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Negotiating the Gendered Representations of Sexualities through Critical Literacy

by

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Chapter One: **Introduction**

1.1 Background

Caster Semenya is one of South Africa's great athletes. Having participated in the Olympic Games, she has received much media coverage. Unfortunately, this has not necessarily been a good thing. Semenya's biological sex was publically called into question because of her high testosterone levels and record-breaking running times. This meant that she was forced into gender testing and hormone treatment, which we will see is problematic in the evaluation of biological sex.

However, let us begin with some context: In 2009, Caster Semenya participated in the Olympic Games in athletics. However, because of her gender nonconformity to traditional performances of femininity – identified by her muscular physique, flat-chestedness, and tightly-braided hair (Greenfield, 2012) – Semenya was put under the spotlight as Other to the extent that the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federation) required that she undergo 'gender testing'. The media spread the word of this across international forums and uproar emerged from two sides: athletes were outraged at athletic standards and the allowance of a nonconforming female to participate in women's sports on one hand, while on the other hand communities around the world were outraged at the sensationalised and insensitive coverage of a sportsperson's personal identity. Texts everywhere emerged with Caster Semenya's name on it; many titled in derogatory or crass ways:

Is Female Track Star a Man? No Simple Answer by Harrell (2009);

World Athletics: Caster Semenya tests 'show high testosterone levels' by Hart (2009);

Caster gets made over by Ndebele (2009);

Caster Semenya, forced to take gender test, is a woman ... and a man by Yaniv (2009).

Again, however, some did support Semenya and criticise the actions and methods of policing sex and gender in sports:

> *Feminine masculinities, masculine femininities* by Schuhmann (2009);
>
> *We celebrate otherness today: But tomorrow we'll be back to 'curing' lesbians by raping them* by Lowe Morna (2009).

And, with these arguments running rife in the public arena, it seems that we forgot that young Caster Semenya herself was actually a person, and not a thing.

In an online article from theatlanticwire.com, *Runner Caster Semenya Looks a Lot More Feminine Than She Did in 2009* (Greenfield, 2012), Semenya was analysed. Her physical appearance and some of her behaviour was compared over time. Between 2009 and 2012, Semenya underwent hormone treatment to address athletics institutions' concerns about her biological sex. However, in that same time, her ways of performing gender had also been actively changed through 'make-overs' and 'style fix-ups' (see *Caster gets made over* in *The Times* newspaper, Ndebele, 8 Sept, 2009). This kind of gender policing in the public domain shows how the categories of sex, gender and even sexuality are constantly maintained and reproduced by the reassertion of traditional, normative representations.

The policing of how Semenya did biological sex was met with verbal remarks on her anatomical form. Initially, discriminatory remarks were handed out to Semenya by other runners:

> These kind of people should not run with us. For me, she's not a woman. She's a man (Elisa Cusma in Greenfield, 2012);

And even formal critics:

> *The New Yorker's* Ariel Levy called Semenya "breathtakingly butch" in a profile of the runner. 'Her torso is like the chest plate on a suit of armor. She has a strong jawline, and a build that slides straight from her ribs to her hips,' Levy wrote... (in Greenfield, 2012).

We, the public along with other audiences of athletics, were observing bodies to see whether Semenya would do biological sex 'correctly'. But, because the body can only do biological sex anatomically we turn to the socio-cultural constructs of how to do gender in order to judge and regulate how people really embody their sex. The extent of our observations, however, becomes disturbing sometimes:

> "She wears a tight turquoise polo over her fit, feminine body. Relaxed, poised and, it must be said, pretty, the young woman with an irresistible smile is almost unrecognizable from photographs taken during the height of the controversy," she writes. And, indeed, her face has gotten rounder, hair longer and figure curvier, *as you can see below* (emphasis added: Findley as cited in Greenfield, 2009, no page number).

The line 'as you can see below' emphasised in this extract refers to a set of images that have been used to compare Semenya's femininity between 2009 and 2012:



Figure 1.1: *Caster Semenya in 2009 and again in 2012* (Greenfield, 2012)

A description of Semenya's choice of dress moves without fault or consideration into a description of her 'fit, feminine body'. Here, it is Semenya's anatomical structure, and how it has changed due to hormone treatment that is regarded as a performance of gender and not sex. The images provided by the article are drawn on as evidence for this understanding of sex and gender.

Greenfield's (2012) article does not stop there, however. Instead, image 1 is reproduced with some additions later in the text:



Figure 1.2: *Caster Semenya Annotated* (Greenfield, 2012)

The commentary that is presented throughout the article is then applied to the second image as annotations in red. It identifies, very much like a biology textbook, the characteristics of being "breathtakingly butch" (Levy in Greenfield, 2012, no page number) in 2009 and the changes since then. However, is this just another Sarah Baartman exercise that objectifies the body of African women and disguises it as authentic study? By marking the changes in this way, the article presents Semenya as an object for study, a biological abnormality or anomaly, reverting back to the discourses of Othering that we found in 2009. And the question still remains, to what extent is normative gender performance a prerequisite for participation in sports?

Even though the issue of hormone levels and the advantages that that could bring to competitive athletes might be argued as an area worth investigating, this brings to the forefront a concern for sexed identity: identity in relation to accepted notions of male and female. This is not unproblematic, especially because sporting institutions and regulatory federations still see sex as a binary which excludes

intersexed identities. It still sees female athletes as lesser copies in an authentic and original male activity.

In an article by Schuhmann (2009), this gendered take on sports is criticised because of its narrowed views of both sex and gender identities. In this article, Schuhmann (2009) refers to other gender-subversive sportspeople; namely Serena and Venus Williams whose athletic body-shapes are not particularly feminine either, but who do femininity in their dress during tennis matches and formal sporting events in more socially acceptable ways. Similarly, we could consider the biological advantage of wingspan for Olympic swimmer and American Michael Phelps, whose arms span lengths greater than average male swimmers. Phelps' media coverage represents him as an American hero (see Stewart's, 2013, *Michael Phelps Second Most Influential Athlete in United States*) despite his biological advantage for swimming. Schuhmann (2009, 22) rationalises this kind of inequitable representation as emerging from

> [a] narrow understanding of the diversity within femininities and masculinities [that] haunts both South Africa and the world.

Our understanding of sex and gender thus needs to broaden into something that includes intersexed identities, the biological diversity of both male and female identities (Paechter, 1998) as well diversity in gender performance. We also need to be very careful not to confuse or conflate these.

In another instance, the sex and gender conflation is taken even further seemingly to necessitate a particular sexual orientation (henceforth encompassed by the term sexuality):

> In case you missed it, the men's magazine Maxim has launched a campaign against 'mantropy' (the feminizing, or metro-sexualisation, of men) and called for a return to macho values. Apparently, men have had enough of images of hairless footballers, and long to get back to

> fermenting their socks behind the sofa, washing their hair with dishwashing liquid and blowing all their money on sound systems (*Dad's not gay, he's ecstatic*, in *Sunday Times*, July 24, 2005; in OBE Panel, 2007; cited in Govender, 2011, 74).

The article, *Dad's not gay, he's ecstatic*, was used by *English First Language: Grade 12* (OBE Panel, 2007), an English (home Language) Further Education and Training (FET) textbook as part of a summary task. This means that only read-recall and grammar questions were asked of the article, despite its content that deals with gender and sexuality. The article (even when located in a textbook activity) comes across as a simple, everyday text without any need for probing about the issues that it actually presents on how men 'should' act out their gender in particular ways. Any other way of behaving, dressing, thinking, speaking or being is in dire need of fixing. Like Semenya, the men who exhibit the symptoms of mantropy need to be re-evaluated according to social norms and made-over.

The above extract draws for its readers a picture of traditional masculinity ("macho values") as being threatened by metrosexual men and "gay dads" (OBE Panel, 2007, 56-57). Without actually confronting the patriarchal and heteronormative values inherent in this article, this textbook activity reproduces the problematic binaries that often conflate sex and gender, and then gender and sexuality. That is, through representation patriarchal and heteronormative values are empowered by the article in its active argument for "a return to macho values" (OBE Panel, 2007, 56, cited in Govender, 2011, 74), while "mantropy" is disempowered by being represented as different from the values and gender enactments of real 'men'.

The way people do gender, firstly in terms of it being correct in relation to one's biological sex, can then be read to assume one's sexuality. But, does male femininity really indicate homosexuality? Are all masculine men heterosexual? Are

all lesbians masculine or trying to be men? How is heterosexuality made compulsory and 'normal'? How are representations of sexuality allowing us to conflate sex, gender and sexuality in order to reproduce and maintain patriarchal and heteronormative order – and furthermore, to justify the 'fixing' or 'correction' of any deviances that might occur in communities of gender and sexual minorities?

Most troubling are the social effects of reproducing and maintaining systems of patriarchy and heteronormativity. Homophobia, transphobia and sexism are the products of such hegemonic orders. Through repetitive representation normativity can be established, and when those constructions are transposed into real-life situations conflict can arise. From homophobic pejoratives (Thurlow, 2001; McCarl Nielsen et al., 2000) on the street and in the classroom, to acts of outright violence that sometimes makes its way into public media, such as in *'Masculinising' Camp Owner on Trial for Murder* (mambaonline.com retrieved 26/04/2013). From symbolic to physical violence, homophobic responses to sex, gender and sexual deviation still run rife, despite policy and constitutional rights.

That is, even in the presence of South Africa's Bill of Rights, as found in the national Constitution, discrimination on the basis of sex, gender and sexuality continue to exist at ground level. This continuum of violence, from subtle and psychological to more outright and physical, still emerges despite South Africa's long-running Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) movements. Running alongside and through South Africa's major anti-apartheid political party, the African National Congress (ANC), LGBTI movements in the 1980's such as the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) and later the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW) managed to emerge despite the yoke of 'Christian Nationalist' values (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Nkoli, 1994). After

Simon Nkoli's coming-out and his acquittal from imprisonment because of his alleged involvement in the Delmas trial of 1986 and the eventual unbanning of the anti-apartheid liberation movements in 1990 (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Nkoli, 1994; Retief, 1994), LGBTI issues became known to the ANC as yet another area of discrimination that needed addressing. Sexual orientation, then, became formally legislated as part of South Africa's Bill of Rights after our first democratic election in 1994:

> 3. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
> 4. No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination. (The South African Constitution (Chapter 2: Bill of Rights) Retrieved 26/06/2013 from http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/96cons2.htm).

Neither the state nor any individual citizen may discriminate on the basis of gender or sexual orientation (South African Constitution, Chapter 2: Bill of Rights, section 9: Equality, points 3 and 4). What is further impressive of South African history in relation to LGBTI issues, is also former president Nelson Mandela's inclusion of sexual orientation in his inaugural speech in Cape Town, on 9 May, 1994 (retrieved 26/06/2013 from and available on www.info.gov.za/speeches). The recognition of both gender and sexual orientation as identities worth protecting made South Africa's constitution one of the most progressive in the world.

It is, therefore, possible to reread the apartheid era and South Africa's liberation from that regime in a completely new light. From Gevisser and Cameron's (1994) *Defiant Desire* (and its collection of South African authors) to Tucker's (2009)

Queer Visibilities: Space, Identity and Interaction in Cape Town, we can see that apartheid was about segregation and oppression along many lines - including race, class and sexuality - individually and as intersecting with each other. Apartheid, then,

> legislated who we were, what work we could do, where we could live, who we could associate with, what we could read and see and what kind of sex we could have (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994, 5).

But, the interaction between race and sexuality, and the constitutional liberation from the oppression associated with this, reveals the dynamics of sex, gender and sexuality in current South African societies. The question that remains, however, is why non-heterosexual gender and sexual identities "continue to be seen as frivolous and 'un-African'" (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994, 4), and how this can be addressed in schools.

In present day South African schools, reports of homophobic violence still make it onto public media forums. Even with South Africans' unfortunate reputation for not reporting violence, stories of bullying on the basis of gender and sexuality still persist. This implies a deeper problem regarding gender and sexuality in schools, which could be compounded if race, class, age and geographical region are also taken into consideration. One of the most striking articles is called *Teachers Never Intervened – homophobia in South African schools* (Judge, 2007, retrieved 20/06/2013 from www.tigweb.org). Here, the reflections of gay and lesbian learners, now adults, reveal the emotional and sometimes physical danger that they, as learners, faced. From being bullied by other learners to being discriminated against by teachers, learners who are gay, lesbian or even just perceived to be so are forced to endure varying forms of violence because of teachers' lack of intervention – or their lack of confidence and knowledge to intervene. This is evidenced by a range of

studies on gay and lesbian identities, and homophobia, in schooling and teacher education: see Richardson's (2004 and 2008) work with student-teachers in an elective course at the University of the Witwatersrand, Bhana's (2012) research on teachers' perspectives of homophobia in South African schools, as well as a range of studies on teacher education, homophobia/heterosexism and the South African context, amongst others (2011, 2014 and Francis and Msibi, 2012).

Therefore, besides textbooks being a possible area of concern for the representation of sex, gender and sexuality (see my discussion on Govender, 2011, on page 6), how we dress and behave is also related to how we represent our bodies and sense of personal identity. Unfortunately, when we represent our bodies and identities in ways that do not match socio-cultural norms, we can be met with discrimination and (threats of) violence. In schools, we need to consider the role of the teacher as well as the schooling system itself in terms of how sex, gender and sexuality are normalised, policed and maintained as well as how we deal with subversions of these identities by other teachers, parents and learners. What are the social actions teachers can take – pre-emptive of actual discrimination – and what are the social repercussions of taking, or not taking, social action in schools? As we will see in my discussion of my theoretical framework, this is where a critical literacy approach to teaching and learning for social awareness and transformation becomes an imperative.

Do learners, parents and teachers know and understand the state protection afforded to sexually diverse people? Do we feel a sense of responsibility when learners, parents and teachers are discriminated against because of actual or even perceived sexual identity? And, what are the tools that could be used in schools to teach towards developing a human rights agenda and social transformation?

Because “[s]o much of South Africa’s past is based on different communities’ perceptions of themselves in relation to other, often neighbouring communities” (Tucker, 2009, 3), this both raises and complicates the question of how to teach in order to explore how the stigmatisation of difference has became normalised and institutionalised, and what possibilities exist outside of those normative differences in education.

1.2 Research Aims

While previous studies have been conducted on how pre-service and in-service teachers respond to and (dis)engage themselves from issues related to sex, gender and sexuality (Richardson, 2008 and 2004; Francis and Msibi, 2001), they have tended to take place only in elective courses in higher education. This means that the participants of these studies actively chose to engage with issues related to sex, gender and sexuality in education. It would be safe to assume, then, that these participants would also have had some personal or occupational investment or interest in choosing to study these topics. It is true that these studies yield important findings and that these in turn yield important insights on the role of education in tackling the scourge of homophobia, transphobia, sexism and heterosexism in South African schools. A great deal has been said about socially just pedagogies and their effects in higher education classrooms with in-service and pre-service teachers.

