonial administrators and post-colonial politicians and policy makers expressed great reservations [about] women marriages" (298) and they

question such reservations. They additionally interrogate why women marriages were contracted only for reasons of status or patrilineage.

They argue that sex could also have played a role in women marriages: “I don’t want to rule out the possibility that affection, erotic attention and sexuality also motivate particular women to contract women marriage” Wieringa argues (Morgan and Wieringa 2005:303). In order to argue for such a possibility Morgan and Wieringa interrogate the writings of those ethnographers such as Krige (1974); Gay (1979); Oboler (1980) and Tietmeyer (1985) who do not allow for the possibility of sex in women marriages. They question the sustainability of the claims made by these writers “that there was no sex between women in marriages” (285). According to Morgan and Wieringa the claims by Krige et al. are not sustainable since these researchers perceived sex as being limited to penile penetration. They also argue a similar case for “many African societies” in which “‘sex’ is understood only as penile penetration” (285). Any sexual practice (such as elongation of the labia[38] and mutual masturbation in puberty rites) that excluded penile penetration, Morgan and Wieringa assert, was considered witchcraft by African societies and not real sex by ethnographers and, therefore, ignored.

The denial of these sexual practices, particularly by ethnographers such as Krige et al. is questioned by Morgan and Wieringa (2005) who argue that such denial is based on generalisation and speculation. Furthermore, they claim that there are “too few historical studies that delve in any “depth” (303) into pre-colonial sex practices to support the denial of the existence of these sexual practices. However, since Morgan and Wieringa make clear in their introduction that in Africa, “talking about sex [is] taboo” (14) one needs to question the grounds on which they make this assertion. In addition, as Pincheon argues, it is an anthropological given that researchers are rarely or never allowed into the very private spaces of people they are researching. There is no doubt that women marriages existed in pre-colonial Africa, but why is it so important for Morgan and Wieringa to prove that sex was a motivating factor in these marriages? Why do they go to so much effort to discredit the research by Krige et al. as being based on limited perceptions of sex? I argue that Morgan and Wieringa confine heterosexual instances of sex as being limited to penetration in

[38] Which was also aimed at increasing male sexual satisfaction

order to create the conditions of possibility for lesbian sex to emerge. This is done in an attempt to connect pre-colonial women marriages to a contemporary lesbian sexual identity thus providing support for gay rights and gay marriage to be permissible in a present day African setting.

However, in doing this, Morgan and Wieringa (2005) try to hide the inequalities of power and the potential for exploitation in pre-colonial women marriages in order to show how they were "normative, non-disruptive same-sex patterns" (319). I think that an important question that needs to be asked here is whether 'the right to marry' assumes that sexuality is already organised around marriage (Butler 2002). If the answer to this question is yes, then does this mean that anything outside of the marriage norm is neither possible nor recognisable? Surely making marriage the most preferred arrangement for queer sexual lives in Africa undermines the diverse array of lesbian-like practices that Morgan and Wieringa reveal in *Tommy Boys*.

In my analysis of *To Have and To Hold* below I tease out the ambiguities of gay marriage in a more contemporary and a specifically South African setting.

4.4 *To Have and To Hold: The Making of Same-Sex Marriage in South Africa* (2008)

> [To Have and To Hold] offers a riveting tale of contestation, negotiation, zealous lobbying and, finally, the awkward triumph of principle (Trengove-Jones 2008:11).

Here Tim Trengove-Jones, a commentator on gay issues in South Africa, succinctly summarises the two central arguments about gay marriage that inform *To Have and To Hold*. First, the triumph of marriage is described as awkward, perhaps because of its association with conservative mores that are inconsistent with the progressive ideals of a gay and lesbian rights movement and the fact that there is a worldwide trend for people not to marry.[39] Second, and more important, despite this caveat, gay

[39] In the United Kingdom marriage rates are at their lowest levels since 1862. In the United States marriage rates have dropped by 43% over the past forty years. In South Africa one in two marriages end in divorce and in 2007 there were 40 000 divorces in the country (Labour's Legacy 2010:n.p.); (The American Non-Partisan National Marriage Project 2010:n.p.); (Cohen 2009:2).

marriage is considered to be about the principle. In Chapter 2 I have outlined the complexity of the gay marriage debate. In agreement with Butler (2004) I think that one does not have to adopt a fixed 'for' or 'against' stand because one may want to secure that right for those who want to marry even if one does not want to do so oneself.

The editors of *To Have and To Hold* (2008), Melanie Judge, Anthony Manion and Shaun De Waal, make the aim of the book very clear. It is a celebration of the right of gay people in South Africa to marry, a "critical engagement" with marriage and a resource for "human-rights advocacy". Thus, the passing of the Civil Union Act on the 30 November 2006 is described as an "historic moment" (1) and a "giant leap forward for South African family law" (Bilchitz and Judge in Judge et al. 2008:160) because denying gay people the right to marry denies them "the right to *belong* (de Vos in Judge et al. 2008: 34, original emphasis).

In this section I will investigate[40] the validity of these questions: Has gay marriage been critically engaged with? Is gay marriage a giant leap forward for South African family law? Is gay marriage historic because gay and lesbian people now rightfully belong? In Chapter 2 of this thesis in the section "Being critical of the political—problematising gay marriage" which is Judith Butler's theorisation of the gay marriage debate in the American context, I note that for her, to ask for state legitimation should not mean that questions cannot be asked about the state or about legitimation. The need to be similarly critical in the context of South Africa underpins my approach in this chapter on gay marriage.

The battle for gay marriage

In the section "A person is always produced through and in discourse" in Chapter 2, I refer to Butler's (1990) ideas as they relate to subject formation. Subjectivity will always be fractured and unable to correctly play out the assumptions of particular categories. However, for Judge et al. and for the LGEP, too, homosexual subjectivity is a known constitutional category. Since the passing of the Equality Clause in 1996,

[40] My investigation will focus on ten articles (including the introduction) written by, according to the blurb on the back cover of the book, "an impressive selection of academics, attorneys [and] researchers" who "critically examine the legislative and advocacy process to marriage" and question "whether the attainment of the right to marry and the Civil Union Act itself should warrant celebration or circumspection."

the priorities of the LGEP have shifted from fighting against and overturning discriminatory laws[41] which Judge et al. (2008) reveal "had passed without much fuss" (5) to campaigning for the social and legal recognition of gay and lesbian relationships and families, the most important being through marriage.

The fight for gay marriage became the LGEP's biggest and longest single-issue fight and lasted from 2002 until 2006 and was the "first LGBTI rights issue to enter the public arena for orchestrated, nation-wide debate" (Judge et al. 2008: 5). There was incredible resistance to this as "[the] outpourings of hate speech against lesbian and gay people embedded in the public debates on same-sex marriage, and often expressed in a vitriolic manner, bear testimony" (13). For Judge et al. there is a power imbalance between homophobic people and gay and lesbian people. Such an approach to power is based on a binary understanding of the operations of power. In Chapter 2 in my overview of Foucault, I explain how he understands power as a fluid and omnipresent relation rather than a binary between the oppressors and the oppressed. Here, this understanding of how power operates is crucial.

In the introduction to *To Have and To Hold* Judge et al. (2008) make known the challenges with organising gay and lesbian relationships around a "conservative, patriarchal, heterosexist convention" such as marriage (12). However, they argue, the struggle for gay marriage in South Africa has not been about the ratification of heterosexual conventions, or the desire to replicate them, but has been, rather, about "*choice"* (12, original emphasis). This would be consistent with the first argument in favour of gay marriage that I outline above, drawing from Kaplan (1997). The problem with seeing gay marriage as being only about choice is that marriage is not simply a private act. This would only be so if marriage could be made sense of without any allusion to the state. However, for Judge et al. writing on behalf of the LGEP with words such as "activists" and "our struggles" (12) one of the biggest problems with marriage, is not state legitimation, but rather, its prescribed unequal "sexual and power dynamics" (12) and as a result the gay marriage issue is "vexed" (8) as marriage "rightly or wrongly" (12) carries more symbolic and legal weight in terms of relationships.

[41] Such as the Sexual Offences Act, No. 23 of 1957; the Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51 of 1977; and the Security Officers Act, No. 92 of 1987

Judge et al. (2008) question whether the LGEP's struggle for gay marriage has "ensured the primacy of heterosexual-style marriage as an institution worth attaining". They themselves are unsure whether gay marriage will transform society and eradicate homophobia and claim that only "time will tell" but they are convinced that the strategic litigation of the LGEP has "opened a space" that represents a break from a discriminatory past. Despite these hesitations Judge et al. assure the reader that the gay and lesbian rights movement has "adequately interrogated the role and function of marriage". The main reason why gay marriage is acceptable is because gay and lesbian people will "do marriage differently" (12). For example, Reid argues that

> [n]o doubt the gays of small-town Mpumalanga will find their own ways of occupying the space created by civil unions, on their own terms–and in a way that is loyal to their own 'customs and traditions', country style (Reid cited in Judge et al. 2008:85).

Judge et al. (2008) argue that the reason why gay marriage has been prioritised is because the "price of difference in South Africa remains high" (13). It is widely hoped that gay marriage will reduce the high levels of prejudice and homophobia in society by normalising "homosexuality in our society as an identity" (Reddy and Cakata in Judge et al. 2008: 276) by integrating "sexual minorities within mainstream societies" (Judge et al. 2008: 12). It must be noted that Judge et al. make clear that the normalisation of the homosexual identity in society occurs concurrently with a process of de-normalising and redefining of the financial, sexual and social "power dynamics" associated with marriage (12). The purported transformative power of gay marriage in South Africa is thus seen to be quite remarkable and I now move onto an investigation of the validity of the three other claims made in relation to gay marriage in *To Have and To Hold*.

The gay and lesbian rights movement has "adequately interrogated the role and function of marriage" (Judge et al. 2008:12).

Yet there are only two articles out of 43 in *To Have and To Hold* that actually interrogate gay marriage. In the article "The Civil Union Act: More of the Same" Elsje Bonthuys argues that the Civil Union Act is restricted to gay and lesbian people who are "urban, middle-class people who have the social and economic wherewithal to flout the norms of their families and their religious and cultural communities"

(Bonthuys in Judge et al. 2008:175). The basis of her critique is that when formulating the Civil Union Act, legislators did not draw from customary law which has a history of tolerance of a wide array of sexual practices and has "proved more malleable and more responsive to same-sex relationships" (178) when compared to civil law. As a result, she argues, instead of "destabilizing sex, gender and sexual orientation, the Act represents more of the same old gender and more of the same old sexual orientation" (179). Bonthuys makes it clear that in presenting this critique of the Civil Union Act, she is not saying that customary law is better than civil law since both are "deeply rooted in patriarchy" (177).

She criticises the drafters of the Civil Union Act for limiting the criteria for same-sex marriage to what she calls "immutable" (Bonthuys in Judge et al. 2008: 179) gay and lesbian identities. Bonthuys argues that the Civil Union Act should have included those "African people who are involved in same-sex relationships that do not fit this profile" (177). The Civil Union Act relies on the "sexual economy of male/female, masculine/feminine and 'hetero'/ 'homo'-sexuality" she argues, and, in such an economy, there is a lack of recognition for these relationships which are "far more radically disruptive of this system" (179). As evidence for her arguments she uses the work of Epprecht (1998) and Morgan and Wieringa (2005) to show the existence and tolerance of same-sex marriages and practices in Africa (examples of which can be found in my analysis of *Tommy Boys* earlier in this chapter). She also provides more recent examples of the tolerance for "radically disruptive" sexualities and genders in African communities (175). These include the belief that homosexual people are "biologically intersexed ... and therefore cannot be held responsible for their biological urges" (176) and that people in same-sex relationships are not the same gender and, therefore, not homosexual. Another example that Bonthuys provides is that such biological descriptors are intertwined with sex and, therefore, a person may change from being homosexual (sexually passive) to heterosexual (sexually active). Bonthuys further argues that many people who engage in same-sex relations in African communities are often married and define themselves as bisexual rather than gay or lesbian. Even though there is evidence that in many traditional societies same-sex practices are tolerated, she admits that the South African Customary Marriages Act "contains no provisions allowing customary marriage between same-sex couples" (178).

Although Bonthuys makes it clear that in critiquing the Civil Union Act, she is "not implying that same-sex marriage should not have been legalized" (Bonthuys in Judge et al. 2008: 177) her expansion of specifically African queer sexualities beyond the rigid boundaries of the middle class heterosexual economy is well-intentioned. In particular she should be commended for challenging the drafters of the Civil Union Act who ignored "customary examples to imagine richer concepts and more sophisticated forms of legalization" which resulted in the Civil Union Act being an "impoverished and disappointing" piece of legislation (178). What will happen to those "radically disruptive" (179) sexualities and practices in traditional societies that are not narrowly defined as gay or lesbian and that do not have the potential of legalisation by the Civil Union Act?

Should a similar question be asked in non-traditional urban settings about bisexual, transgender and intersex people? Has their potential for legal recognition been compromised by the narrowness of the Civil Union Act? In Chapter 2, in my analysis of Butler's (2004) ideas as they relate to human rights and the constitution of the subject, I contemplate how people on the borders of unreality such as transgendered, butch-femme and transsexual people are trying to be recognised. This needs to be considered in the South African context. Forty one articles in To *Have and To Hold* are concerned with gay and lesbian identities, only one article includes a transgender perspective and only one presents an intersex perspective; there is no mention of a bisexual viewpoint. Vasu Reddy and Zethu Cakata even go as far as to argue that "[the Civil Union Act] caters for lesbian and gay people" (Reddy and Cakata in Judge et al. 2008:276). Butler's (2004) argument that gay marriage legitimates only gay and lesbian lives and that alternative non-homosexual sexualities will struggle to be eligible for legitimation is particularly relevant here. In my discussion of Queer Theory in Chapter 2, I uncover how Queer Theory is a much more accommodating approach to the study of difference in society because it takes into account a diverse assortment of sexualities and sexual practices that are considered abnormal. It is a pity that more queer ideas were not considered when the Civil Union Act was drafted as it could have been a more inclusive piece of legislation had it not been aimed predominantly at gay and lesbian people.