What needs to be explored now is how the controversial topics of sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them could be introduced to a more mainstream course in teacher education. Therefore, this study works with pre-service teachers studying English in education. Rather than introducing the topics of sex, gender and sexuality as an elective course or module, these English students

are required to complete a compulsory critical literacy course. The conflations in the representations of sex, gender and sexuality are used as one example out of many possible examples of engaging with a sensitive topic in the classroom.

Furthermore, the field of critical literacy has thus far, to my knowledge, not engaged with the conflations in the representations of sex, gender, sexuality. Previous studies on masculinities (Martino, 1995; Young, 2000 and 2001; Davies, 1997) and gendered narratives (2004) have tended to focus on gender and identity in classrooms. Even Vasquez's (2008) work touches on issues of gender only as they emerged in her kindergarten classroom. As such, it becomes important to investigate the usefulness of a critical literacy approach for addressing the persistent homophobia, sexism, transphobia and heterosexism that permeate South African contexts. Through this study I intend to test the waters of a critical and socially just education with pre-service teachers.

This study thus begins by examining the development and implementation of an educational workbook for teacher education as related to issues of sex, gender and sexuality and how, through normative representation, these are generally conflated. To do this, I co-teach a course on critical literacy using the workbook I have designed (to be discussed later) as a means for deconstructing patriarchal and heteronormative order. This should allow me to consider the possibilities for teacher education in practice, and state schooling and education more generally. That is, how do particpants react to social constructions of and the social responses to male, female and intersexed sexes, feminine, androgynous and masculine gender performances, and the diversity of sexual identities in South Africa (which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality) in the schooling system.

In order to explore how gendered representations of sexualities could be dealt with in a more inclusive manner, I have developed a workbook, henceforth referred to as 'the workbook', using critical literacy as an approach to deconstructing and redesigning texts. It has been designed for and implemented in a Bachelor of Education's critical literacy course and is aimed at getting pre-service teachers to deconstruct gender as a social and cultural construct and sexual identity as being more diverse than the dominant heterosexuality. Using a series of text-based-activities and a collection of texts for analysis, the workbook requires that its readers engage with everyday texts and their positioning power in maintaining the heterosexual centre while marginalising or excluding other minority sexual identities (such as homosexual and bisexual identities). Similarly, gender will be addressed as socially constructed and different from biological sex because of the diversity of gender identities that actually exist (which includes varieties of masculine and feminine, as well as transgender and intersex identities). The main purpose, then, is to create an awareness of how heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgender and intersexed identities work and the power relations that exist between them by teasing out the naturalised gender performances (Butler, 1993) behind the ways in which we view these different sexual identities and regularly conflate them with gender itself.

To begin understanding the possibility, or impossibility, of this, my study looks first at pre-service teachers and their training. In order to teach learners about the conventionally controversial activity of putting representations of gender and, furthermore, sexuality under dispute, teachers need to have dealt with these issues themselves before stepping into the classroom. Therefore, my study is interested in developing a critical understanding of pre-service teachers' responses to activities on

the deconstruction of gender and sexuality in a critical literacy course, the extent to which they would be comfortable deconstructing gender and sexuality in their own future classrooms, and to what extent a critical literacy approach to teaching might enable these teachers to deal with a topic that is generally out of people's comfort zones.

I am therefore concerned with the kinds of responses that these pre-service teachers give me during the classes that involve the workbook. What language do these pre-service teachers use when speaking about gender and sexuality? What language do they curb? How do they participate in class and engage with (or disengage themselves from) the activities and topics at hand? These questions, and more that develop throughout the study, may give an indication of, one, how gender and sexuality is already conceived of by the participants and, two, what potentials exist in the realms of educational materials design and critical literacy for engaging with the gendered representation of sexuality in schools.

However, this study does not exist in a vacuum and, therefore, also considers the issues of how my workbook and its site of implementation function within hegemonic and heteronormative power structures through a critical reflection. This means that I will not only look at how the pre-service teachers respond to my workbook through their engagement (participation and resistance) with the activities, but also at how my workbook is a positioned and positioning textual and pedagogical construction in itself.

Furthermore, I am interested in how these students might also design activities on sexuality based on the course content and their own comfort with teaching controversial issues. As part of the assessment for the critical literacy course, students are required to design and produce their own materials, using a

critical literacy approach, to teach about an aspect or issue related to sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them. These materials, then, become data that can be analysed to ascertain whether or not this approach is useful for confronting controversial issues and difficult conversations in classrooms, as well as the possibilities for including issues of sex, gender and sexuality in school-based materials.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to begin *Negotiating the Gendered Representations of Sexualities through Critical Literacy,* the following underpinning research questions need to be considered:

1. Using theories of critical literacy, gender, and sexuality to develop a "critically aware" educational workbook on the topic of gender and sexuality for pre-service teachers doing a course in critical literacy, what are the issues involved in producing educational materials on a controversial topic? And what does a critical reflection of the design process reveal about what decisions I make about what is included and excluded, who the text serves, and what socio-cultural and political ideologies influence the production of the workbook?;
2. What are the observable effects of the workbook during implementation in a critical literacy course for pre-service Bachelor of Education students? What verbal responses do these student teachers give when and after they interact with the workbook and its content? And, what written feedback is given by the pre-service teachers through their use of critical literacy in designing their own worksheets on sexuality?; and

3. What do the design process and pre-service teachers' responses reveal about the possibilities for disrupting gendered representations of sexualities in South African schools?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

My theoretical framework seeks to unite three major fields of study: 2.1 Antonio Gramsci's hegemony and, 2.2, its applications to understanding sex, gender and sexuality; 2.3 critical theories of gender performance and sexual identity and the issues of sex, gender and sexuality in South African contexts; and, 2.4, the critical theory related to issues of representation, critical literacy and pedagogy. Through this framework, I hope to develop a deep understanding of how power works to construct our identities as well as enable us to construct our own and each others' identities in very particular ways. And while identity is a vast topic, made of a myriad of issues, the concern here is with the gendered representations of sexuality as emerging from the common conflations of sex, gender and sexuality.

2.1 Hegemony

On 8 November 1926, Antonio Gramsci was arrested for his vivid participation in socialist, communist and anti-fascist movements in Italy (Gramsci, 1975/1992; Jones, 2006). It was during this imprisonment that Gramsci wrote some 3000 notebook entries that built up to the theory of *hegemony* in his *Prison Notebooks*, edited with an introduction by J. A. Buttigieg (1992). These notebooks were never published by Gramsci himself, but were collected, collated and even translated post-mortem. Some entries are longer than others, and some are even incomplete. However,

> what makes the *Notebooks* among the most important and moving documents of the twentieth century is precisely their immediacy, their sense of *not* being disinterested but of transcending the confines of prison, of reaching beyond the failure of socialism and the triumph of fascism, to understand a contemporary situation and to remake it. Thus, the very different scraps of synthesis and analysis in the *Notebooks* –

> about intellectuals, language and linguistics, about literature and folklore, the Southern Question and the Risorgimento, about 'Americanism', 'Fordism' and most insistently hegemony – build towards a major understanding of power and meaning in the countries of advanced capitalism (emphasis in original text: Jones, 2006, 25).

It becomes useful to quote in length from Jone's (2006) *Antonio Gramsci*, a publication on the life and theoretical work of Gramsci, because it illuminates the extent to which Gramsci's notes have impacted the ways in which we think about power in its various forms and the ways in which to resist and transform it.

From his Marx and Leninist roots, Gramsci's thoughts during a time of military action and political upheaval in Italy, which eventually expanded into Italy's involvement in World War II, revealed a new way of understanding power, oppression and resistance in relation to culture and the subaltern population that is being dominated (Gramsci, 1975/1992; Jones, 2006).

My discussion of Gramsci draws, primarily, on his theory of hegemony whilst looking briefly at the roles of *civil society* and *common sense*. I look at how power is constructed and reconstructed through normative representation in behaviour, sexual and social relations and the everyday to reproduce and maintain particular dominant groups and values. What are the 'normal' conceptions of sex, gender and sexuality, and how can we transform and extend these ideas to disrupt the norm in educational settings?

Let us explore this through a scenario: When Simon Nkoli came out as gay to his prison-mates and anti-apartheid comrades in the mid-1980's, he defied the hegemonic definitions of black, male activist in relation to masculinity. While imprisoned and awaiting trial for alleged involvement in the Delmas Treason, his fellow prison-mates began to use the separatist language of the time to distance themselves from Nkoli:

> The arguments against me were that homosexuality was not African; that we cannot accept to be led by a gay person; and that I had been dishonest by hiding this vital information (Nkoli, 1994, 253).

This fragmentation seemed to be a kind of upholding of the hegemonic masculinity of the time: that homosexuality isn't African, but an imperialistic European thing that was brought to Africa with colonialism – a by-product of racial and cultural oppression. But, this meant that Nkoli's sexuality was not just a defiance against normative sexual order, but a defiance against African racial and cultural identity as well. His relationship with a white man suddenly compounded his abuse:

> 'Why do you like fucking white men?' he [a policeman involved with torture and interrogation at John Vorster Square] asked. 'What have they done to you? Why don't you have sex with your own people?' (Nkoli, 1994, 254).

The dominant discourse of the apartheid era was that of separatism: from the more apparent and widely known discrimination and oppression of racial/ethinic, cultural and linguistic difference, to the more subtle but no less oppressive policing of gender and sexuality. The ideas of how to do race, culture, gender and sexuality were defined in the big-P politics (Janks, 2010a) of legislation down to the little-p politics (Janks, 2010a) of everyday life amongst South African citizens (Retief, 1994; Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2009; Bhana, Morrell, Hearn and Moletsane, 2007). The fact that this discourse and way of thinking still persists today shows the far-reaching effects of any apartheid-esque ideology. We still declare our race on insurance applications and define sex, gender and sexuality according to ethnic backgrounds.

Power, then, is about more than just overt dominance of one group/ person/ organisation/ political party over another. It is more than just coercion, although this is

still a definite instrument for getting and maintaining power. Instead, power can work in more subtle and convincing ways.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony does just this. It considers how power is established by first 'leading' and then 'ruling' (1975/1996, 32). In 'leading', the dominating group begins to align itself with the values, morals and beliefs of the group that is to be dominated. We see this in political campaigns and the marketing of celebritydom, where people of power speak of religion and humble cultural upbringings to sell their personalities through mass media and rhetoric. It is an adoption of popular ideology: there is a

> material organization meant to preserve, defend, and develop the theoretical or ideological 'front'. Its most notable and dynamic part is the press in general: publishing houses (which have an implicit and explicit program and support a particular current); political newspapers; reviews of every kind – scientific, literary, philological, popular, etc.; various periodicals, including even parish bulletins (original parenthesis: Gramsci, 1975/1996, 52-53).

Such leadership creates for the general population a sense of belonging and connection with powerful people or institutions. We see them as role models, upholding the values of the common people (Gramsci's subaltern) and therefore, assumedly, holding the needs of the common people as a priority. However, as Gramsci mentions, this is a front, a facade of sorts that convinces the subaltern that those in power are serving a unified people – as nation, as pop-cultural group, as religious movement, or as liberation party.

Values, however, can be quite abstract and are not by themselves wholly convincing. We, the subaltern, the common people, need the concrete argument of materiality. Through mass media representation (Gramsci, 1975/1992, mentions the 'press'), we see, hear and feel the dominating group taking on the values of the

subaltern. They home the homeless, eat the food of the common folk and participate in cultural festivals; all in the presence of the press. Gaining and maintaining power, then, comes with a level of consent from the population that is to be ruled, and that "the maintenance of that consent is dependent upon the incessant repositioning of the relationship between rulers and ruled [...] It must be able to reach into the minds and lives of its subordinates, exercising its power as what appears to be a free expression of their own interests and desires" (Jones, 2006, 3-4). Anti-same-sex marriage movements in the United States of America are convincing to those that follow them because of their alignment with religion, tradition and American 'family values'. Any arguments for resisting the legalisation of same-sex marriage in such contexts therefore draw on popular belief and selective religious extracts in order to fit neatly within the existing ideologies of the populace.

The existence of these movements has permeated into family life, work spaces and school classrooms: From whole lessons on the racial and cultural differences between people in South Africa, to bench signs which allocated waiting areas for different races at bus stops and parks. And, from life orientation classes on socially appropriate ways of doing gender, to binary differences of gender through the mere colour differences of 1-pound (pink) and 10-pound (black) gym weights. These are the spaces of *civil society* where the ideas of the ruling group "need to be embedded through cultural institutions and practices that appear to be independent of politics" (Jones, 2006, 7), and so, seem part-and-parcel of everyday life.

Using Marx's concept of the *base-superstructure*, Antonio Gramsci argues that the base of any society forms civil society (Jones, 2006). However, in order to come to terms with the power of civil society, it is useful to understand how Gramsci

distinguishes between *structure* and *superstructure* first. He uses the analogy of an orchestra to discuss these differences and the complexities bound to them:

> Structure is confused with 'material structure' in general, and 'technical instrument' is confused with every material instrument, etc., so that in the end the development of a particular art is attributed to the development of those specific instruments through which whole artistic expressions enter the public domain and can be reproduced (Gramsci, 1975/1996, 153).

The question here, then, is what constitutes a *superstructure*? Is the orchestra the domain from whence power emerges; or, does this power emerge from the musical instruments that make up the orchestra itself? What we need to understand here is that while the instruments that allow the music to 'enter the public domain' do have a relationship to power, they are not themselves the domain of power. Instead, a *superstructure*, in this case viewed as the orchestral party, composes relations of power. They produce the idea. Similarly, governments create frameworks for how society can be envisioned. They embody, at least they aim to, a kind of national constitution and legal being. However, the social *structures* of schools, hospitals, legal courts and the press are instrumental to making that superstructure-idea apparent to the general public. Social institutions become the instruments of power and for Gramsci, these instruments, or material structures, are what make civil society.

As an institution of civil society, education, and the school, are public spaces within which hegemonic ideals work. Learners are socialised implicitly and explicitly into conforming to social norms (Bhana, 2012; Msibi, 2012a). In simple terms, those who deviate are punished in various ways, and those who strive to embody the ideals of society are rewarded. This makes the school an unsuspecting building for the reproduction and maintenance of power relations. Explicitly, the national curriculum

of South Africa, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) stipulates what is to be taught in every grade for every learning area. Teachers are required to follow the policy document in order to standardise education across South Africa. Power, however, works implicitly in two ways: On the first hand, the document itself prescribes socialisation in very particular ways.

> The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 aims to produce learners that are able to:
>
> - identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
> - work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team;
> - organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
> - collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
> - communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;
> - use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
> - demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation (CAPS, 2011, 5).

These criteria for measuring appropriate and successful learners are further based on a set of ideological criteria, based on human rights, which is defined by the South African Constitution. Following the history of South Africa's anti-apartheid liberation movements and post-apartheid democratic government, the hegemonic ideals of the CAPS (2011) document are seemingly progressive.

Using South Africa's constitution as a moral yardstick for educational practice is not necessarily problematic when we consider that it is one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. However, the exclusion of *diverse sexual identities* in the CAPS (2011) policy document for learning areas such as life orientation and English (Home Language) is still problematic, as there are specified sections of the curriculums that deal with gender and sexuality. In addition to being patriarchal, education remains heteronormative (Bhana, 2012; Sumara and Davis, 2015; Msibi, 2012a) despite the fact that sexual orientation appears in the national constitution as an identity worth protecting by law (The South African Constitution (Chapter 2: Bill of Rights), retrieved 26/06/2013 from www.info.gov.za).

The problem here, however, is how to account for gaps between legal structures, such as the national constitution of South Africa, and the tools of civil society, such as educational materials. Where chapter two of the Bill of Rights (The South African Constitution (Chapter 2: Bill of Rights), retrieved 26/06/2013 from www.info.gov.za) recognises the equal protection of people of diverse sexual orientations under constitutional law, education curriculum documents and some educational materials do not perpetuate this ideal in schools (see page 23 for the extract from the CAPS, 2011, document). Here, political society, explained by Jones (2006, 50) "as the set of apparatuses which *legally* enforce discipline on those groups who do not give their consent" (emphasis added) does not intervene when policy is disregarded by education, an instrument of civil society.

Gramsci might explain this lapse between civil and political society in South Africa as the people resisting the value (or human right) stated in the constitution of our time. The value of equality on the basis of sexual diversity does not necessarily resonate with the racial and cultural ideals of many South African citizens:

homosexuality has been argued to be ‘un-African’ (Nkoli, 1994; Gevisser and Cameron, 1994), and homosexual behaviour considered to be anti-Christian, and more generally anti-religious, among various racial groups (Retief, 1994). There is a disjuncture between policy and the subaltern.

However, and furthermore, the ignorance surrounding issues of sexual diversity can also be attributed to silence and marginalisation. While gay and lesbian people and couples are somewhat more visible in media than they were, say, 50 years ago, it would seem that there is a lot of educational work still to be done (I will discuss this under the section on representation and pedagogy in this chapter). The inclusion of sexual orientation, and therefore, sexual diversity, in the South African constitution could be attributed to those values that South Africa’s political hegemony used to hold. As we will see, hegemony shifts and changes form, and so although the human right is stated officially, there are not necessarily any means for upholding that human right amongst the people – there is no value attributed to that human right.

On the other hand, schools and teachers implicitly socialise learners through the hidden curriculum: from separating boys and girls during assembly and defining sports for each biological sex, to educational materials that represent binary forms of gender under heteronormative and patriarchal assumptions.

A previous study on whether South African (government-approved) Further Education and Training (FET) textbooks were adopting a critical literacy approach, and if they were themselves critically aware of their uses of texts, provided an indication that problematic, normative ideologies are still not necessarily being addressed in some schools’ educational materials (Govender, 2011). While this previous study considered issues around gender and sexuality (as dealt with by the

textbooks considered in that project) as well as representations of Eurocentric versus Afrocentric uses of English, it was found that the activity on gender and sexuality in particular excluded any critical questioning. Here the idea of critical questioning involves picking out the social and political issues of power that are present in texts (Janks, 1993; Fairclough, 1989) by considering the choices that go into representing different groups, communities, and individuals. This form of questioning is pertinent for the unpacking of texts that serve to position readers in particular ways.

According to Govender (2011), the analysed textbook activity constructed gay men, metrosexual men, what has commonly been called 'gay-acting' men ("gay dads") and the women who marry gay dads from a patriarchal and heteronormative perspective. Traditionally male-gendered identities - which included participation in sports, shaving practices and ways of being 'macho' - were actively empowered, while other male identities - which included an interest in cosmetics and personal care and child-care - were seen as medically symptomatic of a failing sense of masculinity. The fact that there was a lack of critical questioning that resisted these constructions reinforced these gender stereotypes as natural and *common sense*. This further implicated the article and the activity based on it in the misrepresentation of the diversity that comes with how people do gender and identify with diverse sexualities. Some educational materials, it would seem, function to (re)produce heteronormative and patriarchal conceptions of gender categories, gender relations and sexualities through the texts they include and the ways in which their activities get learners to interact with those texts. Educational materials, then, can be considered one textual manifestation of dominant socio-cultural ideals on gender and sexuality, and the conflation of gender, biological sex and sexuality.

To understand the impact that everyday texts and representations have on learners, we need to come to grips with Gramsci's notion of common sense. We need to consider how in aspects of our personal lives, such as in the classroom, "ruling values seem most natural and therefore unchangeable" (Jones, 2006, 32).

To think about common sense, then, is to think of the everyday knowledge of different social groups. These are the things taken for granted, and which appear 'true' and 'natural'. They just are. However,

> [w]e should not confuse Gramsci's notion of common sense with its normal use in English. Gramsci emphatically does not conceive of common sense as practical wisdom that contradicts theorizing or dogma. Instead it is literally thought that is common – common to a social group, or common to society as a whole (Jones, 2006, 54).

It seems, then, that common sense has a significant relationship with the values and beliefs of subaltern classes. As an Indian-South African of Hindu upbringing, it is 'natural' for me to think that women serve the needs of their husbands. Husbands have their meals served to them before any other family member. The wife eats last. This is 'true'. However, this system of female subordination in heterosexual relationships, in some Indian households, stems from religious teachings, and so goes, for the most part, unquestioned. There *is* nothing to question, as there is nothing peculiar in seeing a wife serve her husband in this way – and that every wife would have a male partner, and not a female one. They define the common tasks and behaviours of people in their daily lives, and so give definition to what might otherwise be a chaotic state of freedom.

No doubt there is some Indo-religious folklore that justifies and explains this system of basic female subordination. For Gramsci, the role of folklore is illustrative of common sense as a tool of hegemonic power:

> It seems to me that all popular songs could and should be reduced to the third category, since what distinguishes popular song, within the framework of a nation and its culture, is not its artistic element or its historical origin, but its way of conceiving the world and life, in contrast with official society... (Gramsci, 1975/1996, 399-400).

The three categories that Gramsci refers to, to define the purposes of these 'songs' and folklore in general, are: "(1) songs composed by the people and for the people; (2) songs composed for the people but not by the people; (3) songs written neither by the people nor for the people that the people have never the less adopted because they conform to their way of thinking and feeling" (original parentheses; Gramsci, 1975/1996, 399). In the third category, songs function as a kind of explanatory tool for understanding the world, but that originate outside of the social group that it affects. If we also understand that all texts are positioned and positioning (Janks, 2010a), we can see that these songs can also function as constructs that get people to understand the world in very particular ways, and that do not seem to be forced on them by any 'official' group. The fact that they are conceived of as common sense thus strengthens their legitimacy in social contexts, because there is no need to resist them.

This does not mean that hegemony always remains the same over shifts in time and context. Rather, a Gramscian perspective sees power as dynamic. In order to reproduce and maintain power relations, hegemonic structures need to constantly re-evaluate themselves in relation to the changing needs of the subaltern (Jones, 2006). Songs, texts, mass press coverage and the representation of government need to undergo continual modification in order to remain relevant and aligned with the socio-cultural values of those it seeks to rule. That is, hegemony needs to constantly reassert and justify itself in terms of values and economic, material and legal-political forms (Jones, 2006). Any hegemony cannot assume to maintain its

power if there is too great a distance between itself and those it governs – the people will lose faith.

For Simon Nkoli, and so many other gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersexed people, the hegemonic structures that define, police and (mis)represent their sexed, gendered and sexual identities need constant resistance. In order to give value to that human right that our political hegemony secretly keeps, we need to consider how, under and through hegemonic structures, we represent our own and each other's identities. We need to consider how we have let this power infiltrate and regulate our own lives, thoughts and beliefs to enable a normalisation of various forms of oppression.

2.2 Gender Hegemonies

Power also works in and through institutions of gender and sexuality, or maybe more aptly institutions that have become gendered and sexualised. It is within the context of such power relations that theories of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995) and lesbian feminism (Rich, 1993; de Lauretis, 1993; Jagose, 1996) become important ways to think about gender, sexuality and power in context. They reveal the complex ways in which normative ideas of sex, gender and sexuality have been established and institutionalised, while also exploring the ways in which to make such power systems more apparent. That is, how do we displace socio-cultural norms in order to expand our notions of what sex, gender and sexuality mean? And, in so doing, what are the existences that reveal themselves in those policed and silenced spaces?

When Vivian Vasquez' (2000, 10) male kindergarten student said that "Pink is a girl color, right? 'Cause men don't buy that color. 'Cause girls wear that color

dress. My mommy sells clothes for kids so I know", it becomes quite evident how deeply gender roles have become embedded in the way we see things. Non-gendered concepts, like colour, become gendered through our practices within contexts of hegemonic masculinity. We see this child defining his own masculinity using colour, and the cultural connotations of colour. It also becomes evident that gender itself is a social construction that we assign to biological sex (and I will explore this idea in relation to Judith Butler later in this chapter under the heading 'Sex, Gender and Sexuality'). A boy wearing pink, especially a pink dress, would result in a gender violation (McCarl Nielson, 2000) of the kind of masculinity that holds hegemonic status in Vasquez' context, and might result in other students drawing on homophobic taunts that they could be exposed to outside of school. Not only is gender identity at stake, but also one's real or even assumed sexual identity (as heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual). In the context of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity, non-heterosexual identities can be met with homophobic language as a way of reasserting dominant definitions of masculine (and male) and feminine (and female) (Thurlow, 2001; Msibi, 2012a; Bhana, de Lange and Mitchell, 2009). The heterosexual male of most ages, it would seem, "can define himself as 'straight' only in opposition to that which he is not – an effeminate gay man" (Namaste, 1994, 222).

The idea of a hegemonic masculinity, then, is related to how sex, gender and even sexuality are thought about in everyday circumstances. It is the regulatory practices that teach us to 'do' boy and man in socially acceptable ways. In extension, then, it also teaches how *not* to do boy and man, thus defining girl and woman as identities of deficit. Masculinity exists only in relation to what it is not (Namaste, 1994; Connell, 1995).

In R. W. Connell's (1995) *Masculinities*, masculinity can be seen as a thing of socio-cultural and even political power, and thus

> as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Connell, 1995, 77).

As a hegemonic structure it is comprised of a myriad of material institutions and tools that help it to reproduce and maintain its politico-cultural status in different contexts and times. It is, therefore, also a power that infiltrates into the lives of those it rules and enables; constantly naturalising and legitimising itself to remain relevant. It subordinates those who are different – the effeminate and the female, across biological sexes and sexual identities. Even for Gramsci (1975/1992, 170-171 and 174-176) *the sexual question* is something of interest. That is, Gramsci recognises the political, economic, legislative, generational and everyday inequalities between men and women, masculine and feminine and how this

> ought to justify sex education and indeed make it a requirement, since the presumption that it is something that comes to be known, only means, in effect, that one can be sure the environment produces this education (Gramsci, 1975/1992, 175).

We will explore later how these concerns for biological sex and gender further relate to concerns around the representation of sexualities in education.

However, to understand this conceptualisation of masculinity, and gender as a whole, we need to view gender as a 'structure of social practice'. Connell (1995, 71) helps us to establish that "[g]ender is social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do" and that gender itself "exists precisely to the extent that biology does *not* determine the social" (original emphasis). In my section on sex,

gender and sexuality, we will consider how to negotiate the aspects of sex, gender and sexuality that are biological, social and, to some extent, both biological and social. In the meantime, let it suffice to understand that gender is a form of social practice. That is, like Vasquez's (2000) student, there are socially and culturally correct ways of *doing* gender that we recognise as being natural, legitimate and true. While gender is not necessarily a direct attribute of biological sex, we are socialised into believing, thinking, moving, speaking and understanding in very gendered ways.

Gender as social practice thus allows us to understand and move beyond various other ways of perceiving gender (adapted from Connell, 1995, 68-71): (1) As Essentialism, gender is defined according to strict binaries. Men embody masculinity through activity, aggression or economic contribution, while women embody femininity through passivity, sympathy and maternal functions. There is a distinct and quite simplistic differentiation between the sexes and the genders they are to inhabit. (2) As Positivism, men and women are 'logically' defined according to what they do and this is justified in relation to statistics. However, it then assumes that men and women have already been categorised into masculine and feminine gender roles, and overlooks the possibilities of masculine women and effeminate men. (3) As Normative, gender is thought of as what men and women 'ought to be'. However, these definitions become quite abstract and idealistic, leaving real men and women always short of the normative construct: "What is 'normative' about a norm hardly anyone meets? Are we to say the majority of men are unmasculine? How do we assay the toughness needed to resist the norm of toughness, or the heroism needed to come out as gay?" (Connell, 1995, 70). (4) Finally, as Semiotic, gender is conceived of in terms of 'symbolic difference', where "[m]asculinity is, in effect, defined as not-femininity" (Connell, 1995, 70). In this study, I will make use of

normative and semiotic perspectives because they are useful for addressing issues of representation in the classroom.

In this we might understand that masculinity comprises the dominant, umbrella for defining and practising gender in society, even though there are other, significant gender hegemonies working as well that resist male dominance. There are surely normative, positivist and semiotic ways of doing femininity. Ways of understanding feminine and female subjectivity have been theorised through various strands of Feminist Theory (consider the works of Butler, Kristeva, Wittig or Beauvoir) that tackle the hegemonies of both masculinity as norm and femininity as Other, and the ways of doing female and feminine gender (a useful discussion of this is in the 1999 and 1990 prefaces to *Gender Trouble* by Judith Butler, 2006). One such example is that of Lesbian Feminism (Rich, 1993, de Lauretis, 1993, Jagose, 1996). While feminism resists male dominance and the creation of women as Other, lesbian feminism resists heteronormative constructions of gender and sexuality as well. There is the recognition that even in Othered sexual identities, such as gay, lesbian, transgender and intersexed identities, the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1995) is still at work.

The universalisation of male symbols to represent both man and humankind has infiltrated so many spaces of everyday life. Restroom signs, construction signs, and even signs that tell us when to cross roads all depict the universal man. As an indicator of patriarchy, this normative symbol for *people* places men at the top of gender and sex hierarchies, reiterating the dominance of male masculinity and heterosexuality in measuring gender performance and sexual identities. Interestingly enough, this is not only so for normative representations. Even in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed 'community' Connell's (1995) patriarchal

dividend still functions to subordinate non-male identities. Representation of the gay man seems to supersede any other non-hegemonic identity in soap operas, nightclub advertisements, and television series. Where, then, is the gay female experience, the straight transgender experience or the bisexual male experience, to name a few?