The second and final article that interrogates gay marriage "Lesbians and the Civil Union Act: A Critical Reflection" by Mary Hames is written from a lesbian feminist

point of view. In this article Hames condemns gay marriage as a compromise for lesbians. She argues that marriage reinforces “heterosexist and patriarchal social norms” and consequently will force lesbians to adopt either a butch or a femme gender role. This imitation of heterosexuality would be the result of the pressure to “fit in”. Hames believes that lesbians have developed relationship types that “somehow transcend heterosexist ones”. Therefore, lesbians could have transformed marriage by not adopting gendered butch or femme roles, but instead, the pressure is now on for “gay couples to indulge in roles that mimic such norms” (263).

The lesbian feminist argument that butch-femme role-playing contributes to patriarchal domination is based on the belief that such role-playing mimics the unequal gender roles of men and women (as I discussed in section 2.6.1, The feminist sex wars—the battle between pro-sex and anti-porn feminists, in Chapter 2). In this same chapter, I refer to Butler (2004) who, argues that butch-femme role-playing is not a mere mimicking of gender inequalities, but shows, rather, the very instability and masquerading potential of gender in much the same way as drag does. Case (1994) argues similarly that

> [t]he combo butch-femme … are coupled ones that do not impale themselves on the poles of sexual difference or metaphysical values, but constantly seduce the sign system, through flirtation and inconstancy into the light fondle of artifice, replacing the Lacanian slash with a lesbian bar (295).

From a lesbian feminist point of view the subversive potential of butch-femme, is not appreciated. Hames, in particular, perceives gay marriage as a compromise because it makes lesbians want to emulate heterosexuality and its associated stereotypes since “marriage has been traditionally the union of a man and a woman” (Hames in Judge et al. 2008: 263).

The editors’ response to the lesbian feminist interrogation of gay marriage by Hames is that gay marriage in South Africa will be located in the “conscious rejection of the heterosexual mould of marriage” (Judge et al. 2008:12) which is revealed as not only a fantasy but also as a place that produces gender inequality. It will, instead, be based on equality, because gay couples will “do marriage differently” by redefining “the institution and its prescribed gender roles, hierarchy and inherent financial, sexual and social power dynamics” (12). It is argued that, since marriage involves two people who are the same sex, gender inequality will be undermined and,

therefore, gay marriage has the potential to transform the institutions of both marriage and society. Robson argues that "[an] optimistic forecast is that the realization of sexual liberation will only grow" (Robson in Judge et al. 2008:201) and Bilchitz and Judge add that gay marriage creates "an equal alternative option to marriage [but] also in some sense decentres marriage" (Bilchitz and Judge in Judge et al. 2008:155). This would be consistent with the second argument in favour of gay marriage that I outline above, drawing from Kaplan's (1997) point that the love between couples in a gay marriage will lead to the transformation of the institution. In the critique of this argument by M. Warner the state vanishes and gay marriage will undermine patriarchy and construct "something more radically egalitarian" (M. Warner 1999:127).

An example of the transformative and egalitarian nature of gay marriage according to Pierre de Vos, is that the Civil Union Act allows both a same-sex and a different sex couple to choose either a marriage or a civil partnership with identical legal consequences. Because of the "special status that marriage has in our society", de Vos argues, "most couples would probably not choose to register 'civil partnerships' if they have the choice of registering a 'marriage' " (de Vos in Judge et al. 2008:37-38). However, for some couples to be joined in a civil partnership rather than in a marriage is less patriarchal and amounts to a "net gain for progressives" (de Vos in Judge et al. 2008:38) (here de Vos is referring to lesbian feminists).

The choice between the title marriage and civil partnership is an example of the seriousness that the gay and lesbian movement took with regard to the lesbian feminist argument that gay marriage mimics patriarchal heterosexuality. However, it is unfortunate that there is not more of a contribution to the gay marriage debate by feminists such as Epstein 1998; Hassim 1999; Vetten and Ludsin 2005 who work in the area between sexuality and gender and who do not see gender discrimination as only about patriarchy. Butler (2002) (see Chapter 2) argues further that gay marriage legitimates married gay people, and the sexual relations that fall outside of marriage become excluded. This, she adds, leads to the establishment of new sexual hierarchies, which creates the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate queer lives. This is a consideration that has not been taken account of in the LGEP's hasty

drive[42] to have gay marriage legalised. It is clear that the two articles that I survey above were included in *To Have and To Hold* only as proof that gay marriage was adequately interrogated. It would make little sense in a book that is a celebration of gay marriage in South Africa to dedicate too much space, or produce too much doubt, about the problems with marriage. Nevertheless, I challenge the claim that gay marriage was adequately interrogated in the South African context. I now move onto an investigation of the second claim made in *To Have and To Hold* that:

Gay marriage is a "giant leap forward for South African family law" (Bilchitz and Judge in Judge et al. 2008:160).

Craig Lind argues that the Civil Union Act is not limited to gay and lesbian identities, and is in fact "moving family law in the direction of diversity" (Lind in Judge et al. 2008: 293). According to Lind, subsequent to gay marriage, the next step in the diversification of family law will be the legal recognition of unmarried relationships since there are currently very few legal protections for people who choose not to marry. He argues that "[l]egal authorities will impute a marriage-like status to relationships that satisfy a large variety of objectively verifiable relationship criteria" (293) because "[p]eople who fail to formalize their relationships create difficulties for lawyers and policy makers" (294). However, he does concede that trying to legislate the numerous permutations of "unmarried cohabitation is almost impossible" (295). Although Lind is aware that there is a need to pass additional laws that would be applicable to the unmarried (because they create legal problems), he also makes the reader aware of the difficulty of creating such laws for non-standard relationships. The fight for gay marriage in South Africa by the LGEP was a well organised and strategised campaign that showed the power of a progressive alliance between activists and lawyers. No such alliance exists between unmarried people or people in non-standard relationships and so it is unclear as to who exactly is going to take up the fight for legal protections for sexualities and practices not based in marriage**.**

This is the greatest flaw in the Civil Union Act: it disadvantages anyone who is not married since there are no legal protections for "intimate relationships outside of marriage" (Bilchitz and Judge in Judge et al. 2008:159). The Civil Union Act has

[42] There is a sense that there was some "haste to adopt the Civil Union Act" (Bonthuys in Judge et al. 2008:179). Refer to footnote 44 for a full discussion.

actually undermined the advances that the state had made with regard to the recognition of gay relationships. In 2000 the Constitutional Court recognised the concept of same-sex relationships. This recognition was based on the fact that gay people could not marry and, in fact, it gave gay couples more rights than unmarried heterosexual couples (Bilchitz and Judge in Judge et al. 2008). In the case of Gory v Kolver [43] the Court made it clear that these rights would not automatically be taken away now that the Civil Union Act has been passed; gay couples could still inherit from one another and jointly adopt children, but not indefinitely. De Vos (in Judge et al. 2008) makes it clear that

> [p]arliament will have the right to amend this kind of legislation in the future to take away the rights of unmarried same-sex couples so that they are treated the same as unmarried heterosexual couples (38).

The legalisation of gay marriage means that, in time, those gay people who choose not to marry may lose these rights. This is because the Civil Union Act erodes the validity of unmarried gay relationships which may mean that "in time, same-sex couples who are not married [will] have very little legal protection" (Bilchitz and Judge in Judge et al. 2008: 159). Since the passing of the Civil Union Act, Bilchitz and Judge argue that "it is likely" that the courts will still protect those couples "who have not yet had an opportunity to marry" (159). There is no doubt that many gay and lesbian people are choosing to marry, but at the same time there are many gay and lesbian people who are choosing not to marry. If one looks at heterosexual South African society, there is an undeniable divide between those people who are married and those who are not. Marriage affords respectability.

This would be consistent with the third argument in favour of gay marriage that I outline above following Kaplan (1997) that marriage will make gay and lesbian people respectable. An important outcome in this argument, besides the hope that marriage will change the sexual mores of gay men, is the desire to feminise butch lesbians and make them 'proper' and, therefore, respectable women. However, as I point out in Chapter 2 in my overview of Butler, gender is completely unstable and,

[43] Gory v Kolver led to the Intestate Succession Act 81 of 1987 being declared invalid and unconstitutional since it took into account only the intestate succession of heterosexual spouses (De Ru 2009.) The consequence of this judgement was that the court granted equal benefits to the surviving partner of a gay relationship in the case of the death of one partner without a will (Judge et al. 2008).

therefore, prone to imitation and subversion. Butch lesbians are unlikely to capitulate to the demands of feminine respectability just for the sake of marriage. Judge et al. claim that the Civil Union Act will open a space for the "recognition of diverse sexualities and relationship forms" (Judge et al. 2008:12), however, the evidence I have provided above challenges this assertion. A question that needs to be asked is this: Will those people living outside of the conjugal frame be considered more unreal and will their loves and losses be valued less than "true" loves and losses (Butler 2004: 26)"? The contention that the Civil Union Act is a progressive step in the diversification of Family Law in South Africa is not true. I want, now, to investigate the third claim made by the LGEP that:

"To deny same-sex couples access to *marriage* would … deny them the right to *belong*" (de Vos in Judge et al. 2008:34, original emphasis).

It is not difficult to understand, given the legal discrimination against homosexuals during the apartheid era, why "lesbian and gay people demand an equitable share of state resources" (Bilchitz in Judge et al. 2008:26). Judge et al. make it known that the Civil Union Act provides "automatic access to legal protections" (Judge et al. 2008:12). This would be consistent with the fourth argument in favour of gay marriage mentioned above (Kaplan 1997) that gay people should be entitled to the legal benefits of marriage. The problem with gay marriage being linked to legal benefits is that there is the potential for these benefits to become fixed and to further entrench the importance of spousal status. Butler (2002) questions first, why the benefits of gay marriage cannot be extended regardless of a person's marital status, and second whether state legitimation will lead to the projection of deviance onto people who are not married. Despite these shortcomings Mkhize argues that gay and lesbian people "deserve equal treatment, protection and regulation by the law as enshrined in the Bill of Rights of our Constitution" (Mkhize in Judge et al. 2008: 105). The legal benefits from the state are the right to: inherit; have children; adopt children; choose a marriage contract; be liable for maintenance; have marital privilege in civil and criminal law proceedings; and be subject to the same exchange control regulations and tax exemptions as heterosexuals (Fisher-French 2009: 36).

Numerous benefits also accrue from civil society and the symbolic benefits of marriage associate it with status, stability, seriousness and permanence. De Vos

makes it clear that the courts were forced to recognise that marriage provides a "myriad *intangible* benefits" (de Vos in Judge et al. 2008: 34, original emphasis). These intangible benefits include the couple's public celebration of their wedding anniversary for the rest of their lives "while pictures of the day can be displayed in their house and in the houses of their families". Therefore, "to deny same-sex couples a choice in this regard would be to negate their right to self definition in a most profound way" (34). In addition to these civil, symbolic and intangible benefits there are numerous other non-state benefits of marriage. For example, a spouse in a gay marriage qualifies for medical aid; insurance; pension and compassionate leave; and also has medical decision-making powers. The benefits offered by the Civil Union Act are significant and in all likelihood will become permanent. [44] In my overview of Rubin (1993) (see Chapter 2) I refer to her concept of the erotic pyramid. In such a pyramid different values are placed on different types of sexualities and each has a status. There is no doubt that with the passing of the Civil Union Act in 2006, gay married couples have accrued more value and status in the erotic pyramid because they are in possession of 15 more legal benefits than unmarried homosexual and heterosexual people are.

It is undeniable that gay and lesbian people have been discriminated against in South Africa and have not had the same rights as heterosexual people. This lack of rights has led to alienation and fear, and logic demands that denying gay and lesbian people access to marriage denies them the right to belong. This is a powerful argument and here I am mindful of Butler's (2004) analysis (see Chapter 2) where she argues that not to be recognised (in other words not being allowed to belong) has the potential to lead to suffering. However, she also questions why the quest for legitimacy is centred on benefits and considers further why benefits cannot be granted without consideration of the beneficiary's marital status. The claim that gay

[44] Taking into account the limitations of the Civil Union Act which include that its selective benefits will inevitably become permanent, one wonders why the LGEP and its alliance partners did not foresee such problems. This may have been because there is a sense that there was some "haste to adopt the Civil Union Act" (Bonthuys in Judge et al. 2008:179). The reason for this urgency was twofold. First, there was intense political opposition from the Christian right and traditional leaders as "[the] outpourings of hate speech against lesbian and gay people embedded in the public debates on same-sex marriage, and often expressed in a vitriolic manner, bear testimony" (Judge et al. 2008: 13). Second, the original judgement on the Civil Union Act in 2005 gave Parliament only one year to amend the act to ensure that gay couples were given the same rights as heterosexual couples.

and lesbian people in South Africa finally get to belong through marriage may well be valid, but at whose expense?

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have investigated the compromises in the fight for gay marriage in South Africa. In order to do this I delineated some of the objections to gay marriage made by homophobic people. Drawing on Kaplan (1997) and M.Warner (1999), I then outlined and critiqued the four major arguments in favour of gay marriage—choice, love, respectability and legal benefits. I also showed how reducing the gay marriage debate to a simplistic 'for' or 'against' position does not take account of the subtleties that construct this field and how, consistent with the position of Judith Butler (2002), it is necessary to "develop a critical practice that is mindful of both [positions]" (28). Such critical practice takes into account that not to be recognised in terms of rights (which include gay marriage) can lead to suffering.

To develop such critical practice I used evidence of the gay marriage discourse from *Tommy Boys* (2005) and *To Have and To Hold* (2008). For example, *Tommy Boys* makes an important contribution to the fight to recognise lesbians and oppose homophobia in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa. A lingering myth in the African context is that homosexuality is a Western colonial import, and in order to counter such a myth, Morgan and Wieringa provide anthropological evidence to show the existence of female same-sex practices and marriages from pre-colonial Africa. However, drawing from Pincheon (2000), I show how Morgan and Wieringa ignore the likelihood that these relationships were tolerated only because they did not challenge or question gender inequality and established heterosexual family arrangements. I also question whether marriage should be the preferred social arrangement for non-normative sexualities in Africa given that there are many different types of relationships and sexual practices that are not based on marriage (which Morgan and Wieringa themselves make known and that include: bond friendships; transgender and same-sex identified healers; mummy-baby relationships; initiation rites and elongation of the labia). Despite the lack of critical insight with regard to the role of pre-colonial same-sex practices and the lack of space for non-normative sexualities within a marriage discourse, *Tommy Boys* is a

ground-breaking book as it is the first non-fiction book that is dedicated solely to the experiences of working class black lesbians in Africa.

To Have and To Hold (2008) traces the four year struggle by the LGEP to have gay marriage legalised in South Africa. It also includes testament of the impact of the legalisation of gay marriage on the long term relationships of ordinary gay and lesbian South Africans. *To Have and To Hold*, therefore, functions as an activist text as well as a celebration of becoming equal in a society that has a long history of discrimination and prejudice. It is made clear in *To Have and To Hold* that although there might be problems with the marriage institution, marriage should be made available to gays and lesbians because it provides them with a choice. In addition to having the choice to marry, the editors of *To Have and To Hold* make it clear that gay marriage in their own words may " contribute to the 'normalization' of homosexuality" (Judge et al. 2008:13) in a homophobic society. There is scant consideration in *To Have and To Hold* of the consequences of homosexual normalisation despite Judge et al's. emphasis on the claim that in the drive for gay marriage, the normativity of marriage was adequately interrogated.

In my analysis of *To Have and To Hold* I investigate the claims made in the introduction by Judge et al. that the marriage discourse was critically engaged with; that the passing of the Civil Union Act is historic and further that this piece of legislation is moving Family Law in a progressive direction. Drawing from Foucault (1978); Rubin (1993); M. Warner (1999) and Butler (2002) I have shown that these claims are not true. There is no robust engagement with the normativity of marriage or the fact that since it became enmeshed with the state in the 20th century, it has developed into an institution that is constructed on excluding difference, as embodied in gay and lesbian people. I also argue that gay marriage is only historic for those gay and lesbian people who choose to get married and automatically have access to 15 legal benefits. Finally, given that those few legal protections that single gay and lesbian people had before the passing of the Civil Union Act are likely to be eroded, the Act is not a progressive step forward for Family Law or sexual minorities in South Africa.

The overturning of the apartheid era homophobic laws, and winning the right to marry as a result of the activism of the LGEP undoubtedly represents a break with a

prejudicial past. However, reflecting on the history of the gay and lesbian movement in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s where a wide range of controversial issues that confronted the gay and lesbian community were on the political and research agenda, [45] one can only ponder how a radical sexual rights movement like the LGEP who identify "patriarchy, gender oppression, social conservatism, slavery, colonialism, apartheid and capitalism" (LGEP 2011:n.p) as the roots of oppression and discrimination in South Africa, came to endorse marriage as the most appropriate way to legitimate queer lives, and came to top the LGEP's political agenda. [46] In Chapter 2, I refer to Butler's (2004) argument that asking the state for the right to marry, transforms a "collective delegitimation into a selective one" that is nearly "impossible to reconcile with a radically democratic, sexually progressive movement" (27).

No matter how strongly the LGEP believes that gay and lesbian people will do marriage differently, many will not. What is cause for more concern is that the soon to be tabled National Family Policy encourages all South Africans, including gay and lesbian people, to get married in order to stop the "historical decline of traditional family values" (Laganparsad 2011:13). How can traditional family values be reconciled with the radical politics of the LGEP? Is proposing marriage as the most suitable way to organise queer lives not a form of submission to liberal democratic ideals? If one of the goals of politics is continual resistance, is it possible to resist from a co-opted position? The challenge for the LGEP could (and should) have been to try to develop ways of being in the world for gay and lesbian people not based on the exclusive marriage norm. As M.Warner (1999) argues, "marrying consolidates and sustains the normativity of marriage. And it does so despite what may be the best intentions of those who marry" (109).

[45] This is reflected in *Defiant Desire* (1994) in which the editors refuse to present a "buttoned-down" version of gayness (Gevisser and Cameron 1994:12) and include chapters of the full spectrum of gay and lesbian life in South Africa from moffie life in the Cape to male gay sexuality in the Reef townships; from butch-femme role-playing in lesbian relationships to drag queens and comrades in the gay pride march; and from the steam baths of Johannesburg to the challenges of gay males with HIV in Cape Town.

[46] Marriage is not even the most legitimate way of organising heterosexual lives as "[s]ingle-parent households have become the norm in South Africa, while nearly 100 000 children live in child-headed households" (Jones 2011:1).

The LGEP has, in my opinion, compromised its radical political position by not encouraging critical debate about gay marriage because of the opposition of political and religious conservatives to such marriage. Also, the LGEP did not consider the legal consequences for those gay and lesbian people who choose not to marry. There was no investigation into whether the state's power is extended[47] by legitimating gay marriage and, finally, the LGEP did not adequately consider what homosexual normalisation might mean for a politics of difference in the South African context.

Judge et al. (2008) do question if the normalising effect of gay marriage[48] will lead to the assimilation of "diverse sexualities into a heteronormative model, thereby undermining the real transformative potential of alternative sexualities to lead us closer to embracing difference rather than trying to dilute it?" (13).This is an unsettling and disturbing question and Judge et al. rightly claim that in the South African context the price paid by being different—to be gay or lesbian or queer—"remains high…as the escalation of rape, torture and murder of black lesbian women and other LGBTI people demonstrate" (13). The question of the transformative potential of alternative sexualities in resisting heteronormativity is, therefore, not engaged with. It is a dangerous question, given the "hate-motivated acts of violence" (13) against people who are gay or lesbian or queer in South Africa. It seems as if it is safer for difference to be diluted rather than amplified.

However, does living in a homophobic society mean not questioning the consequence of gay marriage as being the potential assimilation of diverse sexualities into a heteronormative model? Are questions related to the disruptive power of alternative sexualities in challenging heteronormativity by refusing to enter into its conservative institutions not allowed to be explored? In the course of this

[47] In the South Africa context the state has greater control over the lives of married gay and lesbian people specifically as it relates to the level of personal and financial information that needs to be disclosed by married gay and lesbian couples apropos inheritance, adoption, marriage contracts and tax exemptions.

[48] As a book that is endorsed by the LGEP, when the editors of *To Have and To Hold* state that gay marriage may "contribute to the 'normalization' of homosexuality" (Judge et al. 2008:13) in a homophobic society, they are reflecting a majority view.

chapter I have provided evidence to suggest that the consequences of questions such as these have perhaps not been completely thought through by the LGEP.

It has been five years since the passing of the Civil Union Act, and prejudice, discrimination and violence against gay, lesbian and queer people is rife in South Africa. I would argue that what needs to be engaged with is how homophobia can be opposed without asking the state for legitimation. I would concur with Butler (2002) who promotes the development of non-state forms of support and alliance between queers, minorities and the abjected[49] by revising the "social organization of friendship, sexual contacts, and community" (21). In the South African context, radical critical voices need to be given a space in which to emerge. My criticism of the LGEP and gay marriage should not be construed as my being allied to those homophobic people who oppose gay marriage; I do so for completely different reasons. There are many queer people in South Africa who refuse to get married, prefer to be single or who live in different permutations that do not have the support of the state. This is where non-state supported community building needs to start happening. I am not sure how this would or could occur, or what form it would take, but the dots need to be joined between the pockets, as it were, of radical queers that undoubtedly exist in South Africa who could be connected through some kind of "social organization of friendship, sexual contacts, and community" (21). I think that in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Gauteng this might have been more feasible because of the then thriving gay, lesbian and queer sub-culture that existed in this part of South Africa (see Appendix on page 190 for a discussion on this dwindling subculture).

In Chapter 5, "The Changing Representation of Homosexuality in South Africa: for Better or for Worse", I investigate how representations of the public face of homosexuality has changed from the earliest text in my selection, *Defiant Desire* (1994) to the most recent text, *To Have and To Hold* (2008). In the process of my investigation into whether this shift is for better or for worse, I raise a number of questions about the political strategies of the LGEP and the shame associated with the negative differences associated with homosexuality

[49] That is, anyone who is rejected by society for being more controversially gender or sexuality deviant.

Chapter 5

The Changing Representation of Homosexuality in South Africa: For Better or for Worse?

In the six non-fiction gay and lesbian books that I analyse there are only two that contain photographs that represent aspects of gay and lesbian life in South Africa. In *Defiant Desire* (1994) there are 16 photographs that illustrate the chapters "A drag at Madame Costello's: Cape moffie life and the popular press in the 1950s and 1960s" and "Lesbian gangster: The Gertie Williams story". The author, Dhiannaraj Chetty drew from *Drum* and *Golden City Post* [50] magazine photo archives in order to illustrate his chapters about gay and lesbian life in Cape Town in the 1950s and 1960s, where a robust queer culture existed despite an oppressive apartheid state. These photographs, of which I provide a sample of on pages 154-155, accurately present a glimpse of drag queens having a private party at Ms Joey Costello's house. [51] These gay coloured working class men in drag provide the reader with, as Chetty argues "a sense of lives lived between … two powerful stereotypes" (Chetty cited in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:120). The one set of shameful stereotypes casts drag queens as "effete, theatrical, tragic, comic" figures whilst the other set casts drag queens as "social pariahs…wallow[ing] in self-pity" (120).

A 14 year hiatus ensued until the next set of photographs representing aspects of gay and lesbian life in South African were published in *To Have and To Hold* (a sample of which I include on pages 155-157) . All in all, a more substantial 57 photographs (when compared to the 16 in *Defiant Desire*) are published. These photographs reproduce images of various protests and posters, and the court process in the struggle for gay and lesbian marriage (27 pictures). There are also 30 photographs of a diverse array of black and white gay and lesbian couples who have got married since the passing of the Civil Union Act in 2006. It is obvious that the subject matter is different in *To Have and To Hold* (which is celebratory and a

[50] These were publications that were specifically aimed at black South Africans in the 1950s and 1960s. *Drum*, in particular Chetty argues was so highly influential in "its ability to capture the *zeitgeist* of urban black life, that the1950s renaissance in black culture is often referred to as 'The *Drum* Era' (Chetty cited in Gevisser and Cameron 1994: 116, original emphasis).

[51] Madame Costello or Joey is described by Chetty as "an older queen well-known on the circuit" and we read that "her home was a regular venue for drags" (Chetty cited in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:120).

documentation of the struggle for gay marriage) than it is in “A drag at Madame Costello’s”, and the photographs, therefore, document images of gay and lesbian married couples in smart wedding attire that reflects their personal beliefs and social status.

Defiant Desire (1994)



Figure 6 Yvonne de Carlo poses for *Drum* 1962



Figure 7 Kay Kendall



Figure 8 On the dance floor at Madam Costello's

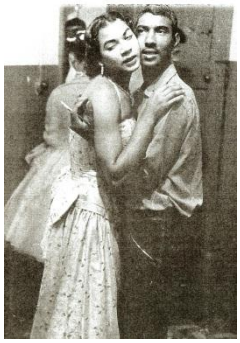


Figure 9 Linda Darnell and partner



Figure 10 Ginger and friend



Figure 11 Piper Laurie



Figure 12 Kewpie Doll



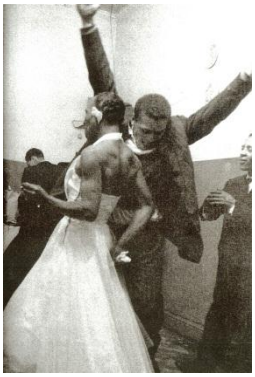




Figure 13 Rita Ricardo and friends 1956 **Figure 14 On the dance floor** **Figure 15 Gertie Williams with her family *Drum***

To Have and To Hold (2008)

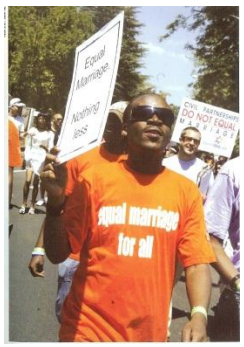


Figure 16 Nothing less: An OUT supporter makes LGBTI activists' demands known at Pride 2006



Figure 17 Campaign trail: A 2004 Lesbian and Gay Equality Project poster in support of the right of same-sex couples to marry



Figure 18 The inside of the constitutional court on 14 May 2005 when the hearing on same-sex marriage was held



Figure 19 Charles and Hompie Januarie (2007)



Figure 20 Nozipho Ngcobo and Thulile Gasa (2007)



Figure 21 Sadia Kruger and Zukanya Leonard (2006)



Figure 22 Margaret Auerbach and Liebe Kellen (2007)



Figure 23 Justice Edwin Cameron marries Dalli Wyers and Zackie Achmat (2008)

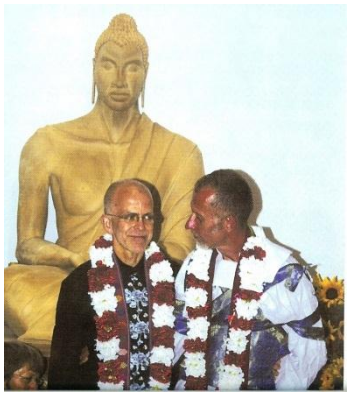


Figure 24 Vajradhara and Wayne Sampson (2007)

However, I would argue that it is evident from these two sets of photographs that the representation of the public image of homosexuality in the six non-fiction gay and lesbian books that are under investigation changes dramatically over a 14 year period, from a defiant and outrageous celebration of difference to a celebration of one of the most normative institutions in society—marriage. In this chapter I investigate how the non-fiction books that I am investigating represent the development of an approach to gay and lesbian politics that distances itself from the differences associated with homosexuality in public and media discourse.