Rich (1993) explains that, in view of male dominance, the female voice has been stifled. She uses the concept of Lesbian Existence to differentiate between male and female homosexuality. That is, it is an essentialism to group male and female homosexuality as one 'community' just because both groups have been socially and culturally stigmatised on the basis of their sexual orientation. Instead, we need to consider how each sex experiences stigmatization based on sexuality in different ways when they intersect with other identity markers such as gender, race or class:

> To equate lesbian existence with male homosexuality because each is stigmatized is to erase female reality once again. Part of the history of lesbian existence is, obviously, to be found where lesbians, lacking a coherent female community, have shared a kind of social life and common cause with homosexual men. But there are differences: women's lack of economic and cultural privilege relative to men; qualitative differences in female and male relationships [...] I perceive the lesbian experience as being, like motherhood, a profoundly *female* experience, with particular oppressions, meanings, and potentialities we cannot comprehend as long as we simply bracket it with other sexually stigmatized existences (Rich, 1993, 239).

Recognising that male dominance has still managed to permeate into the non-hegemonic spaces, identities and interactions between gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed people is to recognise that sexuality cannot be simplified into male-female or even gay-straight binaries. Our gendered and

sexualised identities mingle in complex ways, and the potential to uphold hegemonic order, even in 'deviancy, remains.

In order to address how the tyranny of patriarchy can be resisted by lesbians, Rich (1993, 239-244) has reconstructed the ways in which we conceive of female and lesbian experiences by introducing another rather interesting idea: the *Lesbian Continuum*. While the concept of lesbian existence seems to be a way of emphasising lesbianism as a legitimate and natural identity, a way to bring "the fact of the historical presence of lesbians and [their] continuing creation of the meaning of that existence" (Rich, 1993, 239) into normative spaces; the lesbian continuum seeks to define the female experience, in relation to oppression, subjectivity and resistance, as a unified existence:

> ... to include a range – through each woman's life and throughout history – of woman-identified experience, not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman [but also] to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support... (Rich, 1993, 239)

The argument for a unified 'woman-identified-woman' (Schneir, 1994 in Jagose, 1996, 55) identity is raised; stepping away from male absolutism. While this position has been resisted by both gay and straight men and heterosexual feminists, it is an important position to understand in its take on how male supremacy, as a hegemonic construction, is not just a concern for those who identify as heterosexual. Instead, the struggle against male supremacy – which is reflected in dominant representations of male heterosexuality and the subordination of women – extends from being a concern about gender power relations to the power relations enacted in sexuality.

To address this issue, a reconstruction of what resistance against male hegemonic order means for women, lesbian or heterosexual, is given. Rich (1993) illustrates how even the defiance against marriage, having children, or settling down with a male partner are also examples of political resistance against hegemonic masculinities by the Othered woman. She also shows us how such resistances expand over racial, cultural and even sexualised intersections with gender identity.

Thus, femininity functions around hegemonic orders of gender, as both hegemonic masculinity and the lie of female heterosexuality which is given and given again by the persistence of patriarchal discourses by both men and women. Gender, when commonly used to mark sexual identity, needs to be contested in the ways in which it has been established as normal through civil institutions and common sense. In order to do this, we need to identify and deconstruct the ways in which dominance works.

Hegemonic masculinity operates in three fundamental ways to produce power relations between men and women, as well as between traditionally masculine men and those men who 'do not measure up': Subordination, Complicity and Marginalisation (Connell, 1995; Luyt, 2012). Firstly, hegemony works as a form of socio-cultural dominance, where ruling gender identities (and its conflations with biological sex and sexuality) subordinate other gender identities through "political and cultural exclusion, cultural abuse (in the United States gay men have now become the main symbolic target of the religious right), legal violence (such as imprisonment under sodomy statutes), street violence (ranging from intimidation to murder), economic discrimination and personal boycotts" (Connell, 1995, 78). It is important to note that subordination under hegemonic masculinity works against men, women, and, surely, intersexed and transgendered people in defining and rewarding 'good

gender practice'. It is also important to note that this subordination extends beyond just othering traditionally non-masculine gender practice, but is closely related to how people do biological sex and sexuality: from persistent inequalities between men and women, to the rife discrimination of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed people. Even heterosexual men who practice 'other' masculinities, such as metrosexuality, suffer such subordination. Consider the work of Martino (1995) and Young (2001) where displays of masculinities in classrooms need to be negotiated, and where subordinated masculinities need validation from teachers in order to gain any sense of value. (Lesbian) women (Rich, 1993) who are subjected to discrimination based on their sexualities are also subordinated further by both gay and straight men based on gender inequalities – which, in turn, makes the lesbian a double-subordinate in the household, the community and even economic spaces (Rich, 1993; de Lauretis, 1993). Even in South Africa, "[v]iolence against black lesbians, precipitated by culturally sanctioned homophobia and hate speech, often results in physical, mental and emotional harm inflicted on such women (mostly by men)" (original parenthesis: Mkhize, Bennett, Reddy and Moletsane, 2010, x). Such forms of economic, physical, emotional and symbolic violence maintain the subordination of women across sexual, gendered, racial and class boundaries.

Secondly, hegemony enables particular social groups, those that benefit from it and thus maintain it in a variety of ways - even when they themselves do not entirely fit the hegemonic mould (Connell, 1995). That is, men comply with hegemonic masculinity because of the gains to be had from the subordination of others. Such complicity is attributed to the *patriarchal dividend*: "the overall subordination of women" (Connell, 1995, 79). When the power structures that promote certain masculinities go uncontested, or when subordination is not even

recognised, hegemony is maintained as a natural status quo. A useful illustration appears in Govender (2011) from A. J. Jacobs' *The Year of Living Biblically* (2007). Jacobs reports his attendance to a celebration of the Jewish holiday Simchas Torah to his wife, Julie, and while he may not know it he also reports on male complicity in the hegemonic differentiation of men from women within religious ritual:

> The next morning, I tell Julie about my wild night of dancing with Hasidic men and how I got a taste of pure joy.
>
> 'And where were the women during this thing?'
>
> 'Well, they were watching. They have these observation windows.'
>
> 'Observation windows?' Julie looks pissed.
>
> It's strange. Naturally, I noticed the gender segregation – but there were so many odd and overwhelming things about the night that I didn't laser in on that one. *It's the obliviousness that comes with being in the majority* (original emphasis in Govender, 2011, 67-68).

In this scenario, the obliviousness to male dominance enables that dominance to remain secure. In fact, even the complicity of the female 'observers' enables the hegemonic gender relations to reproduce itself – in silence.

Thirdly, marginalisation works as an instrument of hegemony. When a particular social practice, a kind of masculinity, gains dominance within a context and at a particular time, we need to experience the materiality of the power to know that it is there. Through representation, conforming models of the hegemonic ideal dominate social media, cultural definitions and everyday texts so that "[m]arginalization is always relative to the *authorization* of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group" (Connell, 1995, 81) in visible ways. On one level, this means that representations of specific hegemonic identities saturate public spaces (civil society) to produce a norm. On another level, however, representations of 'Other' non-hegemonic identities can be constructed as undesirable or problematic in order to legitimise and reinforce the authenticity of the hegemonic ideal itself. Here,

misrepresentation of the Other works in powerful and discriminatory ways. And, on yet another level 'Other' non-hegemonic identities can be marginalised or silenced through a lack of representation. There is no representation because such identities should not exist in the first place (Connell, 1995; Kumashiro, 2002). Consider the marginalisation of bisexual, transgender and intersexed identities from hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity and even LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) organisations or communities.

But, hegemonic masculinity grasps more than just gender and sex roles. To practise masculinity appropriately we need to also consider its intersections with race, class and sexuality in the production of *heteronormativity*. That is, in order to practise masculinity, a man needs to be, quite noticeably, heterosexual (Luyt, 2012; Cameron, 2006; Martino, 1995; Young, 2001). Non-heterosexual gendered identities, assumed or real, suffer subordination and marginalisation. This is done by asserting that certain ways of doing masculinity constitute one's identity as both male and as heterosexual. This has become evident through multiple studies: from Cameron's (2006) revealing analysis of heterosexual college men's talk in order to (re)affirm their own sense of masculinity through the Othering of men identified as gay and the evaluation of women's breasts; to Thurlow's (2001, 25) qualitative account of "homophobic pejoratives [and] verbal abuse" (parenthesis added) in a United Kingdom high school. Hegemonic masculinity is upheld through the active, and even the unconscious, policing of gender practice through jokes, insults, comparatives or violence against women, non-heterosexual men and those heterosexual men who do not perform heterosexuality well enough for their context.

This is congruous with Rich's (1993) concept of *compulsory heterosexuality*. Rich (1993) effectively shows how everyday, household representations of both straight and lesbian women make the *compulsory* nature of heterosexuality apparent.

> The lie of compulsory female heterosexuality today afflicts not just feminist scholarship, but every profession, every reference work, every curriculum, every organizing attempt, every relationship or conversation over which it hovers. It creates, specifically, a profound falseness, hypocrisy, and hysteria in the heterosexual dialogue, for every heterosexual relationship is lived in the queasy strobe light of that lie (Rich, 1993, 244).

We are bombarded, ironically quite unnoticeably, with 'heterosexual dialogue' from the time we are able to sense the worlds in which we live and the people we share it with. From romanticised folklore, film and commercial representations of heterosexual love to the silencing of homosexual, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed experiences, we are so often socialised and policed into heteronormative order. Compounded by a persistent patriarchy and heteronormativity, the female, or in this case the lesbian, experience is formed around oppression and inequality.

Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity can be used to construct non-hegemonic identities: the seminal works of Donham (1998, in Luyt, 2012), Gevisser and Cameron (1994), and Tucker (2009) as well as more recent studies by Mkhize et al. (2010), Msibi (2012a), Bhana (2012) and Reddy (2011 and 2012) all discuss how under South African apartheid "sexual identity in same-sex male relationships within urban 'black' culture was based on a subtle negotiation of the link between heteronormativity, gender and biological sex [...]" and a "clear distinction was made between the effeminate or passive partner versus the active partner" (Luyt, 2012, 50). That is, even non-hegemonic identities of sex, gender and sexuality are sometimes only imaginable within the hegemonic structure it seeks to defy. Establishing a same-

sex relationship sometimes requires legitimation and rationalisation according to the dominant ideas of what relationships should look like, which are 'normally' heterosexual. Hence, binary gender roles of feminine and masculine (the female role and the male role) may still persist in homosexual relationships. In order to function within society, in a quasi-acceptable way, same-sex partners have to perform the traditional roles of heterosexual relationships, or even other cultural roles that use gender identity in different ways (Mkhize et al., 2010). This, in turn, leads to people in same-sex relationships adopting socio-culturally normative sex-related gender practices as well.

Gender hegemonies hold an unnoticed but all too powerful status in societies. We are quick to organise ourselves and each other according to these hegemonies because they seem real, rational and natural. We lose the questions necessary for understanding power in everyday life: from heterosexuals being regulated into very particular gender practices to non-heterosexuals being condemned for deviating from hegemonic orders of gender and sexuality. In order to confront a sometimes unflinching acceptance of the 'normal', we need a pedagogy bent on creating awareness and developing a human rights agenda. Once we understand sex, gender and sexuality more, I will discuss this pedagogy (especially in relation to representation) in part 2.4 of this chapter.

2.3 Sex, Gender and Sexuality

> Although compulsory heterosexuality often presumes that there is first a sex that is expressed through a gender and then through a sexuality, it may now be necessary fully to invert and displace that operation of thought (Butler, 1993, 318).

Biological sex, gender and sexuality are difficult concepts to define by themselves because they have been conflated with each other in complex ways over time. Using my study to understand that they are separate but still interrelated concepts and to map the identities that exist in and as a result of the interaction between each domain is thus a response to Butler's (1993) recognition for the need to invert and displace normative ideals. Sex does not naturally imply a particular gender, which does not necessitate any particular sexuality (which includes sexual orientation – these differences will be discussed later in my theoretical framework).

Butler's (2006) publication, *Gender Trouble,* poses the theory of performativity: the understanding that the 'sexed body' (the body in its anatomical form) is made real through socio-cultural performances which are then used to make heterosexuality compulsory (Rich, 1993). Performance relates to the ways in which we represent our biological sex, gender and sexual identities in the social sphere. In doing so, however, people are also policed, sometimes quite violently, into 'performing' and practising heterosexuality despite their desires (Rich, 1993). From arranged marriages to corrective rape, we can begin to see heterosexuality not only as an orientation of desire, but also as an institution of power. How we construct ourselves and others is under general contestation, even today, and is both determined by individual agency as well as through the socio-cultural structures that help to define us within different contexts.

Here, Butler considers how sex, gender and sexuality are seen to be 'naturally' binding concepts within most contexts, and how the subversion of these identities reveals their actual constructed forms. Through her discussions on drag and imitation, she establishes that under post-structural ideology sex, gender and

sexuality are more fluid categories than those definitions posed by more essentialist and gender role theories (Butler, 1993, 2006).

This will allow me to do two important things in this study: Firstly, it provides a theoretical framework for mapping sex, gender and sexuality and their interactions with each other. Doing this allows us to see how these categories exist independently as well as through each other. It gives us the opportunity to locate the intersecting identities of sex, gender and sexuality (which could even be related to intersections with race, class or age in the future) in terms of normativity, as well as locate identities that are normally thought of as 'deviant' or 'subversive' (such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed identities) in the political centre of these categories. Secondly, it relates to issues of representation. Using Butler's (1993, 2006) gender performance fits neatly with my study's concern for the gendered representations of sexuality in education and how to take subversive identities away from misrepresentation, marginalisation or even silence. This study, in part, intends to answer Butler's (1993) call for inverting and displacing traditional ways of thinking about and doing sex, gender and sexuality.

However, my study exists in a South African context. And, while gender performance and a theory on imitation have relevance (as we will see in my theoretical framework), South Africa's history of oppressive apartheid through racial fragmentation and its current variety of cultural and racial identities make for a very interesting dynamic. Sex, gender and sexuality have been interpreted and represented in a vast many ways according to language, religion, race, culture and geographical region (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2009; Msibi, 2012a; Mkhize et al., 2010; Bhana, 2012; and Bhana et al., 2007). This makes negotiating the gendered representations of sexualities in education pertinent for understanding

the different ways in which different South Africans do sex, gender and sexuality and how this works in relation to representation, normativity and hegemonic power structures in the school (Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Tucker, 2009).

In June 2013 my grandmother arrived from a 6-month stay in Australia where I have extended family living. On her return she stayed in Johannesburg, where I live, to spend time with my immediate family. Late one night I received a text-message on my mobile phone from my sister-in-law:

> Ayah is asking me if u gay
> [emoticon]
> What should I say
> Wud u like for me to come out of the closet for [you] again? [emoticons]
>
> Haha! That is so hectic
> Yeah, sure ...
> Sorry for the awkward encounter
>
> Lol
> Hey atleast she will never ask u again if u have a girlfriend

When my sexual identity had been confirmed, my grandmother commented that I had always worn bangles. The link she made between my sexuality and my somewhat deviant gender performance of wearing not-traditionally-male attire is not unique to her. Being male, I was already considered a kind of deviant for wearing more jewellery than other, ‘normal’ boys, and this was extended into an attribute of my sexuality. It was a way for my grandmother to explain and rationalise my sexual identity in terms of her own understanding of the socio-culturally appropriate ways of doing gender.

There is, then, a clear conflation between sex and gender and then gender and sexuality that leads to the gendered representations of sexuality. However,

because these conflations have become commonplace, it is easy to perceive them as natural and real. In this section of my literature review we will see, however, that this way of seeing sex, gender and sexuality is not so natural but has actually been *constructed* as real. To do this, we need to understand Judith Butler's (2006) theory of gender performance as a social practice, and as comprising of drag, the imitation of nothing and compulsory heterosexuality. These concepts have allowed me to map the interaction between biological sex (male, female or intersexed); gender (along a continuum of feminine, androgynous and masculine) and sexual identity (including, but not limited to, heterosexuality, bisexuality and homosexuality).

When it comes to gender and sexuality, conventional ideas of the male/female binary seem to permeate every sphere of daily life. Even more concerning is the conflation of gender with sexuality and the effects that this has on how we think about what practices are appropriate for each biological sex. From toilet signs to textbooks, gender and sexuality have been constructed as given, natural categories meant for their assigned sex. But, it is when someone disrupts this convention that institutionalised notions are shaken - from the religious to the economic, social and cultural institutions that people engage with and are socialised by.

It is, therefore, important to consider "the impact of the operating assumptions" (Bilodeau and Renn, 2005, 36) that different perspectives on sex, gender and sexuality, and the conflations between them, have on the ways each of these can be represented in socio-cultural texts. From a post-structuralist, critical perspective, gender identity can be described as "an individual's internal sense of self as male, female, or an identity between or outside these two categories" (on Wilchins, 2002, in Bilodeau and Renn, 2005, 29). However, this is still a fragmented 'us-versus-them' definition that understands gender in terms of the traditional

male/female binary. There are still only two categories. It can be said that this definition seems to include intersex and transgender identities as only 'between' or 'outside' of the male/female norm, instead of being considered as centred, whole identities within themselves.

Furthermore, while the Bilodeau and Renn (2005) article is concerned with the identities of gay, lesbian and bisexual people too, it does not seem to provide a distinct definition of how these different sexual identities exist outside of gender performances. It would seem that even progressive texts can still fall victim to male/female and heterosexual/homosexual binaries and conflations. Instead, it needs to be understood that

> Sexuality is never fully "expressed" in a performance or practice; there will be passive and butchy femmes, femmy and aggressive butches, and both of those, and more, will turn out to describe more or less anatomically stable "males" and "females." There are no direct expressive or causal lines between sex, gender, gender presentation, sexual practice, fantasy and sexuality. None of those terms captures or determines the rest (Butler, 1993, 315).

There is, then, the dire risk of assuming gender as the necessary enactment of a defined sexuality, and that both gender and sexuality arise from a person's biological sex. This becomes slippery territory because, as Butler (1993, 315) goes on to explain, "[p]art of what constitutes sexuality is precisely that which does not appear and that which, to some degree, can never appear". The origin of sexuality is disputed and theorised through various models (Bilodeau and Renn, 1995; Butler, 1993; and Namaste, 1994) and never seems to take definite shape. But, in our attempts to fit diverse identities within gender, sex, sexuality and their myriad of intersections with class, race, age, and more, into traditional male/female, man/woman and masculine/feminine binaries, we as social agents begin to confuse

various *parts* of our identities (like being gay, straight, bisexual or other) as definite *wholes* and therefore regulate ourselves and each other by way of discursive, verbal and bodily representation. Our sexed, gendered and/or sexual identities begin to overshadow our other identities, and so suddenly our performances as family member, employee, student, and human become sexed, gendered or sexualised. Furthermore, such a hyperbole of sexed, gendered and sexualised identities puts all other identities at risk: the male teacher that needs to be watched because of the risk of paedophilia that is associated with his sexuality, or the female teacher's feminist identity that might turn girls into lesbians. Such misconceptions emerge from misunderstandings about sex, gender and sexuality.

While gender is sometimes traditionally linked with ideas of biology, it is instead something we do in a "culturally specific way" (Connell, 1995, 68). Each culture, religion, society and even language helps to construct gender, but this is still usually done according to biological sex: man equals male which equals masculine, and woman equals female which, of course, equals feminine. The exclusion of transgender and intersexed identities in the larger spectrums of sex and gender, then, becomes worrisome. However, biological sex only refers to the anatomy of the body, while gender actually refers to the socio-cultural understanding of how to perform and read the body in socio-cultural context (Connell, 1995; Paechter, 1998): the spoken and unspoken regulations for behaviour, speech, dress, and participation in society as one of those biological sexes. How people are to perform their genders, however, also exists within the context of the heterosexual norm. Under these circumstances, not only is 'correct' gender enactment often equated with biological sex, but it also seems to necessitate a particular sexuality: male masculinity means heterosexual, while female masculinity might mean lesbianism or femininity in a man

could cause him to be identified as gay (Luyt, 2012; McCarl Nielsen, 2000). There is a distinct conflation between gender, sexuality and biological sex that becomes normal through the repetitive and understated gendered representation of sexuality.

In Judith Butler's (2006) *Gender Trouble*, Butler disputes the normative connection usually made between sex and gender:

> the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. The unity of the subject is thus already contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex (Butler, 2006, 8).

One major point that Butler addresses is the constructedness of gender. As we have seen, gender can be understood as a social practice (Connell, 1995). In this way it can be constructed and *reconstructed* as a hegemonic concept, and as a tool for socio-cultural power. Hopefully, however, this means that gender as a function of hegemony can also be *deconstructed* (I will look at this in part 2.4 of chapter 2, under the heading of Representation and Pedagogy).

Another main point posed by Butler is that of the 'multiple interpretation of sex'. It is interesting to note that even in Connell's (1995) study, the title of the book is in plural: *Masculinities*. Similarly, I have titled part 2.2 of this literature review *Gender Hegemonies,* as well as the title of this research project as dealing with *gendered representations of sexualities.* Pluralising the words that relate to gendered and sexualised identities illustrates a conceptual leaning toward sex, gender and sexuality as diversified. It allows us to move away from a binary representation of male/female, masculine/feminine or heterosexual/homosexual. Instead, we can come to see these as points on separate, but interconnected, continua.

However, if one thinks about gender as a social practice (Connell, 1995) or a performance (Butler, 2006), one also needs to consider *how* this performance is done. Drag is a kind of performed realisation of gender (Butler, 1993 and 2006) that is often based on the subversion of the culturally prescribed ways of doing biological sex. That is, a man who dresses, behaves and names himself a women actively subverts the hegemonic criteria for performing masculinity. He may not, however, personally identify as the 'opposite sex' the way a transgender person might. It can be purely a performance that functions to subvert the gender hegemony.

A visible feature of drag is its overt exaggerated form. To a large extent, people who dress in drag are noticeably doing so: copious amounts of cosmetics define facial features in quite extreme ways (high eye-brow lines, lipstick that extends beyond lips themselves, and colourful and well-sprayed hairdos), and dress can be quite flamboyant (in the likes of popular celebrities like Cher and Lady Gaga). It is a "simile that lacks 'reality', and is taken to constitute an illusory appearance" (Butler, 2006, xxiii). It is not, then, a way for men to represent real female gender performance (femininity) or for women to represent real male gender performance (masculinity). Rather, its function is to reveal the constructedness of those performances; to reveal gender as theatrical and the possibility for it to be interpreted and adopted by any biological sex.

Even subverting traditional gender practices, however, still seems regulated by hegemonic definitions of sex and gender. Tucker (2009), in *Queer Visibilities: Space, Identity and Interaction in Cape Town*, looks at how queer (gay), male, identities in Cape Town, South Africa, have found ways of being accepted in the communities within which they live. One of these identities involves the Coloured community of Zonnebloem, where the male drag performances of queer Coloured

men exist alongside normative gender and sexual identities. This “moffie drag” (Tucker, 2009, 74) “came increasingly to represent a form of symbolic autonomy and freedom for coloured society. Defiant of wider (white) society – exhibiting both seductiveness and pride in their own identity” (original parentheses: Chetty, 1995 in Tucker, 2009, 78) the queer Coloured men use drag as a political tool. In order to become normalised into Coloured society, they transform their male gender identities through drag, making it a visible marker of their sexual identity – as gay, queer or moffie. However, it would seem that the only way of subverting hegemonic masculinity would be to adopt its binary opposite: femininity.

It would seem that while drag is useful as a political tool in some contexts for normalising gay identity through gender and further as a method of subverting gender, it still succumbs to hegemonic masculinity. Drag seems only imaginable within the bounds of the gender binary. But, maybe this is appropriate for its work in making the constructedness of normative gender performance apparent, and not for expanding our intellect to the boundless possibilities of un-categorical gender performance that might be. That “what we take to be ‘real’, what we invoke as the naturalized knowledge of gender is, in fact, a changeable and revisable reality” (Butler, 2006, xxiv) that is only restricted by the imagination.

Leland Bobbé, a New York photographer, illustrates this in his series of *Half-drag* photographs (Brenda, 26 Oct, 2012, retrieved 06/06/2013 from www.venusplusx.org). In this series, portrait-style photographs were taken of cross-dressing men. Half their faces were ‘normal’, purely physical and without make-up, and half was done up in drag, with the hyperbolic features of drag as discussed above. These photographs provide a visual illustration of how drag subverts gender identity through a kind of satire by juxtaposing each man’s ‘real’ physical identity with

that of their performed drag identity. We see how, through representation of the body, gender becomes a construction, a thing that is decisively made and remade. It would be interesting to see a female version of this, where women dress as half-inhabiting the social constructions of femininity and half representing an alternative identity (probably still within the bounds of the masculine/female binary). Would they emerge in the likes of Annie Lennox or Grace Jones?

Gender subversions such as these reveal the contestability and obscurity of the origin and 'reality' of a gendered identity. Does gender actually emerge from scientific findings on biological sex? To what extent is gender a biological and/or social phenomenon? Does gender infiltrate how we think about biological sex, or does biological sex necessitate that an appropriate gender performance take place? Paechter (1998) looks at the interaction between sex and gender in research to reveal that researchers themselves often looked at brain-structure to reinforce their findings on the differences between men and women. However, even this process of research and legitimation was constructed under gender hegemonies:

> Such research, however, is predicated on the assumption that there are only two, clearly distinguishable, biological sexes. Having made this initial distinction, the scientists involved then try to establish differences. While it is the case that we can find 'scientific' criteria that permit us to label the majority of people as either male or female, there remain individuals who do not easily fit such criteria. Who these people are depends on where we draw our biological line (Paechter, 1998, 40-41).

Unfortunately, we tend to draw our 'biological line' as a septum between male and female identities only. Instead, this line could be drawn as a continuum (I will discuss this further in relation to my model for mapping sexed, gendered and sexualised identities at the end of this section). What is important to note at this point, however, is that Paechter's (1998) biological line is also a construction that informs how we

work with the supposed 'origins' of gender performance: biological sex. The conflation of sex and gender has consequently obscured any notion of 'origin'.

Similarly, the conflation between gender and sexuality establish a heteronormative homeostasis. If gender can be seen as biological, and therefore 'real', and not a socio-cultural construct, its attachment to sexual identity can become powerful. Under gendered hegemonies, sexuality could be described as part of gender performance. Gender performance, then, becomes a way of, on one level, policing gendered hegemonies and, on another level, a method for establishing heteronormativity.

How gender and sexuality function in this normative manner is apparent in the following scene, given by McCarl Nielsen et al. (2000), where a study on *Gendered Heteronormativity* illustrates how people react to 'gender norm violations'. Here, a violation of gender hegemonies seems to provoke the policing of gender and sexuality toward a heteronormative gain:

> 'There's a totally cute girl smoking a fucking cigar in my section', confided a waitress to her manager in a restaurant in a university town (McCarl Nielsen et al., 2000, 283).

Here, a 'totally cute girl' has been heterosexualised to embody the concept of cuteness, often associated with the female gender or a sense of femininity. However, she is smoking a cigar which is an activity associated with men and masculinity, and from the response given by the waitress, this is a shocking violation of gender norms. Through a series of sociology students' studies, McCarl Nielsen et al. (2000) are able to present the many ways in which heterosexuality is normalised and made compulsory by regulating gender performance in various ways, and how gender norm violations produce homophobic speech or the 'heterosexualization' of the so-called violators themselves. Men are shunned with homophobic taunts for deviating

from their gender roles, while women are often pulled back into heterosexual order by observers of their 'violations' through comments like "Is this any way for two pretty young girls to behave?" or "You should be posing in the centrefold of *Playboy* instead of working in a mine" (McCarl Nielson et al., 2000, 290-291).

Similarly, heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality are maintained in African contexts by way of the 'homosexuality is un-African' argument (Msibi, 2011; Mkhize et al., 2010; Bhana et al., 2007). This position uses past western colonialism and current western imperialism as its main argument for non-heterosexual behaviours and identities becoming more visible in African societies. That is, that "homosexuality – same-sex desire – is a Western import" (Msibi, 2011, 62). Leaders across the continent have contributed to this argument in various public arenas, always maintaining the illegitimacy of those behaviours, identities, and ultimately people who do not fit the constraints of a compulsory heterosexuality. South Africa's president, Jacob Zuma, has publicly shared these sentiments, despite South Africa's progressive constitution:

> Jacob Zuma, while still deputy president of the ruling African National Congress, declared that same-sex marriage was a "disgrace to the nation and to God," and that when he was growing up, a gay man would never have stood in front of him, as he would "knock him out" (Ismail and SAPA, 2006 as discussed by Msibi, 2011, 62).

And, yet, other studies reveal that gender in many African societies was fluid and, perhaps, even more equitably negotiated pre-colonisation:

> Although it is difficult to make generalizations, at the very least we can note that the gender rigidities and binaries which became a feature of

European modernity were not a feature in much of precolonial Africa.

Gender divisions existed but were fluid (Bhana et al., 2007, 132).