In order to do this I unpack the assimilationist and anti-assimilationist[52] (or queer) political approaches to the public image of homosexuality. Although the strategies to

[52] "[t]he term 'lesbian and gay' [refers to a] discreet minority of people for whom same sex desire is a defining condition of [their] identity and as such must be assimilated into existing cultural norms. This view is termed 'assimilationist', but [it] could also be called 'liberal' or 'humanist' as well. Conversely, [the term] 'queer' which sees societal norms as oppressive, sexophobic and in need of radical change [is called] 'revolutionary', or 'critical' or even 'postmodern" (Kemp 2009:8).

political change by an assimilationist and a queer approach differ, both are committed to dismantling the power of heteronormativity. Then, drawing from Rubin (1993) and Foucault (1978), I highlight their analysis of the construction of normal and abnormal sexualities and show how normal sexuality[53] is awarded a higher status and value. Following this, I describe the shift in the theorisation about homosexuality from the pathological to the normal in the West. However, I question the relevance of the ideological underpinnings of this research and its association of homosexuality with respectable white middle class values to the South African context with a largely black gay and lesbian working class[54] population. Finally, I investigate the tension between the representation of gay and lesbian respectability and outrageous queerness in two of the earliest non-fiction texts in my selection, *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and *Defiant Desire* (1994).

The reason why I have focused on *Male Homosexuality* is because while it is ground breaking in de-pathologising white male homosexuality, the authors, Isaacs and McKendrick (1992), do this by arguing that homosexual normality can only come about when there is an understanding that "homosexual behaviour is not necessarily dependent on sexual conduct" (166). Michael Warner calls this a "politics of shame" (M. Warner 1999:42). Isaacs and McKendrick are embarrassed by the association of homosexuality with sex, and their aim is to show a more so-called normal side to homosexual behaviour which aligns them politically with an assimilationist point of view. *Defiant Desire* (1994), by contrast, refuses to represent only a "buttoned-down image of gay life and culture" (Gevisser and Cameron 1994:12) and therefore, creates a space for various authors to represent respectable approaches to homosexuality (assimilationist) and radical approaches (anti-assimilationist). Finally, I provide evidence showing that *Defiant Desire* (1994) is the last of the six non-fiction books that I analyse that dedicates a space for theorisation of those performances

[53] There are many rewards for performing a normal sexuality and in Chapter 2 I draw on Gayle Rubin (1993) to outline what these are. Rubin argues that normal sexuality is associated with having "good, normal, natural, blessed sexuality" (Rubin 1993:13) and is accorded very high status in society. A normal person, as she points out, is awarded mental health, respectability, legality, social mobility, material benefits and institutional support.
[54] Working class is a contested terrain in the South African context because 'working class' encompasses those people who not only sell their unskilled or semi-skilled labour but also those people who are subsistence farmers or who are poverty stricken.

and practices that respectable gays distance themselves from: drag queens, butch-femme role playing by lesbians[55] and gay male promiscuity.

5.1 Assimilationist and Queer political approaches to the public image of homosexuality

In reviewing the approach to the public image of homosexuality by gay and lesbian liberation movements both locally and internationally a tension emerges that I argue is best described by Esther Newton's study of men who impersonate women in 1960s America in *Mother Camp* (1979). Newton (1979) argues that stigmatised people such as homosexuals can be represented by either the "gentleman deviant" who tries to prove that he "can be just as normal and competent as heterosexuals" or by those "persons who most visibly and flagrantly embody the stigma, 'drag queens', men who dress and act 'like women'" (3).

The normal or provocative public image of homosexuality reveals different approaches to gay and lesbian politics. The 'normal and competent as heterosexuals' approach to gay and lesbian politics is represented by an assimilationist strategy, which is based on the dilution of difference, and the normalisation of gay and lesbian identities in society. Activists who agree with this political strategy question why gay and lesbian people are still stigmatised in society when they are just as normal as heterosexual people. In order to show how normal homosexual people are assimilationist activists distance themselves from and are often ashamed and embarrassed of the negative stereotypes that associate homosexuality with pansies, [56] drag queens, butch dykes and sexually promiscuous men.

The 'visible and flagrant approach to homosexuality' is represented by an anti-assimilationist (or queer) approach to gay and lesbian politics and is based on the intensification of difference as a way of resisting and irritating heteronormativity. Activists who subscribe to this political strategy question what it means to be accepted by norms that were formulated to exclude difference. Queer activists are

[55] The exception is *Tommy Boys* which explores lesbian butch-femme role-playing in three different chapters. Morgan and Wieringa show the function of butch-femme roles as being "more flexible" and they note that, "various respondents report having switched from butch to femme at different points in their lives" (Morgan and Wieringa 2005:318).

[56] "a passive gay man" (Cage 2003:87)

not embarrassed by the association of homosexuality with gender and sexual deviance, nor are they ashamed of "every queer who flaunts his sex and his faggotry" (M. Warner 1999: 32).

I have used the binary assimilationist and anti-assimilationist approach to the public image of homosexuality to expose the dangers of simplifying gay and lesbian politics. The field is, of course, much more complex and subtle and there are many overlaps and commonalties between these two different approaches: they are not just polar opposites. M. Warner (1999) similarly argues:

> A frank embrace of queer sex in all its apparent indignity, together with a frank challenge to the damaging hierarchies of respectability can result in neither assimilation nor separatism if carried through consistently (74).

5.2 Construction of normal and abnormal sexualities

Undoubtedly what drives the activism behind a liberal and a radical approach to gay and lesbian politics is the desire for a more just and equitable society. Both approaches oppose homophobia and all other hate crimes associated with the hatred of difference and stress the interconnectedness of race, class and gender in the analysis of the various vectors of oppression in society. [57] Conway (2009) argues that it is vital to conceptualise "racial, sexual and gender identities as intersectional and plural, and articulated and embodied according to contingent circumstances" (863) (this recalls Rubin's sexual value hierarchy). The power and pervasiveness of heteronormativity that has led to the construction of the categories good (heterosexuality) and bad (homosexuality) sexuality is the target for both the assimilationist and queer approach to gay and lesbian politics.

In Chapter 2, I use Foucault to explain how the shift in the control of sexuality from the church to more secular discourses in the 17th and 18th centuries changed the focus of regulation from the married couple to children, sodomisers, criminals and the insane. The distinction between normal and abnormal people and sexualities was, therefore, established. Normal people are married monogamous heterosexuals and abnormal people are everyone else who does not conform to this mean, including homosexual people.

[57] This is made evident in the South African context by the wide range of political opinions (from liberal to radical) of organisations that are affiliated to the LGEP.

5.3 The shift in the theorisation about homosexuality from the pathological to the normal

Sixty years ago it was unthinkable that homosexuality could ever be considered normal; it was seen as an illness. In the article "Towards a queer research methodology", Daniel Noam Warner (2004) re-visits a piece of psychological research from the early 1960s[58] on the normality of male homosexuals in America and evaluates the effect it has had in shaping policy and attitudes. The psychological research he is referring to is found in the chapter "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual" published in 1963 in *The Problem of Homosexuality in Modern Society* by Evelyn Hooker which shows that there is no link between male homosexuality and illness. Hooker's research subjects were self-identified gay white middle class American males who were members of the Mattachine Society.[59] It was the findings from this research population that Hooker used to prove that male homosexuality was normal and not pathological. However, in the context of same-sex desire in 1950s America, D.N. Warner argues, this male gay white middle class research population was certainly not normal because most homosexual people did not consciously identify as homosexual, were not affluent and were certainly not organised as a homosexual community. [60] However, this brand of homosexuality that was associated with white middle class males "got its name and face out there first, and thus established a new grid in the matrix of intelligibility… the normal male homosexual" (331). D.N. Warner further argues that gay normality has become associated with white male middle class values and in the American context such values have almost became a "gold standard against which other sexual perverts are measured, and for whom policy is designed" (331).

[58] Research conducted prior to the American Psychiatric Association's removal of homosexuality as a diagnostic category from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1973.
[59] The first gay liberation organisation in the United States
[60] In the South African context the Constitution and the Civil Union Act entrench immutable gay and lesbian identities. The Constitution and Civil Union Act have been critiqued by Bonthuys (2008) for making allowances only for such immutable and usually middle-class identities. She argues that self-identifying middle-class gay and lesbian people usually have the "social and economic wherewithal to flout the norms of their families and their religious and cultural communities". Those African same-sex relationships which display a "more complex pattern of behaviour" are ignored (Bonthuys cited in Judge et al. 2008:175) in the same way those people in Hooker's study who are not white, middle class or that do not self-identify as a homosexual are.

5.4 Gay normality in the South African context

The question that needs to be asked here is: Is there such a thing as 'gay normality' in South Africa, taking into account that such normality is often aligned with a set of values and political ideals that run counter to the experiences and lived realities of the majority of gay and lesbian people in South Africa who are black and working class? In the South African context before the development of a non-racial gay and lesbian liberation movement in the late 1980s, the gay experience was frequently associated with white, middle-class, urban males and such a perception was damaging both socially and politically. It was, therefore, the aim of the non-racial gay and lesbian liberation movement to reveal the reality of the diversity of the gay and lesbian population and to additionally show how such a population was human and, therefore, eligible for rights.[61] I would argue that in the South African context gay normality means something different and is operationalised differently depending on the racial, class and economic specificities of different contexts. For example Chetty (1994) and Reid (2005) provide evidence of how gay hairdressers are accepted as normal (and even stylish) members of certain conservative black peri-urban and coloured urban working class communities in Mpumalanga and Cape Town. Walker and Reid argue further that it is not "uncommon for gay lifestyles to be associated in the public imaginary with 'fashion', and for gay visibility to be regarded almost inextricably linked to South Africa's transition to democracy" (Walker and Reid 2005:16). There is also evidence in the media of a growing gay white-middle class respectable community (more in line with D.N. Warner's understanding of gay respectability) that distances itself from gay clubs, male gay promiscuity, feminine men and pornography. [62] Evidence from Canada suggests that since the legalisation

[61] In Chapter 2 I refer to the work of Judith Butler who argues that human rights are about the unrecognisable human becoming a recognisable one. However she also draws attention to one of the problems with a human rights discourse in that it does not adequately describe the complexity of people. A human is presented as a bounded being that can be recognised and, therefore, awarded rights and sexual minorities are reliant for being intelligible on the norms of others. This is a conundrum she argues as "[t]he discourse of rights avows our dependency, the mode of our being in the hands of others, a mode of being with and for others without which we cannot be" (Butler 2004: 33). Despite the limitations of being accepted on norms that were formulated to exclude, human rights was the prevailing political logic in an apartheid South African context and the gay and lesbian liberation movement was strongly aligned with the rights based political ideals of the African National Congress.

[62] An article entitled "Gays not ecstatic about Charl" that dealt with the re-launch of the Mr Gay South Africa competition was published in *The Times*, 29 July 2009. According to the director of the pageant it was re-launched so as to "restore respect" to the pageant by correcting the false impression of what a Mr Gay South

of gay marriage in 2003 the sexual landscape has become more respectable and conservative [63] and although the sexual landscape in South Africa is completely different (and with different sets of homophobic practices), I argue that the photographs that can be found at the beginning of this chapter from two gay and lesbian non-fiction books written 14 years apart show a shift that represents the distancing of homosexuality from difference to respectability.

Africa might be. "We want to find a normal, beautiful, masculine guy with a beautiful body and mind…ninety-nine percent of gay men are not screaming queens" (3). In February 2010 Mr Gay South Africa, Charl van der Berg, won the Mr Worldwide Gay title. However, soon after his victory it was revealed that he had made a porn video for a gay website. "Members of the gay community in South Africa and abroad have reacted with shock" *The Times* reported. This revelation was described as having "cast a shadow over the community". The article in *The Times* ended by exclaiming "[s]hame on Mr Worldwide Gay" (Sapa-AFP 2010a:3). The re-launch of a sanitised version of the Mr Gay South Africa pageant back-fired on the organisers: in their search for a "normal, beautiful, masculine guy with a beautiful body and mind" they found Charl van den Berg, an unapologetic porn star who asserts that "porn is an integral part of the gay lifestyle, it's just that most guys don't have the guts to do what I did" (Sapa-AFP 2010a:3).