Only with the introduction of Islam and Christianity, and the explicit gender divisions that they held, did the formal policing of gender performance and sexuality commence in these African societies because they "provided a justification for the superiority of men over women" (Bhana et al., 2007, 132). With this shift in hegemonic gender orders, even the policing of sexual fluidity became more stringent and heteronormative.

But, where does this come from? For Butler (2006), the origins of gendered performances of sexuality, or even the lack thereof, emerges from the Derridian concept of *mimesis*:

> If gender is drag, and if it is an imitation that regularly produces the ideal it attempts to approximate, then gender is a performance that *produces* the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core: it *produces* on the skin, through the gesture, the move, the gait (that array of corporeal theatrics understood as gender presentation), the illusion of an inner depth (original emphases and parenthesis: Butler, 1993, 317).

The reality that Butler (1993) proposes is that gender is not 'real' in the sense that is has any identifiable origin within the human subject. Instead, the gendered performances of sexuality that are particular to context, time and intersections with race, culture, age or even religion, have 'produced' an illusory origin through repetition. In this sense, then, even gendered performances of heterosexuality can be regarded as a kind of drag: a *heterosexual drag*. It is an exaggerated display of hegemonic heteronormativity and patriarchal forms.

Heterosexuality is further made compulsory through the repeated acceptance of proper gender performance and resistance of improper gender performance of

sexual identities (by hegemonic structures in both civil and political society). By constructing non-heterosexual identities and conflated gender performances as secondary to heterosexuality, heterosexuality is made to seem like an original (Butler, 1993). It looks, quite plainly and commonly, to be the source from which other sexual identities have emerged. This sets up a hierarchy of sexuality that, with heterosexuality at the top, is measured using gender performance, in that it

> effectively create[s] the distinction between "primary" and "secondary" dispositions to describe and reproduce the distinction between a legitimate heterosexuality and an illegitimate homosexuality (Butler, 2006, 99).

We see this in the constant comparison of marginalised gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersexed people to the hegemonies of compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchy. However, the identities of these marginalised groups always fall short of the normative constructions of families, teachers, students or national citizen. 'Who is the mom?'; 'Who is the dad?'; 'Who is the man in this relationship?' are all questions used to police same-sex couples in relation to heteronormative ideas about what a 'legitimate' relationship should look like. Heterosexuality, and the appropriate gendered ways of doing heterosexual identity, thus becomes a yardstick for measuring other ways of doing gender and sexuality. Again, we see that heterosexuality, even as 'origin', exists only in relation to what it is not (Namaste, 1994) – or in this case, in relation to the 'copy' it supposedly precedes (Butler, 1993 and 2006).

In relation to representation, the dominance of gendered heterosexual performance is an attribute of the commonly accepted idea that heterosexuality is the divine original. That is, heterosexuality is all we see in popular media. While recent international television series, like *The New Normal* or *Brothers and Sisters*,

represent non-heterosexual identities and relationships as having more substance, the local soap operas in South Africa do not necessarily do this. Instead, gay and lesbian characters in television shows often still represent gay and lesbian characters as just that: homosexual. The characters are flat and excessive in their 'gayness'. While these may still be 'real' and legitimate identities, the persistence of sensationalised representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex identities do not reflect their inherent diversity or, in the case of bisexual, transgender and intersexed people, can be completely excluded in day-to-day discourses and media representations.

Media representation has undoubtedly come a long way since Tom Hanks', 1993, performance in the film *Philadelphia* where homosexuality was predominantly associated with HIV and AIDS. International series now show gay and lesbian characters, albeit only gay and lesbian characters and not necessarily bisexual, transgender or intersexed characters, as having lives and social issues beyond their sexual identities. They have careers, families and social lives that are not regulated or stereotypically associated with 'being gay'. However, these series and shows mainly appear on private television networks, and not public television. Therefore access to such representation in South Africa may still be relatively low.

The concern for how people are represented in forums like the media and news press are relevant in that they are spaces for bringing sexual identities into the social sphere. Foucault (1984a/1992, 215) calls this the "isomorphism between sexual relations and social relations". While our social relations include public and economic interactions around social status and reputation which exist under hegemonic ideals, our sexual relations involve somewhat more private interactions regarding desire, pleasure and self-identification. But, our sexual relations can

influence our social spheres, and thus determine our social status in a community – depending on what value is placed on specific kinds of desire, pleasure and identity. Here, gender performance can be seen as the way we manifest and regulate sexual identities in social spaces. It is how individuals choose to perform their self-identified gender and sexuality within a social sphere, if they choose to make such identities visible at all. How our gender performances are produced and read within the confines of society and its norms allows for further identification and evaluation of our sexual practices. This is a difficult balancing act. While society (and its institutional constituents of religion, culture, race, class and so on) defines, rationalises and legitimates, sometimes quite vividly, the kinds of sexual relations and identities that are valued and how they are to be performed through gender, our inner sense of sexuality sometimes also emerges within these confines.

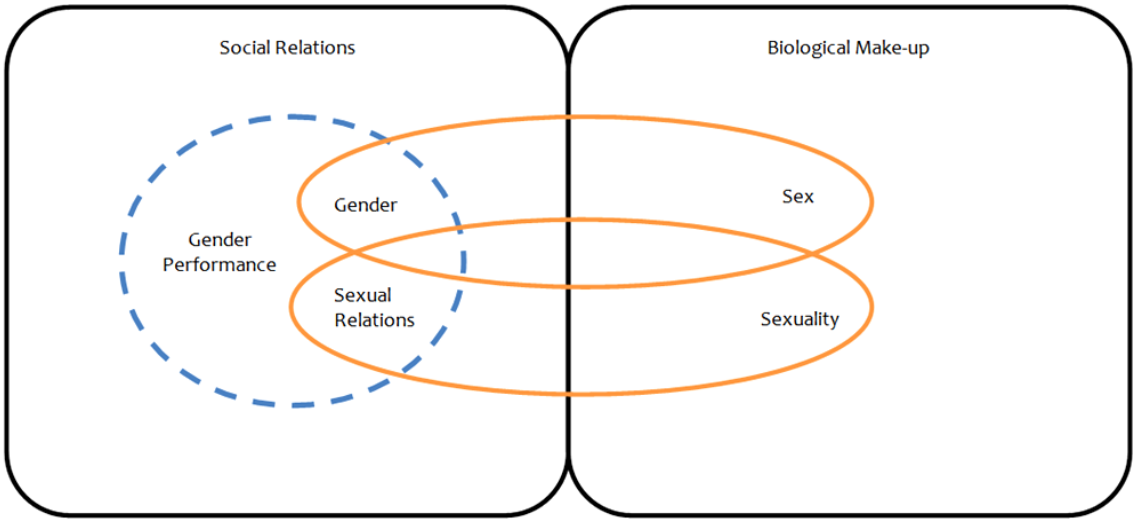


***Figure 2.1**: The Interactions between Foucault's (1984/1992) Social Relations and Sexual Relations being Enacted through Butler's (2006) Gender Performance*

In Figure 2.1, I have identified two realms for the emergence of identity: biological make-up and Foucault's (1984a/1992) social relations. Biological make-up encompasses the anatomical structures of our bodies, from our visible attributes of eye colour, skin colour and biological sex, to the somewhat invisible attributes of our

chromosomal arrangements and the possibilities of a psyche. In this realm, I have identified sex and sexuality (which includes sexual orientation) as biological characteristics.

The realm of social relations includes the socio-cultural interactions between people and social institutions. That is, it would include Gramsci's notion of civil and political society and the subaltern communities that function under and through the institutions encompassed by these. Here, biological sex is realised in the social sphere through gender – where gender is normatively conflated with biological sex to produce 'sex roles' or 'gender roles' according to hegemonic criteria. Similarly, our personal identifications with different sexual identities (as homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, etc.) are brought into the social sphere through our sexual relationships with others. It boils down to whether we take our sexual attractions and act upon them: whether you are a heterosexual, black female who is attracted to tall, muscular men; an intersexed coloured person who is attracted to white women; or an Indian bisexual man who is attracted to people with green eyes – the combinations seem limitless and specific to individuals. We could establish sexual relationships with others based on our biological affinities for a particular kind of person, or the hegemonic requirements for social and sexual relations in the larger community. In the latter option, one may be gay but chooses to conform to the heterosexual norm when choosing a sexual partner. That is, a gay man could marry and have children with a woman in an attempt to suppress or hide his homosexual identity and conform to the more widely socially acceptable heteronormative practices.

However, in this diagram I am proposing that our genders and sexual relations are only realised in social spaces through how we perform them. How we translate our biologically sexed identities into gender, through gender performance,

can affect our social relations. For example, within a patriarchal setting, the gender performances of male and female are associated with masculinity and femininity respectively (Foucault, 1984a/1992; McLean and Ngcobo, 1994; Tucker, 2009; Connell, 2000). In one sense, this kind of social norm insinuates that a butch (masculine) woman, let's call her V, will not be valued. Her social status might be limited according to the degree of masculinity she shows through dress, mannerisms, speech, and the activities she might be involved in (such as male-dominated sports or other pass-times). V would be evaluated according to how she performs her gender in relation to social norm.

In another sense, the evaluation of her gender performance could also be taken to imply her sexuality. Beyond patriarchy, a heteronormative context would mean that certain masculine demeanours in V's gender performance would be equated to evaluations of sexuality according to the common and accepted heterosexual norm. She could be either branded as a 'gender violator' (McCarl Nielsen et al., 2000) or as homosexual – or as a gender violator *because* she is homosexual. Through social interaction, V can further be accepted or discriminated against to varying degrees: from marginalisation to outright violence (Morgan et al., 2009; McCarl Nielsen et al., 2000; Nkoli, 1994; Reddy, 2009; Altman et al., 2012).

However, there is yet another way to consider how social and sexual relations interact in Foucault's (1984a/1992) statement. Because of dominating social norms and expectations for gender performance, especially within the male/female binary, how sexuality can be performed can also be restricted. If V internally identifies as a lesbian woman, she might 'naturally' construct her performance of lesbianism within a framework of masculinity. This can be done through active roles, dress, hair styles and even sexual roles (Beffon, 1992). V may perform a masculine identity because

she understands her own lesbianism as ‘not feminine’. Masculinity may, therefore, be her conscious or unconscious performance choice because it is the only available alternative (re)presented in her context. That is, the male/female gender binary might be the only way to conceptualise a socially non-traditional sexual identity. Furthermore, the kinds of gender performances that V performs are also restricted according to the socially accepted hegemonic construction of her time (Connell, 2000). While her masculine gender identity should not imply a lesbian identity, or visa-versa, Beffon (1994) shows that patriarchal (and heteronormative) power can sometimes dictate the ways in which we do both gender and sexuality, even when we want to break away from restrictive conventions. What is imaginable becomes constrained.

To understand this in more detail, I have attempted to map biological sex, gender and sexual identities along three continua respectively. In Figure 2.2, the identity gem, we can see that each component of identity – sex, gender and sexuality – is not necessarily set in binaries. Instead, if they are thought of as continua, spaces for non-traditional gender and sexual identities emerge. Intersexed people lie within the sex continuum as a real anatomical possibility alongside male and female. Masculinity shifts and merges with androgyny and femininity. Bisexuality is seen in relation to homosexuality and heterosexuality, while still maintaining space for the inclusion of other ways of sexually identifying ones’ self.

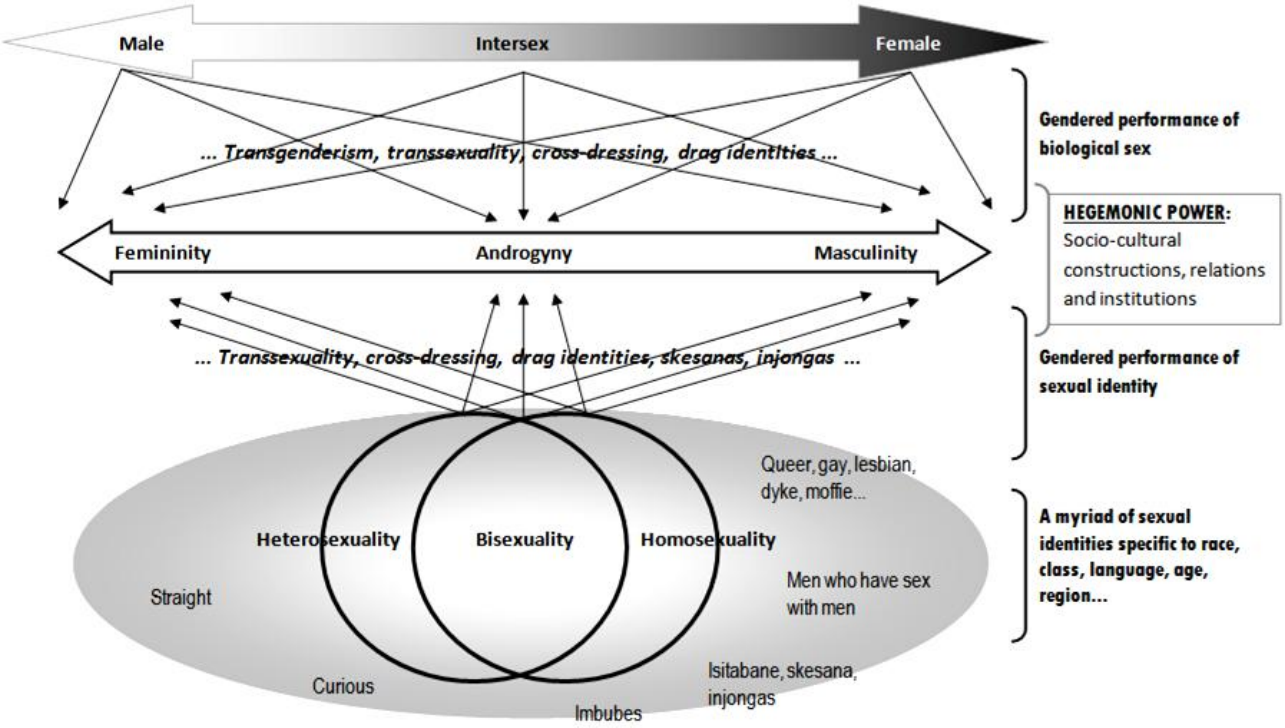


***Figure 2.2**: The Identity Gem – Mapping Sex, Gender and Sexual Identities*

Where sex, gender and sexuality interact emerge the gendered performance of biological sex and the gendered representation of sexualities. Each area, then, signifies the conceptual and real spaces where hegemonic and heteronormative notions of sex, gender and sexuality work. These are the spaces of the mind and personal identification as well as that of socio-cultural and institutional power.

However, it also reveals the lines along which these three aspects of identity are conflated and that there are definite limitations to this model. For example, while there are spaces for transgendered people, I have located this identity within the area of the gendered performance of biological sex. This may not be true for many transgendered people who could locate their identities within the gender or biological sex continua instead (Morgan et al., 2009; Schilt and Westbrook, 2009). Furthermore, sexual identities such as isitabane, skesanas, injongas and imbubes could be argued to be gendered performances of sexuality because they encompass

intimate sexual roles defined by gender norms in ‘Black culture’ (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2009). For example, skesanas play a passive sexual role in same-sex relationships; actively identifying with femininity while injongas play a traditionally male or masculine role during sex (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994). An even greater limitation lies in the fact that the model still excludes the intersections between sex, gender and sexuality with other socio-cultural structures like race, class and religion. It only addresses these through the inclusion of various South African, often racial or regional, identities (moffies, isitabane, skesanas, injongas, and imbubes).

The South African context is a particularly interesting space for this model (Figure 3) to be considered. Here, sexuality has been regulated and conflated with gender across racial and cultural lines as well (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2005; Msibi, 2011 and 2012a; Bhana et al., 2007). How one’s sexuality is realised socially through gender performance changes according to province, city, cultural tradition, racial constructs and history. This means that “there is no single, essential ‘gay identity’ in South Africa” (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994, 3). This is not to assume that there is a single, essential heterosexual identity, but it does reveal the common misrepresentation, and therefore misconception, of homosexuality and its relationship with gender that permeates South African conversations and trains of thought. Sensationalised representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex identities do not reflect their inherent diversity or, in the case of bisexual, transgender and intersexed people, can be completely excluded in day-to-day discourses and conversations.

What we have seen thus far is a rather *queer* vision of sex, gender and sexuality, and the gendered representations of each. That is, expanding what we

commonly understand by these three concepts and their conflations entails disrupting them first: uprooting traditional binaries, destabilising hegemonic discourses and shaking the foundations of common sense. A queer theory is called upon.

According to Doty (1993, xv in Dilley, 1999, 457), the word 'queer' "is a quality related to any expression that can be marked as contra-, non-, or anti-straight". It is the marked identity: the identity that subverts normality and convention, the identity that redefines itself through and despite hegemonic order. From punk rock to drag, queer identities seek to unravel the hegemonic constructions of our time in order to express and create something new.

But, a queer perspective is not just political artistry – subversion for the sake of subversion. It reminds me of a scene from a 2005 film, *V for Vendetta* directed by James McTeigue and written by the Wachowskis, where the two main characters V and Evey discuss art and history. Evey reminisces about her passed father, saying "You would have liked him. He always said that politicians use the truth to tell lies, but artists use lies to tell the truth". Sexuality is always political. From Foucault's (1984a/1992) concept of the interaction between social relations and sexual relations, and Gramsci's (1975/1996) concern with sexuality and education in his prison notebooks, it is easily believable that sexuality is a political tool amongst having other uses. Rubin Gayle (cited in Spargo, 1999, 5-6) emphasises this by stating that

> The realm of sexuality has its own internal politics, inequities, and modes of oppression. As with other aspects of human behaviour, the concrete institutional forms of sexuality at any given time and place are products of human activity. They are imbued with conflicts of interest and political manoeuvring, both deliberate and incidental.

A queer approach to sexuality is thus a political one. And, a queer (self-) identity becomes equal to that of gender and sexual activist in the face of heteronormativity, hegemonic gender orders and the patriarchal discourses that spit homophobia.

Through the subversion of identity performance, a queer theory asks us to take a close look at who we really are and how we bring ourselves into being in the world. It uses subversion – of gender, sexuality, race or anything else – to reveal, on the one hand, the constructedness of identity performance and, on the other hand, the fallacy behind the categories that we believe are real, true and natural. Like the artists that Evey's father refers to, and similarly to Butler's (1993 and 2006) concept of drag, a queer approach requires that we uproot conventional (and oppressive) categories of identity in order to free ourselves from those bonds. It is a somewhat

> extreme form of rebellion that 'rejects a minoratising logic of toleration or simple political interest-representation in favour of a more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal' (Warner, 1993, xxvi, cited in Milani, 2013, 209).

In relation to the gendered representations of sexual identities, this calls for the dismissal of identity categories such as sex (male, female and intersexed), gender (masculine, feminine and androgynous) and sexuality (heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual) as being fixed and given identities (Cover, 2000; Milani, 2013; Ritchie, 2010; McRuer, 2003; Dilley, 1999). That is, it pushes for "a disruption of established sexual categories and the accepted notions of identitarian coherence within the terms of a dichotomy of sexuality" (Cover, 2000, 73). In my model for mapping sexed, gendered and sexual identities I have put forth a queered representation of these categories in the form of continua and the cloud of sexual identities that emerge without any self-identification with heterosexuality, bisexuality

or homosexuality. From slight to extreme chromosomal and hormonal differences in anatomical structure to a variety of socio-culturally subversive ways of performing gender and making sexuality visible, my model attempts to create the space for the emergence of identities beyond traditional and simplistic dichotomies.

It thus becomes easy to see that it is difficult to map the identities related to the conflations between sex, gender and sexuality, and that this model makes assumptions about these identities through its attempt to categorise the ultimately fluid and uncategorisable. It essentialises, to an extent, sex, gender and sexuality in order to make them conceivable – in order to create a 'physical' space for marginalised identities. It is, however, still useful for trying to understand how sex, gender and sexuality work both separately as well as in relation to each other. A visual representation of sex, gender and sexuality, such as this, can function to disrupt normative understandings provided it is conceptualised as itself being changeable and revisable over shifts in time, place, geography and the emergence of other identities (both normative and subversive) and hegemonic constructions. That is,

> [o]nce we understand that gender differences are not matters of biological imprinting, we can start to challenge society's conception of gender and start to reconceive and reconstruct gender roles in accordance with a more equitable system of power relations (Paechter, 1998, 51).

Furthermore, once we understand that gender does not necessitate any particular sexual identity, we can begin to conceive of sexuality as diverse. We can move beyond gender roles as markers of sexuality and find more just ways of representing different sexual identities.

2.4 Representation and Pedagogy

Representation is in part a concern with the question 'Who is the Other?', or even 'What does the Other look like?' It is a political concern for how society constructs 'normal' and its binary Other, and how this plays out in language use: from literature to filmic media, in overtly political spaces to the profoundly ordinary texts of our everyday lives. This happens in different ways: as either defining how the Other can be normal (what and how we should be) or as constructing the normal as *not* the Other (what and how we should not be) (Kumashiro, 2002). It is, then, through repetitive representation, in text formation and of the body, which helps to establish hegemonic socio-cultural norms for performing sex, gender and sexuality (Butler, 1993).

But, such representations, especially of sex, gender and sexuality as I discuss in my theoretical framework, are tools for creating and maintaining power relations. They function under hegemonies. And so, these power relations are contextually based in order to convince particular people, in particular geographical regions, who speak particular languages at a particular time in history of a certain kind of truth. We will find that hegemony changes, constantly renegotiating itself and its hold on the subaltern, in order to remain relevant and dominant (Butler, 2006; Connell, 1995). Representation through multimodal (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001) media of what society and good citizens should be is but one tool for keeping this hold.

Applying Fairclough's (1989) model for critical discourse analysis thus becomes a useful way of thinking about representation in context: from the text (various media, literature and the body itself), to processes of reading and writing identity (how do we represent ourselves and make meaning from the representations

posed by others?), to contexts of being and interacting (what ideological systems allow these texts, readings and writings to exist?) It allows us to consider all the aspects of representation beyond the text itself, including the social and intellectual repercussions that some texts have when they are normative or even subversive.

But, what are the implications for education? Adding a critical literacy approach to teaching and learning about representation means that we always need to think about who is included and who is excluded. Who gets a chance to speak and who speaks for whom? What representations are dominant and why (consider the various critical questions posed by Janks, 1993 and 2010a)? This socio-cultural approach to literacy involves placing education and its means for educating (from the teacher to educational materials, to prescribed curriculums) into socio-cultural context. Doing this permits both teachers and their learners to tease out the power issues at play in their lives. It allows for the identification of normative and hegemonic structures. In this study, I look at teasing out the problematic power issues in normative representations of sex, gender and sexuality in order to get pre-service teachers to look for alternative methods of representing and using identities of sex, gender and sexuality in the classroom – a kind of Gramscian *transformismo* (Jones, 2006) or social transformation for an anti-oppressive and critical education (Janks, 2010a; Kumashiro, 2002).

The American television series *Modern Family* is an interesting example of how the representation of gay couples has changed over the years. From the initial silencing of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersexed (LGBTI) people, to representation of LGBTI people as rambunctiously ‘alternative’ where gay men were shown as always and only being effeminate and lesbian women as excessively ‘butch’, to current more equitable representations that still sometimes draw on the

gendered stereotypes of sexualities. *Modern Family*, however, is also interesting in that its broadcast in South Africa, in 2013, was interspersed by adverts from Kia, a popular Korean motor vehicle manufacturer.

As sponsors for *Modern Family*, Kia aired a number of short adverts that used the back windscreen of various Kia cars on the market in 2013 and an animation of windscreen stickers. These stickers are basic stick-figure drawings of people (male and female adults and children) and animals (usually common pets) with each human sticker available doing a range of activities: surfing, reading, playing golf, or posing in various stances. On the road, people buy these stickers to represent their own families on the backs of their cars. The idea behind the television adverts is based on the slogan “no matter how your family starts, make sure they end up in a Kia”, and thus shows the different ways that people could meet each other and fall in love – to eventually establish a family unit.

In one advert, a man playing golf strikes the golf ball and hits another male golfer on the Kia windscreen. He yells, “Sorry!” as the other man turns around. When they face each other two hearts appear above their heads to signify their attraction to each other. The utter surprise of seeing this on television, especially in such a normative and understated way, caused me and my partner to rewind and re-watch the advert three times. We were in a state of disbelief that a gay couple could be represented without stigma, stereotype or excessive gender conflation.

The role of representation in society, then, is to reflect and reify the changing values of that society. Under hegemony, those values need to be accepted by both the subaltern population and the dominating groups that govern in order to reproduce and maintain power relations. This means, then, that representations of different groups of people are always informed by a positioned source. And, it requires that in

order to reach equitable representation, especially of previously marginalised groups, we need to ask critical questions of the texts (representations) we see (Janks, 2010a; McLaren, 1995).

The critical in critical questioning is that aspect that analyses how power relations are established through language and representation. That is, how does text work to position us? In Janks' (1993) forward to the *Critical Language Awareness Series*, where critical language awareness is a variation of critical literacy with a linguistic focus, she poses a set of useful critical questions:

> Why did the writer or speaker make these choices? Whose interests do they serve? Who is empowered or disempowered by the language used? (Janks, 1993, iii).

From these questions we can see that the choices made when constructing texts always involve enabling some while disabling others. Some groups are represented whilst others are marginalised, misrepresented or completely silenced (Connell, 1995). Similarly, in reading we bring to the text our own socio-cultural understandings that allow us to either accept or resist different meanings. If we are aligned with normative and hegemonic definitions of gender roles then we are more susceptible to agreeing with more homophobic or sexist representations of people. However, if we belong to such marginalised groups, it becomes easier for us to resist and critically question normative representations.

In order to understand fully how critical questioning works we need to consider literacy as a socio-cultural process for meaning-making. Here literacy is the ability to read the word and the world (Freire and Macedo, 1987), and therefore to *write* the word and world into being as well. Our methods for constructing and interpreting the places in which we live are contextually bound in time and space. Our languages, cultures and social values all contribute to the possibilities of

representation within particular places. For example, in Russia where it is currently illegal to even say the word ‘gay’, the texts available do not permit the possibility for a conversation on same-sex marriage. The hegemonic and legislative powers have extended any homophobia wrought by the subaltern into the socio-economic sphere. The everyday and larger political spaces in Russia are thus policed and regulated.

However, this also implies that ‘world’ is a relative term. From the everyday experiences of home, work and social life to the issues of larger political and economic power, ‘world’ pertains to the environments that constitute our personal lives. For many, this is only as large as the local communities they live in while for others it may encompass global issues of governance and regulations. This can be distinguished as “*P*olitics with a big *P* and *p*olitics with a small *p*” (Janks, 2010a, 186). In a hyper-mediated world, global big-P politics do enter the personal lives of individuals. However, our lives are dominated by the little-p politics of normativity: the everyday texts that normalise and naturalise hegemonic order. The twenty-to-thirty second Kia advert was an everyday text that subverted what could be represented as conventional ‘falling in love’, but it did this in the household spaces of the common South African people – albeit only those with televisions and connectivity to satellite broadcasting. It was understated and subversive magic that worked to normalise same-sex, albeit only gay male, attraction. The more everyday texts do this in seemingly unnoticeable and diverse ways, the more normalised sexual diversity could be.

Ironically, how everyday texts could work to normalise the identities and representations of marginalised and silenced groups is also how current hegemonic texts work to set up inequitable power relations. Through repetition, ‘nature’ is constructed. The task, then, is to deconstruct normativity in ways that reveal its

constructedness (Butler, 1993 and 2006; also see Janks', 2010b, *Redesign Cycle*, 183). Fairclough's (1989) model for *critical discourse analysis* becomes a useful framework for understanding how texts work in socio-cultural contexts to establish and maintain relations of power.

Fairclough's (1989) model shows three boxes, each placed inside the other in the style of babushka dolls. The inner most box is labelled *description*, the middle box is *interpretation* and the outermost box is *explanation* (Fairclough, 1989). Description involves the reader "engage[ing] with the physical text and its use of language. It allows him/her to consider the role of particular linguistic devices, their interactions, as well as their contribution to the whole meaning of the text" (Govender, 2011, 62). On one level, the reader must be able to read the text and, furthermore, access it. And yet on another level, the text-designer needs to consider where and to whom the text will be accessible.

Under the label of interpretation, the text undergoes processes of production and reception (Fairclough, 1989; Janks, 2005a). Here, the text is constructed by the designer after a number of choices have been made: Who is the intended audience? What linguistic devices can be used to address this audience? Who is included and excluded, and how are they represented? The answers to these questions, whether they are determined consciously or not, emerge out of a hegemonic socio-cultural norm for constructing texts and representing people or institutions. Similarly, the reader, in their own socio-cultural context, reads the text under their own set of hegemonic norms. If the two contexts, of designer and reader, are aligned it is probable that the reader will be an ideal reader and thus accept the text without much questioning. However, if the two contexts and their values are not aligned, the reader might ask the critical questions that pertain to power, quite easily, in order to resist

the positioning power of the text. Meaning-making, then, takes place in ways that are specific to people, context and time.