Just one year later it seems as if the director of the Mr Gay South Africa pageant's wish to find a 'normal guy' has come true. In the article "DA's Mr Gay SA hopes to break new ground" published in *The Times* on the 26 November 2011, Lance Weyer (a municipal councillor for the DA (Democratic Alliance: a liberal political party) in the Eastern Cape) is reported as becoming the new Mr Gay South Africa. He is quoted as saying he wants to be the Harvey Milk (first openly gay elected politician in San Francisco who was assassinated in 1978) of South Africa. He says further, that winning the Mr Gay South Africa title is a "big responsibility" as it will provide him with the opportunity to "address negative perceptions about homosexuals in South Africa… [and] to be a role model to many young people" (Ndlovu 2010: 3).

Refer also to the picture of Erasmus Louw and Renier Prinsloo in the article from *The Mail and Guardian* "The right to commit" on page 125 in Chapter 4. The white married gay couple, Erasmus Louw and Renier Prinsloo project an image of middle class respectability. They are clean shaven, have short hair, are dressed in smart casual attire; sit elegantly on a designer couch in a lounge filled with art and precious objects smiling straight at the camera with their three daschunds.

[63] In the article "A New Entity in the History of Sexuality: The Respectable Same-Sex Couple" Mariana Valverde (2006) a queer researcher from Canada traces the changing sexual landscape of Toronto since the legalisation of gay marriage in 2003. On the cusp of this legalisation, newspapers in Toronto were awash with pictures that presented "an array of perfect 'same-sex' couples, usually shown in the full glare of sunlight, a lighting convention at odds with representations of the classic homosexual" (Valverde 2006: 57). Not a campy wedding dress was on show nor a lesbian in top hat and tails and Valverde concludes that "[d]rag queens seem to have vanished from view" (158). Instead, lesbian couples were dressed as if they were on the way to the office and clean-cut men in couples all wore suits. What was also noticeable was that the couples were white middle-class, and middle-aged females and males. These pictures, Valverde laments, embodied the future of the gay and lesbian community in Toronto. There was no sign of "a young queer person or a transsexual activist" (159). Finally, Valverde (2006) argues that

> [the] [p]leasures and dangers [of homosexuality are] reminiscences. Bank loans, florists' bills, joint bank accounts, renovated gentrified downtown homes, and worries about the relatives are the pieces that make up the new, post-homosexual entity that Canadian jurisprudence has helped to fabricate: the respectable 'same-sex' couple (162).

I now turn to my two targeted texts, *Male Homosexuality* (1992) and *Defiant Desire* (1994), in order to provide evidence of the source of the changing political approach to the public image of homosexuality.

5.5 *Male Homosexuality* (1992)

As I made known at the beginning of my analysis of the coming-out narrative in Chapter 3, *Male Homosexuality* (1992) is regarded as a classic in the South African gay and lesbian non-fiction genre. *Male Homosexuality* has made a significant contribution not only to promoting progressive non-pathologising research about homosexuality in the disciplines of psychology and social work, but also in trailblazing methods of intervention for male homosexuals in crisis in the health sector. In many ways, it is South Africa's own "Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual" (Hooker 1963) in that it aims to prove that homosexuals in South Africa are normal. [64] As I have made clear, in the context in which the research for *Male Homosexuality* was done in the late 1980s the category homosexual was constructed as abnormal within the matrix of intelligibility.

Isaacs and McKendrick's (1992) aim is to prove that homosexuals in South Africa are normal and that "homosexual behaviour is not necessarily dependent on sexual conduct" (166). The research subjects who provided evidence for this assertion were mainly white middle-class gay men who were volunteers at a service organisation (GASA 6010)[65] that operated in Cape Town in the late 1980s. In Chapter 2, I explain Butler's (1997) understanding of subject formation being related to numerous factors such as context and social identity. It is clear that Isaacs and McKendrick's white middle-class gay male research population was comfortable to self-identify as homosexual perhaps because of the confidence their social status afforded them.[66] Isaacs and McKendrick emphasise that the homosexual lifestyle "can include non-sexual areas of awareness" (166) and, while such a statement would hold true for any group irrespective of their sexual orientation, it is their specific aim to show this

[64] Like the analysis of *Male Homosexuality* in Chapter 2, the terms 'homosexual' and 'gay' in this chapter also only refer to white middle-class men since this is the population that was scrutinised.

[65] Please refer to footnote17 in Chapter 1 for a description of this organisation.

[66] At this time heterosexual white middle class men had the most status and power in an apartheid South Africa and undoubtedly homosexual white middle class men who were 'normal' looking and acting also reaped the benefits of this privileged social class.

to be true for gay men in South Africa. The text is, therefore, corrective in its approach to homosexuality. This is understandable in the context in which the authors were writing when the compulsory regime of heteronormativity, which I discuss in Chapter 2, categorised gay men only in terms of sexual desire.

In their construction of a more correct type of homosexual in South Africa, Isaacs and McKendrick use the homophobic stereotypes of homosexuality that associate it with "gay bars, pornography, and one night stands" (M.Warner 1999:113).[67] I repeat my earlier argument that they seem to be shamed by these deviant associations which have led homosexuals, according to them, to be "considered sexual deviants (not *human* deviants)" (Isaacs and McKendrick 1992:9, original emphasis). However, their argument is, strictly speaking, what M.Warner (1999) describes as "anti-queer" (114) rather than homophobic. In agreement with him, by "anti-queer" I mean that for those gay and lesbian theorists (such as these two authors) who see assimilation as the political strategy to end prejudice against homosexuals, the imperative to avoid associating homosexuality with sexual deviance (such as promiscuity), is paramount. Such theorists are also concerned only with gay and lesbian identities; they want very little to do with other sexual minorities.

For Isaacs and McKendrick (1992) the association of homosexuality with sexual deviance is inextricably linked to the gay sub-culture. Despite sodomy being illegal at the time, there was a thriving gay sub-culture in Johannesburg and Cape Town in the 1970s and 1980s, and it was in this context that Gordon Isaacs conducted his research for his PhD. The gay sub-culture is presented as a "double bind" (211) in *Male Homosexuality*. On the one hand, it is important because it provides a space in which gay men can meet and identify with other gay men. However, Isaacs and McKendrick make it clear that such gay identification can take place only in a pure sub-culture, or, in other words, where there are *only* other gay males. (This is discussed further a little later in this chapter.) On the other hand, the gay sub-culture is also a space that is debauched, that has promoted the "issue of sexuality as the

[67] It is important to note that *Male Homosexuality* is not a prudish book; it is sex positive and Isaacs and McKendrick identify nine different male gay sexual practices. However, these sexual practices are listed in bullet form and in a clinical, detached and biologically descriptive way.

main cause of survival" (72) and has a "has a tradition of affirmation through sex" (211).

Isaacs and McKendrick (1992) argue that the gay sub-culture is preoccupied by sex and debauchery which has taken "precedence over and above all other intimate expressions of behaviour" (211). In addition they argue that the gay sub-culture emphasises a "hedonistic value system and seems incapable of collectively contributing to homosexual liberation or societal change" (162). They seem genuinely shocked at the activities that take place in "discotheques, steam baths, bars, and camping locations", which they refer to as the "temples of the sub-culture" (212) and which they argue are symbolically separated from mainstream entertainment by "being situated in dungeon-like rooms, cellars, or on the tops of buildings" (98). According to Isaacs and McKendrick the most hedonistic sexual behaviour promoted by the gay sub-culture is gay male promiscuity which has "become part of an enmeshment philosophy" (9). They do not mince their words when they argue that if homosexuals are denied sex then

> [a] disillusion occurs, including a substantial sense of disappointment, about the absence of erotic features such as freely available opportunities for sex, a fixation at sexual levels of camping, and overt sexual behaviours (199).

Gay male promiscuity, for Isaacs and McKendrick (1992), is located in a "sexual imagery network" (212) of lascivious behaviour that is associated with self loathing and "internalized homophobia" (108).

In *Male Homosexuality* the self-destructive promiscuous gay male myth is contrasted unfavorably with what the monogamous stable married couple offers as a model. Such a couple not only ensures racial purity (since respectability is based on the values associated with the white middle class) but also economic stability in terms of the reproduction of the workforce essential to capitalism (refer to a discussion of this in Chapter 2 in my exposition of Foucault). Sexually active gay men are a significant threat to this logic on a number of different levels that are linked to ideas about normative sexuality, masculinity, gender, procreation and privacy. Patton (1986) asserts that " [t]he elaborateness of gay male sexual culture…has been rapidly transformed to one that inhibits the spread of [AIDS]…and is marvelously fringe and offensive…as ever" (72). The reason for this, Crimp (1987) adds, is because "[g]ay

people invented safe sex…[w]e were able to invent safe sex because we have always known that sex…is not limited to penetrative sex" (252-253). In Chapter 2, I refer to Butler's (2004) observation that asking the state for legitimation via marriage is partially a shamed response to gay male promiscuity and its association with AIDS.

Isaacs and McKendrick (1992) are ashamed of gay male sexual culture and promiscuity. The reason they feel shame is because it takes priority over any other type of sexual expression and thus "becomes lodged in the repertoire of the homosexual persona" (211). Gay male promiscuity, for these authors, is a one-way path to self-destruction from which there is never a return and that has led to a negatively biased perception of homosexuality. The "homosexual identity will continue to be popularly perceived in sexual terms" (9) and as "disordered, deviant, queer, perverted" (193) if such gay male promiscuity continues. In my summary of Rubin (1993) in Chapter 2, I discuss her idea of sex negativity: the assumption that sex is biological but also dangerous and destructive. I would argue that Isaacs and McKendrick are negative about gay male sexuality.

For them, promiscuity has "beleaguered homosexuals" (Isaacs and McKendrick 1992:211) because the only thing that promiscuous homosexuals can think about is sex, which takes an "exhausting toll on the psyche". This causes psychological problems, a "sense of disharmony" (84) and, eventually breakdown as the promiscuous gay male becomes satiated with the sub-culture's "socially and sexually incestuous activities" (21). This is a very serious indictment of, and strong warning about, the consequences of gay male promiscuity. This corrective and fear-provoking approach to gay male promiscuity was common amongst assimilationist gay theorists at the time (such as Altman 1982; Bronski 1984; De Cecco and Shively 1984; Shilts 1987) and is associated with the hysteria provoked by the belief that AIDS originated from homosexual sexual activity. In his analysis of Shilts' highly influential text about homosexuals and AIDS, *And the Band Played On* (1987), Crimp (1987) argues that

> [l]ike Queen Victoria's proverbial inability to fathom what lesbians do in bed, Shilts's disdain for the sexual habits of gay men extends even to finding certain of those habits "unimaginable" (Crimp 1987: 244).

As I mentioned above, Isaacs and McKendrick (1992) regard the gay sub-culture as a double bind because, while they concede that it is important for in-group identification, they also argue that the sub-culture is hedonistic when it is impure. “Members of alternative fringe cultures…who believe that gay clubs offer a tacit acceptance of mood, style, and behaviour, flock to gay venues”. Such fringe people include “alternatives” and “drug users” (103), “youth culture” (109) and “the androgynous and even the bisexual” (215). They argue that it is these fringe and alternative people who are partially to blame for the problems in the gay sub-culture because they blur “rigid gay sub-cultural boundaries” (215). The other people who are to blame for the hedonistic sub-culture are “sex workers, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, and butch-femme types” (211) because they reinforce negative stereotypes and influence and even lead normal gay and lesbian people astray.

Isaacs and McKendrick (1992) make it blatantly clear that for them, fringe people who fit into alternative categories are not welcome in the gay sub-culture because their presence precipitates “a sense of identity shock for many gay people” (103). Some gay people become “seduced” by these “alternative heterosexuals” and when they make a sexual pass and gay people realise that it is “non-negotiable” this leads to “frustration”, “anger” and “insecurity”. As a result gay people establish gay-only venues and this is deleterious for gay males, they argue, because it “perpetuates the distancing of gays from others, thereby reinforcing their sense of separateness...from wider society”. Therefore, for Isaacs and McKendrick the assimilation of homosexuals into normal society would be psychologically and socially advantageous since it would prevent “insecurity” and “estrangement” (215).

The gay sub-culture that Isaacs and McKendrick (1992) envisage is occasionally frequented by normal, masculine-looking gay males who have a life that is not dominated by shameful “sex indulgent behaviour” (9) such as camping. The association of shame with homosexuality is rooted in the promotion of the idea in heteronormativity that gay men are flawed copies of heterosexual men. I explain the idea of homosexuals being perceived as an inferior version of heterosexuals in my overview of Butler’s (1991) idea that gender is an imitation of nothing (see Chapter 2). Isaacs and McKendrick‘s ideal gay club is a space in which some good old-fashioned wholesome fun would take place between gay men, and where the unique gay “stylization and iconography” and even “mystique” (109) would be apparent. The

occasional lesbian is also permitted into such a sacred place because the "promiscuity and anonymity of male homosexual encounters are either absent or minimal in homosexual relationships between females" (99). This is the type of respectable homosexuality that Isaacs and McKendrick envisage: a space in which gay males and a few lipstick lesbians [68] who "display no marked deviation from conventional descriptions of heterosexuals" (211) meet for self-identification purposes.

In the context in which *Male Homosexuality* was published it was important for Isaacs and McKendrick to distance themselves from those provocative aspects of the gay and lesbian sub-culture and rather show how normal homosexuals could be. The reason for this is because gay and lesbian people in South Africa not only lacked rights but they were also victimised and abused during the apartheid era. Gay and lesbian people occupied one of the lowest levels of Rubin's (1993) erotic pyramid. For Isaacs and McKendrick the only way for homosexuals to climb up the erotic pyramid was to distance themselves from negative stereotypes.

Male Homosexuality is an example of a text whose authors appear to be shamed by the link between homosexuality and sex. The reason for this is the sub-culture's association with deviant sex and gay male promiscuity. In addition Isaacs and McKendrick are ashamed of those fringe people and alternative heterosexuals who are drawn to the difference that the sub-culture offers. For them, transsexuals, transvestites, bisexuals, butch-femme lesbians, sex workers as well as counterculture, fringe and alternative people are invaders in this sub-culture because they blur the boundaries between gay and straight. These are exactly the types of people who would be welcomed by proponents of Queer Theory as I explain in Chapter 2. I also emphasise in this same chapter how queer sub-culture can be understood as a mobile and ephemeral site for all those who resist normal ideas about gender and sexuality. However, in *Male Homosexuality* such an accommodating queer sub-culture is seen to hamper the development of a healthy gay identity**.**

What today is called assimilationist in describing an approach to gay and lesbian politics based on normality would, in South Africa in 1992, not have been possible.

[68] A lesbian who displays classically feminine qualities

Gay and lesbian people had no rights, were subject to legal discrimination and violence and were regarded as abnormal. Isaacs and McKendrick, therefore, were arguing for gay normality and rights and at the time they were writing this was the most progressive way to approach gay and lesbian politics. Since this time, however, the development of more radical political strategies in the fight to resist the discriminations against difference makes Isaacs and McKendrick's analysis seem quite conservative.

In my analysis of some of the chapters in *Defiant Desire* I suggest how this research agenda could have been challenged if a dissident queer perspective had been given the space to develop.

5.6 *Defiant Desire* (1994)

Defiant Desire does not reject the negative stereotypical aspects associated with homosexuality in the South African context and it tries, rather, to problematise them. It presents robust debate about gay normality and queer dissension which reflects the tension that existed between gay assimilation and the development of a radical critique of normality in the early to mid-990s. In the analysis which follows I will first explain how *Defiant Desire* presents homosexuality as being "out of order" (Gevisser and Cameron 1994:4) and how, by doing so, it does not censor any issue related to this conception of homosexuality. Second, I will show how *Defiant Desire* opens a space for the contested issues at the time—drag and gay male promiscuity. In Chapter 2, I outline Butler's (1997a) argument that trying to show the truth of heterosexualised genders always fails. One example of how heterosexualised genders are subverted is drag. Crimp (1987) argues that another practice that subverts the institutionalised sexuality which is a result of heterosexualised genders, is gay male promiscuity.

In the introduction to *Defiant Desire* Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron (1994) question whether there is a developing common gay identity in South Africa. They argue that there is not, but contend that increasingly there are common experiences that erase differences, reinforce "gayness" and affirm homosexuality as being "'out of order' in the eyes of the law, the authorities and the heterosexual establishment" (4). Being "out of order" also establishes a powerful connection to the title of the book. Homosexuality as defiant was a definite challenge to the sex negativity (Rubin 1993)

that was powerful in South Africa at the time. All erotic practices that did not conform to sex in marriage for procreation (such as homosexuality) were regarded as bad and evil and so *Defiant Desire* counters this negative perception by actively promoting homosexuality as not only a right in itself but also as a challenge to the existing social order. Problematising rights being awarded on the prevailing norm (liberation politics) in the context in which Gevisser and Cameron were writing was not a consideration as liberation politics promised all the things that apartheid politics had denied the oppressed majority (and sexual minorities) for 45 years—freedom, rights and equality. (See my overview of Butler (2004) in Chapter 2 in the section "Human rights and the constitution of a subject"). In challenging the existing order, the editors of *Defiant Desire* do not censor discussion on any issue; rather, they encourage debate and provocation and do not "marginalise—or deny a voice to—anyone" [by refusing to only represent] "'normal' boy-and-girl-next door homosexuals" (2).

Butler's (1997a) notion that the more genders are copied and duplicated, the more the heterosexual assertion to originality is shown to be false (see Chapter2) is apposite here. Drag as a form of resistance to heterosexuality in 1994 was a hotly contested issue in the gay and lesbian movement. Debates about drag were embedded within the broader struggle to have gay issues taken seriously by the liberation movement. The recognition of the rights of gay people by the ANC had not been smooth sailing, for it was only when the gay and lesbian movement made alliances with organisations working actively for liberation that their issues started to be put on the agenda, and began to gain credibility: "this [gay and lesbian] politics has, since the unbanning of the liberation movements in 1990, gained a new respectability on the left-and thus a new legitimacy" (Gevisser and Cameron 1994:77). Gaining a new respectability certainly has consequences and there was much debate and even conflict within the gay and lesbian movement about whether the public image of homosexuality should include (or even allow) drag. While there was consensus in the gay and lesbian rights movement that drag was an integral part of gay life, the debate centred around the effect of public drag on the political position of the gay and lesbian movement. Would it offend the sensibilities of new political allegiances?

It was important for the gay and lesbian movement to show that not all gay and lesbian people were cross dressers or "effeminate, limp-wristed '*stabane*'" [69] and to demonstrate that gay interests extended beyond drag (Gevisser and Cameron 1994:69, original emphasis). (See Chapter 2 for my explanation of Butler's (1997a) idea that homophobic people often assign a failed gender to homosexuals which is why it is important to keep the link between sex and gender (but in a non-essential way) intact. The conflict within the gay and lesbian movement at the time was between those activists who wanted to show the normality or respectability of gay life and those who believed that no aspect of gay life should be censored.

Gevisser and Cameron (1994) question whether the gay and lesbian movement should have allowed drag queens to take part in the first two gay pride marches in 1991 and 1992. The presence of drag queens at the gay pride march was questioned because it potentially undermined the gay and lesbian movement's "attempt to present a serious and compelling argument of equality" and, at the same time, the banning of drag queens was criticised as an attempt to "present an upright, buttoned-down image of gay life and culture" (12). Gevisser and Cameron make it clear that both sides of this argument were to be reflected in *Defiant Desire* because they refused to censor anything. These different points of view on the thorny issue of drag are reflected in six different chapters in *Defiant Desire*.

In the chapter, "A Different Fight For Freedom: A History of South African Lesbian and Gay Organisation—the 1940s to the 1990s" Mark Gevisser compares the coverage of the 1993 gay pride march by two different television programmes, *Newsline* and *Agenda*.[70] The *Newsline* documentary highlighted "outlandish images of drag and excess" whilst *Agenda* tried to "find normal-looking couples who your average viewer would be able to identify with" (Gevisser in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:77). In his analysis of this contrast, Gevisser argues that there is a very obvious "loaded ideology" underlying *Agenda's* approach. He argues that the presentation of the normal looking gay couple is often used as a corrective image to the stereotypical images of gays as limp-wristed outlandish queens and plaid shirted, cropped haired butch lesbians. However, "it is also a safe image, easier to digest

[69] From the Zulu word "isitabane" which means "sisterbrother" and a "perversion of kinship ties" (Lock-Swarr 2009: 532). This term is used derogatively to refer to homosexuals.

[70] These were current affairs programs run by two rival South African TV channels in the 1990s.

precisely because it is less threatening to the patriarchal and conservative gender-role values upon which society is built" (77).

In the chapter, "Pride or Protest? Drag Queens, Comrades, and the Lesbian and Gay Pride March" by Mark Gevisser and Graham Reid, there is a much more in-depth theorisation of the contested issue of the participation of drag queens in the gay pride march. "The drag queen issue has raged after each march" (Gevisser and Reid in Gevisser and Cameron 1994: 281), and Gevisser and Reid revisit in detail the dilemma of whether gay and lesbian people should present an acceptable façade or show the diversity of the community by allowing drag queens at gay pride marches. Their stand on this issue is clear. They relate an incident from the 1992 gay pride march during which a group of "edgy black transvestite hustlers" (281) took over the stage and gave an outrageous performance to disco music. However, this performance was soon brought to a halt by a voice from a loudspeaker that admonished them and reminded them that the whole country would be watching and that they therefore needed to be careful how they presented the public image of homosexuality. Gevisser and Reid lament that "[i]t was a sad and telling moment: the conflict of gay abandon with gay respectability… [f]or any gay and lesbian gay pride march has one central function: to facilitate public visibility" (281).

The chapter "Of Gay Rights and the Pitfalls of the 'PC': A Polemic" by Digbi Ricci presents an opposing view to the above. In this chapter Ricci claims that the impact of the first two gay pride marches was completely undermined by the media coverage which showed only drag queens. His position is that drag queens should not be allowed to march in order to help gays present a "serious, not risible, front". He adds that banning drag queens from gay pride marches would be a temporary move only and not a "Stalinist act". He concludes by arguing that a drag-free gay pride march would promote gay rights to the broader public and show how the gay and lesbian rights movement was "a significant movement, not a sequined joke". Further, Ricci berates the homosexual community for having a bad attitude towards the heterosexual community. He argues that the use of gay slang such as "fish" to describe women is nothing more than a "distasteful attack on women" (Ricci in Gevisser and Cameron 1994: 315).

In *Pride: Protest and Celebration* (2006) there is a description of the drag queen crisis at the 1993 gay pride march. When the Pride organising committee applied for permission for the 1993 march, the metro police quoted the Gatherings Act of 1993 that stated that it was against the law for protestors to wear a disguise and that this stipulation applied to people wearing drag. The Equality Foundation objected to this restriction and it soon became evident that this crisis was precipitated by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance. According to de Waal and Manion, the editors of *Pride: Protest and Celebration* (2006), this organisation was a marginal and conservative group of homosexuals who "object(ed) to drag queens being seen to represent gay men and women and threatened to bring an interdict to compel the police to enforce the 1993 law" (de Waal and Manion 2006:160). This incident highlights the intensity of the drag queen debate at the time and it is this debate with which *Defiant Desire* attempts to engage.

According to Gevisser and Cameron (1994), the Western Cape coloured community is the largest but least explored queer society in South Africa. These communities were "by nature fluid, hybrid and permeable" and "nowhere else in this country have [drag queens] been so integral to a culture" (7). There are two chapters in *Defiant Desire* that investigate drag in the Western Cape. One is dedicated to drag queens and the other is dedicated to a lesbian gangster who lived as a man. Both these chapters are authored by Dhianaraj Chetty, who argues that drag queens and female-to-male cross dressers sustained "that essential element of queer culture-subversion" (Chetty in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:126). In their imitation of the female and the male, drag queens and lesbian cross-dressers expose the fragility of heterosexualised genders as lacking a true origin and are, therefore, constantly under threat (cf. Butler (1997a) in Chapter 2). In their overview of Chetty's article in the introduction, Gevisser and Cameron (1994) concur with his point of view that drag is subversive and further argue that it is essential in the "making of 'queer societies'" (9) and a sub-culture defined by "masquerade, resistance, subterfuge and sublimation" (6). The existence of drag communities in 1950s oppressive apartheid South Africa is an example of the unpredictable and powerful way gender and sexual norms are resisted. The idea of the incalculable effect of subversion is drawn from my analysis in Chapter 2 of Butler's (1997a) notion of the performativity of gender and sexuality.

A very different perspective on drag is put forward by Cage in *Gayle* (2003) (see Chapter 3). In his argument drag and camp are an embarrassment to the gay community and he hopes that they will disappear with the consolidation of gay rights: "[b]efore 1994, 'camp' functioned as a device that gave an oppressed minority group coherence, solidarity and humour in South Africa, all of which are, to a large extent, no longer needed today" (9-10). Another form of subversion of institutionalised heterosexuality that the author of *Gayle* (as well as those of *Male Homosexuality* and *Performing Queer*) disapproves of is gay male promiscuity. Such disapproval in all three of these books aligns them politically with an assimilationist point of view in relation to gay and lesbian politics.

However, in *Defiant Desire* there are three chapters that deal with gay male promiscuity in a way that is not disapproving. For example, in the chapter, "Johannesburg's 'Health Clubs': Places of Erotic Languor or Prison-Houses of Desire?" Peter Galli and Luis Rafael question why, despite gay liberation and the "easing of sexual mores", places in which to have anonymous sex continue to remain popular. Instead of bemoaning the continued existence of such places or being ashamed of them, Galli and Rafael argue that they are a "positive space for the reappropriation of some gay sexualities" (Galli and Rafael in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:139).

The lack of shame about sex is also reflected in the chapter, "Gay Sexuality in Reef Townships" by Hugh Mclean and Linda Ngcobo. The subtitle of the chapter "[t]hose who Fuck me Say I'm Tasty" illustrates this clearly and Mclean and Ngcobo refuse to make concessions for "other people's prudery" (Mclean and Ngcobo in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:159). They investigate the prevalence of black male homosexuality in Reef townships and document in detail the sexual intricacies of their respondents. This candid and groundbreaking work by Mclean and Ngcobo was a significant challenge to the ideas popularised by historians such as Harries (1990) and Moodie (1990) who claimed that the many instances of black male homosexuality on the mines on the Reef were situational and occurred only because there were no women available.

Zackie Achmat's [71] chapter, "My Childhood as an Adult Molester —a Salt River Memoir" provocatively destabilises the myth that children are devoid of sexuality or choice to have sex. The author documents his numerous sexual encounters as a young boy which led him, not on a path to self-destruction as the authors of *Male Homosexuality* predict happens with gay males who are promiscuous, but rather, to "the beginning of a life of sex and politics" (Achmat in Gevisser and Cameron 1994:341).

Defiant Desire is not afraid to document those aspects of gay and lesbian life in the late 1980s and early 1990s that were controversial such as drag and gay male promiscuity and has as one of its main aims the "assertion of 'queer culture'" (Gevisser and Cameron 1994:9). One of the aims of Queer Theory that I outline in Chapter 2, is to challenge the pervasiveness of heteronormativity and this is exactly what *Defiant Desire* was doing in 1994, but in a way that has not been taken up in the subsequent texts that I investigate. The focus of the ensuing books that I investigate becomes less and less queer as they gradually promote a more assimilationist approach to gay and lesbian politics in South Africa. The reason for such a shift could be attributed to the increase in violence, hatred and even murder of black working class gays and lesbians in townships and rural areas across South Africa. Such a reality makes it difficult but also necessary to "keep the tension alive between maintaining a critical perspective and making a politically legible claim" (Butler 2002:20).

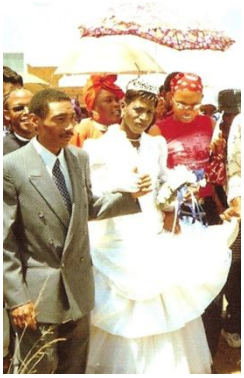
5.7 Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter I investigated whether the change in the representation of homosexuality in South Africa is changing for the better or for worse. The impetus for such an investigation lies in how aspects of gay and lesbian life as represented by photographs have changed in two of my targeted texts published 14 years apart. I provide a sample of two photographs below.

[71] Zackie Achmat is the founder and chairperson of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) one of the most successful HIV and AIDS lobby groups in South Africa.



Defiant Desire (1994)



To Have and To Hold (2008)

These two photographs demonstrate a change from a celebration of queerness to a celebration of marriage. In this chapter I traced how and why this happened. In doing this, I distinguished between the assimilationist and queer approaches to the public image of homosexuality. I showed the shift in societal perceptions of what is considered abnormal and normal sexuality. Sixty years ago homosexuality was considered completely abnormal but today it is considered more normal (especially in liberal public discourse). Today I would argue that abnormal in the South African context (and, therefore, low in status in the erotic pyramid) now includes, instead, transgender people,[72] gender non-conformist people[73] and sex workers.[74]

[72] Evidence of this can be found in an article in *The Times* newspaper on the 16 August 2010 which recounts how Christine Ehlers was fired from her job as a sales representative at Bohler Uddeholm Africa in January 2009 because she was undergoing gender re-assignment surgery from male to female. The chairman of the company was quoted as saying that Christine had to "either revert to being a man, as she was when she joined the company, or accept a redundancy order" (Evans 2010:6). The dismissal was overturned by the Labour Court in August 2010.

[73] Evidence of this is the banning in 2010 of a 15 year old teenager from Cambridge High School in East London, which is located in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, for wearing trousers rather than the obligatory skirt because, she is quoted as saying, "[i]'m not a lesbian. I'm born a girl but I'm a man" (George 2010:3).

[74] Evidence of this is the content of an article on the front page of the *Rosebank, Killarney Gazette* (a community newspaper that targets people living in the northern suburbs of Rosebank and Killarney in Johannesburg). The article is about prostitutes from Oxford Road in Rosebank invading the surrounding suburbs. The residents of these suburbs are clearly enraged because they argue that prostitutes "degrade the area". An example of such degradation is that the prostitutes lift their skirts and show their private parts to motorists in passing cars and one resident asserts that "[i]t's disgusting, a national disgrace—this is a family-orientated area" (Walker 2010:1) .

I also questioned the relevance of research that associates gay normality with the aspiration to white middle class values from the West to the South African context where the majority of gay and lesbian people are black and working class. In order to provide evidence for my central concern that homosexuality is moving along a path to a place where, instead of being celebrated for being different, it is validated for not being different in South Africa, I provided an analysis of *Male Homosexuality* and *Defiant Desire*. Such an analysis was guided by the importance of being critical of the shift in the gay and lesbian political direction towards assimilation, but at the same time taking into account the high price that people still pay for being gay, lesbian or queer in South Africa. I agree with M. Warner when he writes that there is no doubt that the "loathing for queer sex, like the loathing for gender nonconformity" is still very powerful (M.Warner 1999: 48).

However, drawing from Queer Theory (see Chapter 2) I question whether the negative stereotype of homosexuality being only about sex is best combated by adopting a position that disavows any connection between homosexuality and sex.

So for example, in my analysis of *Male Homosexuality* although I acknowledged the pivotal role this book has played in arguing for the normality and legitimacy of male homosexuality in South Africa, I suggest what needs to be de-legitimated in the endorsement of such a position. Here I argue that Isaacs and McKendrick are embarrassed by the association of homosexuality and sex and therefore aim to educate the reader about those aspects of the gay lifestyle that are not enmeshed with sex. In doing this, they provide detailed descriptions of, what according to them, is the sordidness of the white gay sub-culture in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Johannesburg and Cape Town, where sexual pursuit and fulfilment is the number one motivator. The disavowal of this promiscuous culture and the embracing of stable long-term relationships contribute to healthy gay identity formation, the authors argue. A rejection of the risky gay sub-culture also makes gay men aware of other drivers in life such as politics and the need for homosexual liberation. Isaacs and McKendrick also argue for the need for an undiluted and sexually sanitised gay sub-culture because all sorts of queer people with queer practices are drawn to the sexual permissiveness of a gay sub-culture. Such alternative people confuse gay men and dilute the mystique of gay-only places.

In retrospect the political position forwarded in *Male Homosexuality* is assimilationist in nature because they argue that homosexuals are the same as heterosexuals and deserve equal rights. At the time when *Male Homosexuality* was published in 1992 showing the normality of homosexuality was imperative since it was illegal, and gay and lesbian people were an oppressed sexual minority who faced the possibility of rejection, isolation, taunting and violence on a daily basis. My queer look at *Male Homosexuality* however uncovers what M. Warner calls “a politics of shame” (M. Warner 1999:42) and because of the enormous influence that this book has had on gay and lesbian politics and research in South Africa, a politics based on integration became the preferred way to combat the negative stereotypes associated with homosexuality.

In my analysis of *Defiant Desire* I explain how, in the introduction, Gevisser and Cameron’s understanding of homosexuality as being an “out of order” (Gevisser and Cameron 1994:4) challenge to heterosexuality sets the tone for a text that refuses to present a conservative version of homosexuality. At the time when *Defiant Desire* was published, the gay and lesbian rights movement in South Africa was getting more political credibility as a result of its transformation into a non-racial movement. As a result of this, there was much debate within the gay and lesbian movement about the presentation of the public image of homosexuality, specifically regarding how it was presented at gay and lesbian pride marches. Activists who supported an assimilationist point of view wanted drag queens to be banned from marches while activists who supported a queer point of view claimed that there was a place for all aspects of the homosexual lifestyle, including those that are more controversial. The complexity of this debate is reflected in no fewer than six chapters in *Defiant Desire*. Two of the most notable chapters on gender non-conformity and performance are authored by Dhianaraj Chetty in his analysis of the coloured working class drag culture in Cape Town in the 1950s and 1960s. Gevisser and Cameron argue that Cape Town is the largest but least explored queer society in South Africa, so the work by Chetty is crucial in excavating instances of political and sexualised resistances to conservative apartheid society. Another issue that is not skirted in *Defiant Desire* is the way that homosexual practices such as gay male promiscuity operate to resist institutionalised heterosexuality. In his chapter, well known activist Zackie Achmat, echoes Rubin’s (1993) argument that sex is always political, and

shows how his homosexuality was a challenge to coloured working class mores in 1970s Cape Town.

Defiant Desire is a book that is representative of the tension between gay assimilation and radical critique and is the last non-fiction gay and lesbian text in my selection of texts to reflect such tension. The queer issues in *Defiant Desire*—those that are located on the margins of gender, sexuality and desire such as drag, butch-femme and gay male promiscuity are not taken up in the later books that I analyse.

In my concluding chapter, I will summarise the salient points from each chapter of this thesis and offer some thoughts towards encouraging the necessity of staking a political claim whilst at the same time keeping a critical orientation to difference in the South African context.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

I began this thesis by recounting the brutal murder of lesbian activist and footballer Eudy Simelane. Because Simelane did not perform her sexuality or gender 'correctly' she paid the ultimate price. Her murder, points to the fact that having constitutional rights does not guarantee gay, lesbian and queer people as well as those people who do not fit the heteronormative straight jacket, immunity from the anger of extremely prejudiced people. There is clearly a disparity between how the constitution is intended to protect individuals and the reality of what actually happens to them. My aim in this thesis has been to develop a different way of thinking about the inconsistent nature of gay and lesbian rights in South Africa. Drawing on the posts-structuralist insight that discourse is the link between the individual and the social, I have investigated how discourses of identity and politics are represented in six non-fiction gay and lesbian books written over a 14 year period.

Three theorists have been pivotal in influencing my approach to identity and politics and its intersection with gender and sexuality: Judith Butler, Michel Foucault and Gayle Rubin. It is from these theorists that I acquired the tools that allowed me not only to destabilise normative and liberal ideas about gender and sexuality in South Africa but also to tease out the limitations of identity politics and its relation to a human rights discourse.

In my theoretical journey, Judith Butler's idea that gender and sexuality are not the possessions of people, but rather never-ending performances which show the incoherence of subjectivities has been pivotal. A further influential observation was her insistence that it is vital to keep the tension alive between staking a political claim and maintaining a critical perspective. Michel Foucault's writings apropos the supposed truth of identity have been central in providing evidence for my argument that, rather than creating a free subject, confessing to the truth about one's sexuality actually creates a categorisable subject, that is, consequently, able to be controlled and monitored. In addition, whilst being cognisant that liberation is an important step in the realisation of future freedoms, Foucault's assertion that one of the crucial goals of queer politics is continual resistance rather than a once-off liberation has buttressed my argument with regard to the problems of assimilationist political

strategies. Gayle Rubin's insights as to how different sexual behaviours accrue different statuses, rewards and punishments which can be configured in an erotic pyramid has been a crucial tool in my analysis of the South African sexual landscape. The fact that the erotic pyramid is a contested site with movements up or down depending not only on the context, but also on the level of sex negativity in a society makes it a continually relevant instrument to research the effects of a politics of difference. As I have made clear in the introduction, the strength of Queer Theory (which is constituted by theorists such as Butler, Foucault and Rubin) is that it is not fixed: it does not have a rigid set of guidelines, but is, rather, an approach that attempts to unhinge, subvert and resist gender and sexual normativity.

At all times I have endeavoured to do an ethical queer critique of gay and lesbian identity politics in the South African context. Queer ethics is guided by two criteria. First, the binaries assimilationist/anti-assimilationist (for/against) are too simple and reductive to adequately explain the complexity and nuances of a politics of difference. Therefore, critical practice that bridges the divide between staking a political claim and being critical of how political fields are actually established and then maintained needs to be developed. The second ethical touchstone of Queer Theory is that the illusion of a coherent identity is very powerful in society and as a result there are punishments for those who refuse the 'truth' of an identity. The starting point of any Queer Theory analysis is grounded in the reality of the ostracisation and victimization of queer people. I have made it clear in my investigation into the six books that the various authors, editors and contributors all aim to reveal the terrible atrocities that have been propagated against gay and lesbian people in the apartheid era as well as to show how homophobia persists in a liberated South Africa. All six of these books function, therefore, as powerful testaments to injustice and should be commended for the role they have all played in establishing and furthering gay and lesbian research in South Africa.

I have considered the following question in my investigation into gay and lesbian identity and politics and its representation in the six non-fiction books:

> Given the specific South African political and historical contexts in which each book was written, how are gay and lesbian identities constructed?

In answering this question I have argued that the construction of gay and lesbian identities varies from book to book depending on the political imperatives of the gay and lesbian movement at the time of writing (which I explain in detail in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). When *Male Homosexuality* was published in 1992, the political imperatives of the recently legitimated non-racial gay and lesbian movement were to show the synergy between gay rights and human rights and to agitate for the movement to be taken as a serious political force. As a result, homosexuality needed to be seen as normal and the negative stereotypes associated with homosexuality had to be shown to be true only for a small minority (and, for many activists, not to be true at all). These imperatives are reflected in *Male Homosexuality* (1992) when the authors provide evidence in mitigation of the fundamental normality of homosexuality by showing how not all homosexual males were promiscuous and how there was more to the homosexual lifestyle than the negatively perceived hedonistic sub-culture, where the authors argue, clubs were always situated "in dungeon-like rooms" (98). By the time that *To Have and To Hold* was published in 2008, the political imperatives of the LGEP had shifted from overturning every homophobic law on the statute books, to making known how the price of difference in South Africa remained high despite full constitutional protection. This is reflected in *To Have and To Hold* in which gay marriage is celebrated first, as an example of full equality with other types of marriage and second, as potentially revolutionary in ending homophobia because marriage will lead to the assimilation of gay and lesbian people. Reddy and Cakata (2008) make this crystal clear when they write that "the primary benefit of marriage is the extension of citizenship rights that facilitate the assimilation of gay and lesbian individuals into the mainstream of society" (cited in Judge et al. 2008:276). Therefore, gay and lesbian identities in *To Have and To Hold* are constructed as being no different from other identities found in South Africa. I have argued that homosexuality as a normal identity rather than as a defiant one is initially constructed in *Male Homosexuality* in 1992 and such a construction is completed by *To Have and To Hold* in 2008.

I reached these conclusions by analysing the representations of identity and politics in each off the targeted books using Queer Theory as a critical hermeneutic. In my introduction I laid out what value I thought a queer investigation into gay and lesbian politics in South African could offer. I argued that Queer Theory offers a different way

into analysing identity, whilst acknowledging the contribution that identity politics has made in transforming society. Following this, in my analysis of identity I have stressed that there is not one correct way for a person to be a specific gender or sexuality and the more that she or he tries to live up to what it is supposed to mean to be 'real', the more the impossibility of this task becomes apparent. In my analysis of *Male Homosexuality* and *Defiant Desire* (see Chapter 3) I show how in the early 1990s homosexuality was still illegal and, therefore, to self-identify as a more gender appropriate politicised gay or lesbian person, was seen as an act of courage and proof of the inaccuracy of negative stereotypes. My queer re-visit of these two books was guided by Carter's (2005) notion that a queer look at history "will not try and conceal the personal and political weaknesses and inconsistencies of its subjects" (116). It is for this reason that I acknowledge that at the time of writing coming out was seen to be an act of strategic defiance. However, my contribution is that the endorsement of this brand of self-identification in *Male Homosexuality* and *Defiant Desire* (which have both been instrumental in igniting gay and lesbian research in South Africa) has promoted coming out as a political imperative and above critique by the LGEP.

Such a political imperative was certainly influenced by the fact that by 2003 all homophobic laws in South Africa had been overturned and instead of fighting for rights, a space had been opened in which to reflect on rights and their link to homosexual identity. I have demonstrated how in Chapter 3, for an author such as Ken Cage, questioning this link was not a consideration because he believes in the biological truth of homosexuality. But my investigation into *Performing Queer* in the same chapter reveals that many contributors to this text interrogate what it means to be a 'real' gay or lesbian person and conclude, overwhelmingly, that there are numerous ways that homosexual identities unfold and are performed in South Africa.

The more accommodating nature of Queer Theory allowed me to tease out the contradictions and resistances that are a result of the instability of gender and sexual categories. Two of the best known examples of resistances to gender and sexual categories are drag queens and butch lesbians. When I reviewed *Defiant Desire* in Chapter 5, I found that the editors had included two chapters on how drag queens and butch lesbians in 1950s Cape Town resisted the confines of institutionalised apartheid sexual and gender categories. However, this is the last of the six books

that I analyse that includes any theorising about the role that drag queens and butch lesbians play in subverting normality. A text such as *Male Homosexuality* actually indicates shame at the association of drag queens and butch lesbians with the gay sub-culture. The authors of this text believe that being gay means to be no different to any other South African citizen. This seems to me to be to totally unrealistic (never mind undesirable): the challenges faced by gay, lesbian and queer people living in heteronormative societies are not the same as the challenges faced by people who do not deviate from sexual or gender norms.

In Chapter 4, my contribution was to offer a queer analysis of the gay marriage discourse in the South African context. Even though it is claimed by the LGEP that the Civil Union Act includes bisexual, transgender and intersex people, evidence thus far suggests that it is almost exclusively limited to the inclusion of gay and lesbian people. In this chapter I questioned whether illegitimate sexualities (e.g. unmarried partners and single people) would ever be eligible for legitimation (rights), and the evidence that I provided suggested that they will not. The reason for this is that the Civil Union Act has invalidated those few rights that unmarried partners and single gay and lesbian people had prior to the passing of the Act in 2006. The 15 rights accorded by the Civil Union Act are for legitimate (i.e. married) gay and lesbian couples only, and whilst I took cognisance of the valid argument that gay and lesbian people have historically been treated as pariahs, I argued that the price paid for the right to marry has been high.

I have also shown that the many flaws inherent in the Civil Union Act were overlooked by the LGEP in their haste to have the act passed. The LGEP (and its legal allies) fought tooth and nail to make sure that the Civil Union Act was passed in order to extinguish homophobic opposition to gay marriage from different religious and political sectors. Without a doubt the opposition to gay marriage by homophobic people and political parties was venomous and hurtful. However, I have argued that the existence of hatred against gay and lesbian people should not mean that questions cannot be asked about the role that the state plays in regulating people's lives or what it actually means to be recognised by the marriage norm. In being critical of gay marriage, I have thought about how this field has been established and have followed this with a deconstruction of this very field. From my queer point of view, I have argued that gay marriage in South Africa has come to be seen as the

epitome of the gay and lesbian fight for rights, and the more it is seen as the natural step in the progression of gay and lesbian relationships in society, the less space there is to resist it. Additionally, if the gay and lesbian married couple starts to be viewed (by heteronormative society) as the limit of the acceptance of difference, this would lead to the narrowing of the space of possibility in which the sexually unrepresentable could emerge.

The queer concept of the erotic pyramid that both Rubin and Butler refer to has been an important conceptual tool. The erotic pyramid is not a fixed or unchanging way of arranging the constant battles over sexual behaviours; its strength lies in its ability to adapt from context to context. Such a conceptual tool allowed me, in Chapter 5, to identify how homosexuality has moved up the hierarchy of sexual values in South Africa. (An example of such a promotion is Walker and Reid's (2005) argument that gay visibility is "inextricably linked to South Africa's transition to democracy" (16)). For gay and lesbian people to become more valued, the negative sexual and gender stereotypes (promiscuity, drag queens, butch lesbians) associated with homosexuality needed to be shown to exist only for a minority of people in the community. The disproving of these stereotypes usually starts with the presentation of a more conservative brand of homosexuality in the media and society, and my comparative analysis of *Male Homosexuality* and *Defiant Desire* in Chapter 5 shows how the shame of the link between sex and homosexuality is operationalised in the former and interrogated in the latter.

Adopting a queer position has enabled me to examine gay and lesbian politics in South Africa differently. But the particular South African political, social and economic context with its legacy of institutionalised inequalities in some way troubles a Queer theorising of difference which may be characterised as emanating from so called first world liberal democracies in the West. Without a doubt homophobia is present and even insidious in Western countries, however, in Chapter 1, I provide examples of the virulence of homophobia in the South African context. Such homophobic virulence resonates with the violent and oppressive legacy of apartheid. Butler (1997b) suggests that, rather than coming out, queer people should risk the "*incoherence* of identity" (260, original emphasis) as a way to fight homophobia. However, this might not be the most appropriate strategy in the South African and African contexts, especially when gay and lesbian movements have more influence

when they have more self-identified gay and lesbian people to swell their ranks. So, while many people are queerly throwing off the shackles of the confines of identity in the West, I have shown, in Chapter 1, how in the South African context, self-identifying as a lesbian has become widespread for a new generation of urban black working-class women who are aware of their right to be lesbian and who have spurned the traditional roles they are supposed to occupy in society. Also, in my analysis of the coming out narrative in Chapter 3, I have demonstrated how at the time that *Male Homosexuality* and *Defiant Desire* were written, because homosexuality was still illegal in South Africa these books aimed to raise the consciousness of people who were hiding their homosexuality. At the time this was seen to be a political necessity in order to build the fledgling gay and lesbian movement.

Another area of queer critique that has been tested concerns recognition in an African context. Queer Theorists make the point that one of the inherent weaknesses of a human rights approach in trying to make the world an equal, diverse and safe place to live in is that this approach has a limited definition of what being a human is. To be considered human a person needs to belong to an identifiable category in the matrix of intelligibility. However, the matrix is operationalised differently from context to context. So, for example, in liberal, so called first world democracies in the West where there is economic prosperity and a recent history of respecting human rights, the various grids in the matrix now have established categories. In an African context, however, there are many grids in the matrix that are under construction. One such grid is the category 'lesbian' and in my investigation of *Tommy Boys* in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, I show how being a lesbian in Africa does not necessarily mean being recognised as a human.

Future queer research in South Africa should oppose homophobia but continue to investigate those sexual and gender minorities that are hidden from view as a result of the change in the sexual landscape. Another avenue for queer research would be to try to investigate if there are any emergent queer sub-cultures or ways of being that are resisting state control by opting for alternative forms of non-state support. Finally, in the future when there is a growth in queer research in South Africa, the

focus of research could include not only those who deviate from the norm but also those who seem to continue to be immune from investigation—heterosexual men.[75]

My contribution in this thesis has been to construct another discursive horizon in the contested terrain of sexuality and difference in South Africa, while all the time being mindful of the hatred against people who are gender or sexually queer. I have argued that while not having rights leads to suffering, not being allowed to reflect on or be critical of the very notion of 'rights' can lead to doctrinaire politics. It is essential to keep a space open for critique given South Africa's oppressive past.

[75] Recent work on masculinities in South Africa is starting to address this (see Richter and Morrell 2006).

Appendix 1

The dwindling gay and lesbian sub-culture in Gauteng

In 2002 the Acting Head of Law Enforcement for the Johannesburg City Council invoked a 1979 zoning law which outlawed the operation of night life in Braamfontein.[76] The enforcement of this piece of legislation was specifically aimed at what was known as the 'Heartland'—a collection of gay bars and clubs located in renovated office blocks, houses and industrial buildings on the corners of Henri and Juta Streets. The owners of the various clubs and bars were not allowed to apply for re-zoning which was limited to shops and restaurants. Harrison (2005) goes so far as to argue that the City Council official "went on what seemed to be a crusade to shut down the [H]eartland" (49).

In the years preceding the enforcement of the legislation the Heartland had become a thriving area of queer culture. There were lesbian pool bars, leather bars, male cruise clubs, discos and rave clubs. The Heartland attracted a wide and diverse clientele, ranging from screaming queens[77] to fag hags[78] to alternative heterosexuals, from leather-men to swingers to lesbian sangomas.[79] The passing of this zoning law effectively closed down more than 12 bars and clubs in and around the Heartland and the gay and lesbian sub-culture in Johannesburg has never quite recovered.

In the ten years since the closing of the Heartland there are only ten bars and clubs that represent the gay and lesbian sub-culture in the whole of Gauteng[80] (*Mamba Online* 2012:n.p.).This sub-culture is also almost exclusively concentrated in towns like Boksburg, and in the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria (in white affluent suburbs such as Bryanston and Moreleta Park). They are marketed as gay and lesbian bars and clubs but they cater specifically to gay white males. Chris Meklis

[76] An inner city suburb of Johannesburg
[77] Over-excited, effeminate gay men
[78] Heterosexual women who enjoy the company of gay men
[79] Nguni traditional healer
[80] This is the smallest but richest province in South Africa. It includes the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria.

(2010), a journalist for *Exit*, the oldest gay newspaper in South Africa, acknowledges the continued loss of queer space in Johannesburg: [81]

> Seems like places like Factory and Rec Room [Steam Bath] are the only venues that are holding onto Joburg's Gay nightlife like tenacious terriers would a flighty criminal (10).

At the time of the passing of the zoning law that shut down the Heartland, City officials argued that it was not aimed at gay people, who had been legal citizens for eight years by then. They emphasised that they were targeting problems associated with drug peddlers' contesting territory in the area and the fact that the clubs' tables and chairs and a palisade fence extended onto the pavement and therefore infringed the rights of pedestrians during the day. This law, they argued, was not homophobic, but was, rather, aimed at controlling the escalation of unregulated businesses which was leading to the deterioration of the Braamfontein area. A rumour that circulated at the time was that the cleanup of Braamfontein was linked to efforts to attract development investment.[82]

It is worth considering whether there was any opposition to the impending closure of the Heartland in 2002. At the time the gay and lesbian rights movement acknowledged that the loss of gay space in the inner city was problematic, but was focused on their mammoth battle with the state to get gay marriage legalised. However, there was a motley collection of queers and sexual dissidents who were outraged about the pending closure of the Heartland who made their protest known through blogs, postings in chat rooms, letters to gay newspapers and through various other social networks, as the extract below illustrates.

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[81] The situation in Cape Town is very different where queer culture seems to be thriving (*Mamba Online* 2012:n.p.). In 1994 Gevisser and Cameron argued that the Western Cape had the largest but least explored queer society in South Africa. Future queer research could investigate and compare queer cultures in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

[82] A rumour that, perhaps, turned out to be true if a 2006 press release by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council is to be believed:

> Just four years after the City of Jo'burg identified the inner city's need for regeneration, Braamfontein is enjoying the results of this programme, according to business. Investors have moved into the area, buying up buildings and converting them into rental accommodation. Businesses are sprucing up buildings in the area and shops are staying open longer because of customer demand. Sappi, SAB Miller, Liberty Life, JD Group and Wits—all based in Braamfontein—contributed R300m towards upgrading the area (*Johannesburg Discussion Online* 2010:n.p.).

> **Phunked up:** I am willing to bet a large sum of money that there are things behind the scenes at council that are not public knowledge and they have a hidden agenda linked to development investment. GASS[83] has been around for FIVE years now…it is not as if they are some new upstart club…The whole thing stinks!
>
> **Josh:** I 100% agree…you'd think people had better things to do than telling someone off about a fence that is a little too far onto the pavement…Where's the petition?
>
> **Trancy:** Have been to GASS a number of times in the last three years and have thoroughly enjoyed myself. Although not gay I was always made to feel welcome in the club!!!
>
> (*Mio Online* 2010: n.p.)

Berlant and M. Warner (1998) refer to the re-zoning of inner city spaces (in an American context) where queer culture tends to thrive as "sexual purification" and say that "sexual purification[s]" are a way of ensuring that the values associated with naturalised heterosexuality continue to be those that are the most valued and aspired to in society" (552). Is it worth considering whether the forced closure of the Heartland is an example of sexual purification in the South African context?

On the 20 May 2011 I took the pictures below of what used to be the Heartland. It has been ten years since the zoning law was passed that effectively closed down the Heartland and it is evident that this area has not been re-developed or changed at all.





[83] A gay rave club in the Heartland





Perhaps the crumbling and decaying remnants of the once vibrant Heartland function as reminders of what happens to those sub-cultures that do not toe the line. In the American context, Berlant and M.Warner (1998) argue that the influence of an assimilationist politics in the gay and lesbian movement has led to the emergence of "respectable gays" (563). Respectable gays, they explain" [l]ike to think that they owe nothing to the sexual sub-culture they think of as sleazy" (563) and they provide evidence of how public queer sexual culture has "wither[ed] on the vine" (563) in New York. I can only but contemplate whether this has happened in Gauteng.

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