This leads to the third aspect of Fairclough's (1989) model: explanation. At this point we, as readers or even as text-designers, can consider the allowances that our contexts give us. That is, what is imaginable under the hegemonies that function in one's context? As a text-designer, what representations (inclusions and exclusions) are appropriate? What am I allowed to say, and how? As a reader, what meanings does my context allow me to make? In what ways would it be possible for me to resist the text, and what are the consequences? The hegemonies that cause us to regulate our own reading and designing, that make us regulate the meanings we make from texts, result in predominantly normative texts being produced and reproduced. It is in this 'box' that we can consider how power works with the text and the people who interact with texts, as well as what in our history, politics, economics, religions and cultures help us to regulate and police ourselves and the ways we interact with texts.

Through the latter two 'boxes' we, as teachers, could intervene to consider what other, non-hegemonic or non-normative possibilities exist – especially when texts (the inner-most box) can be prescribed by schools and government. It is within these spaces that our students and learners can explore different perspectives and ways to read a text, or the variety of options available for designing texts. Furthermore, where normative texts (re)produce marginalisation, misrepresentation and silences, students and learners could explore the possibilities for re-imagining texts in more equitable forms.

But, what can be considered a 'text' is more than just printed words. While traditional texts still play a pertinent role in literacy practices inside and outside of the

classroom other textual spaces and modes have rapidly become more accessible and useable in everyday and formal educational settings. From multimedia texts in digital spaces to printed visuals in the media, our understanding of what makes a text has expanded into a theory of multimodality (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). Developments in technology have broadened our view of how semiotics could work, and so, more than ever, meaning is being conveyed in new and interesting ways through a myriad of modes: “For example, a television news broadcast uses various modes: it includes written words (the linguistic mode), pictures (the visual mode), a particular layout (the spatial design mode) and sound (the audio mode)” (Ferreira, 2009, 2). Here, a mode is “a socially and culturally shaped resource for making meaning” (Bezemer and Kress, 2008, 6) and each mode comes with its own set of semiotic tools for conveying and making meaning; their own set of affordances and constraints. What is important to note here is that how modes are used and the meanings they are used to convey, or that they elicit from their audiences, are all situated in time and space. That is, whatever the mode, a text (as the inner-most box from Fairclough’s, 1989, model) should always be considered in relation to the two outer-most boxes (interpretation and explanation), and that each text uses its mode in different ways to position its readers.

A critical approach to teaching and learning requires, then, an understanding of how to teach the multiple skills for making meaning from various modes. That is, to move from literacy to literacies (Ferreira, 2009) and, furthermore, to develop an understanding of how different modes influence each other’s meanings (Unsworth and Cléirigh, 2009). In the case of pluralising literacy, we need to understand that reading as a process for making meaning happens not only in formal educational settings for learners. Rather, it is something that even happens in small ways, all the

time. We read billboards, election posters, newspapers, road signs and cereal boxes outside of our formal learning environments. We read newspapers, listen to the radio, feel brail on elevator buttons, taste cultural occasions and smell socio-economic circumstances on bodies and in suburbs. It is, then, part of the role of the teacher to bring these texts into the classroom and help learners to understand the meanings that they make from these (Ferreira, 2009). Because all texts are positioned, the somewhat instinctive meanings we make can sometimes overlook the myriad of other possible meanings available. A critical literacy, or possibly critical multiliteracies, should then push learners into considering the power relations established by those texts when they explore other perspectives, and how the modes for constructing texts enable texts to serve different interests.

Knowing how written words interact with the images that are placed around them, then, becomes an integral concern for critical literacy practitioners (teachers and learners). It is an interest in semiotics for the purpose of understanding the word and the world (Freire and Macedo, 1987). Unsworth and Cléirigh (2009) reveal how text and image work together in different ways depending on the choices of the designer: Firstly, “cohesive ties” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976 cited in Unsworth and Cléirigh, 2009, 152) enables the same meaning in written text to be represented in a visual text, usually juxtaposed nearby. The idea here is to maintain meaning across modes. Secondly, written text and images could represent similar relations apparent between coordinating and subordinating clauses in written English. That is, how dependent are each clause, and so each image (especially in relation to the text it is meant to work with) on each other for meaning (Martinec and Salway, 2005, in Unsworth and Cleirigh, 2009, 153). This, surely, then implies a concern for what information is foregrounded or backgrounded, and so what information has been

positioned as more important. Or is one mode meant to elaborate on, extend or enhance another? How does meaning change if one mode is taken away? How could the relationships between different modes be changed? And so, how could meaning and representation be transformed?

We need, then, to move toward critical literacy as an approach to teaching and learning, where critical literacy can be "conceptualised as a form of social action – as political" (Janks, 2010a, 186) – that works across semiotic modes. The little-p transformations of critical literacy can be seen as a contribution to larger big-P politics of society that is no less valuable. Under hegemonic order, it is the value system of the subaltern that needs to be addressed in order to transform the hegemony itself. Classrooms can become creative spaces for social transformation and awareness.

South Africa's history of racial apartheid informs the current racial, religious and linguistic fragmentation that still persists in the country. If we re-read the apartheid story, however, it becomes quite evident that gender and sexuality were concerns for the apartheid government too. As we have discussed in the background (chapter 1) to this study, even the kinds of sex that people were permitted to engage in, privately, became legislated (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994). In relation to issues of representation, Retief (1994) considers how restrictions of what was allowed to be published in apartheid South Africa affected how we saw, and still see, non-heterosexual identities. By censoring publications and mass media, "attempts to ensure that homosexuality is kept out of the sight and mind of the general public" (Retief, 1994, 104) were implemented. It thus places non-heterosexual gender performance and relationships outside of hegemonic order. When people eventually do see non-heteronormative representations they are surprised, and so these identities are constructed as unusual, 'deviant' or Other. The real problem is that this

representation, or lack thereof, can result in a homophobic social response (McCarl Nielson et al., 2000; Nkoli, 1994; Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Luyt, 2012; Cameron, 2006; Thurlow, 2001; Reddy, 2009 and 2012; Mkhize et al., 2010; Msibi, 2012a and 2012b). Despite the existence of representations like the Kia Modern Family advert, it would seem that homophobia and sexism still run rife.

The persistence of heterosexualisation and homophobic responses to 'gender violations' in order to regulate and maintain traditional ideas of sex, gender and sexuality (McCarl Nielson et al., 2000) becomes a concerning area for primary and secondary education, where learners are socialised to engage in the particular cultural gender roles as presumably determined by their biological sex. And, this is not an isolated concern: from Luyt's (2012) study on the construction and maintenance of dominant ways of performing masculinity in South Africa through talk, and similarly, Cameron's (2006) revealing analysis of heterosexual college men's talk to affirm their own sense of masculinity through the Othering of men identified as gay and the evaluation of women's breasts; to Thurlow's (2001, 25) qualitative account of "homophobic pejoratives [and] verbal abuse" (parenthesis added) in a United Kingdom high school. The ways in which genders and sexualities, and their 'violations' (McCarl Nielson et al., 2000), elicit quite patterned responses of homophobia or heterosexualisation reflects the ongoing and tireless work of hegemonic ideologies.

Critical literacy thus becomes an important tool for making both representations and their social effects visible. It helps to develop an awareness of how texts work in society to (re)produce power relationships. It forces us to consider those that are misrepresented or left out of society and the connotations that result from being excluded: from invisibility to criminalisation. For this study, it becomes a

method for looking at heterosexual and patriarchal norms in different cultures “not as a monolithic entity, but as a type of regulative power dependent on other structures in society” (Tucker, 2009, 3). That is, we see heteronormativity and patriarchy as hegemonic structures that function in different ways through civil and political society.

However, Tucker (2009) poses a critique that can be applied to how I propose to use critical literacy:

> The first danger comes, quite simply, by focussing at the level of representation and limiting an understanding as to how materialities that surround, limit and give opportunity to different communities can go to affect such representations (Tucker, 2009, 13).

Tucker is right; a focus on representation is not enough. It stunts one’s perception of social transformation and may even limit the imagination of what is possible beyond text-based work. However, critical literacy does address this issue. In the workbook I have designed for the Bachelor of Education critical literacy course, students are not only required to analyse the texts they use, but are to show a critical awareness of the issues that emerge when designing texts for their own, eventual, classrooms. They are to use the critical literacy tools given to them during the course to develop a four-page set of worksheets that gets learners to deal with issues of how sex, gender and sexuality are normatively conflated through representation. While I can only hope that these materials will be used in these students’ classrooms in the future, I do believe that their designs could develop a critical understanding that their classroom materials are always positioned, and thus always seek to position learners. Being conscious of this might allow teachers to critique the materials they receive and use, and become more conscious of the choices they make when designing their own materials and lessons.

This brings to the forefront the concept of *redesign* (New London Group, 2000) or *reconstruction* (Janks, 2010a). In resisting texts that reflect normative, hegemonic values, we can develop a critical skill for exploring other ways of representing groups: from different perspectives, in different contexts, at different times or as existing under different social hegemonies. It follows that critical literacy, then, pushes for more than just reading and re-reading texts and imagining their social impacts. Instead, the first step to socially transformative literacy work is that of remaking what already exists. Janks' (2010b) *Redesign Cycle* illustrates that the process of redesign is cyclical and continuous: from designing the text, to deconstructing the text, to redesigning a text that is available for further deconstruction and reconstruction. "It is important that this process is conceptualised as cyclical because every new design serves a different set of interests" (Janks, 2010a, 183), and so every design and redesign should be deconstructed to make space for more possibility and critique. In spiralling through (re)design, learners and teachers can venture into the diverse ways of being in and understanding the world.

How, then, can we envision education? While critical literacy has a long history in South Africa – from People's Education to the inclusion of critical language awareness assessment standards in South Africa's National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2003 in Govender, 2011) – it has recently been excluded in the new policy for national education. The most recent document, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (CAPS, 2011) backgrounds critical literacy, or even critical language awareness, as a relevant approach to education in South Africa. This is troublesome considering the consistent reports on homophobia, 'corrective rape' of predominantly Black lesbian women, and bullying in schools that is based on

regulating hegemonic masculinities. Education needs to return to an approach with a human rights agenda.

Furthermore, higher education, especially teacher education and training, has not always dared to engage students with theories of sex, gender and sexuality in critical ways. From Bennett and Reddy's (2009) study, *Researching the Pedagogies of Sexualities in South African Higher Education*, it was found that while a number of faculties and departments across a range of universities in South Africa did, in some way or other, include or address issues of sex, gender or sexuality, the conditions for teaching and learning as well as the complexities associated with theories of sex, gender and sexuality were a major hindrance (Bennett and Reddy, 2009, 250). Whether issues related to sex, gender and sexuality are dealt with in higher education classrooms or lecture halls rely on the investment that lecturers have in such issues or fields of scholarship, and therefore their personal motivation for dealing with such topics.

In a similar vein, Francis and Msibi's (2011) work with university students, who were also in-service teachers, shows the possibilities for an education that pushes students to confront controversial topics, such as those related to sex, gender and sexuality, in South Africa. In their study, postgraduate students could choose an elective when registered for a course entitled *Social Justice Education*. One elective module dealt with heterosexism and homophobia. These students dealt with issues related to languages and gender, religion and heterosexism, racism, and teachers' fear to confront sensitive topics in classrooms. While this study was particularly useful for understanding teachers' concerns and the possibilities for dealing with issues of sex, gender and sexuality in both teacher education and schools, it was attended by only those students who already had an investment or interest in the

topic. That is, these students chose to be there. What is needed now is a teacher-education course that is located as part of a more mainstream academic curriculum, so that it may engage with students with a variety of positions, investments and interests whilst still drawing on a critical approach to teaching and learning that is committed to social justice. The critical literacy course that this study looks at does just this. It is a compulsory course for English subject-majors that uses critical literacy to engage with controversial, but pertinent subjects.

It therefore becomes important to understand what a critical approach to teaching and learning means. Kevin Kumashiro explains that *critical pedagogy*, a holistic term that includes critical literacy but also expands over all learning areas in schools, includes four main approaches that each have their own advantages and disadvantages: 1) “Education for the Other” (Kumashiro, 2002, 32-39) involves identifying ‘different’ or marginalised learners and teachers and creating spaces for them within the school and the curriculum. However, this is arguably a form a marginalisation as well. By fragmenting and differentiating between ‘normal’ learners and teachers and those in need of support because of their differences, there is the risk of constructing marginalised students as lacking or disadvantaged. Diversity, in this case, isn’t necessarily represented as a resource for education (Janks, 2005b). This is not to say that the support systems that this perspective offers are not useful for uplifting marginalised or silenced people. It does, however, require some caution in *how* these support systems look, function and are interpreted. 2) “Education about the Other” (Kumashiro, 2002, 39-44) moves away from “interpersonal interactions to the school curriculum” (Kumashiro, 2002, 39). This perspective revolves around the idea that teachers should teach their students about marginalised or oppressed groups. That is, in the case of my study, it requires that I provide my students with

information about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed people. This, however, could develop a kind of anthropological distance between the classroom and the group(s) under study. That is, the construction of difference is established by the representation of knowledge – classrooms have information about 'normal' society, people and institutions, and 'Other' information about the societies, people and institutions that do not fit the norm. Again, while it is important to have information about marginalised and oppressed groups, it is how we deal with this information, and how we use it to construct these groups that require care. 3) "Education that is critical of privileging and Othering" (Kumashiro, 2002, 44-50) is the perspective that my study draws on most. That is, anti-oppressive education includes "a critical awareness of oppressive structures and ideologies, and strategies to change them" (Kumashiro, 2002, 45). Teaching and learning in this perspective requires that learners identify their normative socio-cultural constructions and then deconstruct them to determine how power works in their contexts. It is "*un*learning or critiquing what was previously learned to be 'normal' and normative" (original emphasis: Britzman, 1998, in Kumashiro, 2002, 46). The problem that lies with this perspective seems to draw on Tucker's (2009) concern with focussing on issues of representation and the assumption that the deconstruction of hegemonies logically leads to social action. In this regard, redesign (New London Group, 2000) could be seen as a form of social action. Lastly, 4) "Education that changes students and society" (Kumashiro, 2002, 50-54) works to answer the problem of social action in the previous perspective. This viewpoint on critical pedagogy involves more long-term practices of deconstruction and reconstruction (redesign). That is, it understands that "oppression is produced by discourse, and in particular, is produced when certain discourses (especially ways of thinking that privilege certain identities and

marginalize others) are cited over and over" (Kumashiro, 2002, 50). Kumashiro draws on Butler's (1993 and 2006) discussions on repetition as a way of establishing normativity (see part 2.3 on Sex, Gender and Sexuality in this literature review). By making critical practices of design, deconstruction and redesign (Janks, 2010a) a normal and consistent part of education, teachers and learners may take those practices into their own lives outside of the confines of the classroom. The skills and knowledge of a critical approach to education, then, should have a higher potential for being transferred into everyday life – and thus becomes more than just a practice associated with schools. As teachers, we should want our learners to live critical lives.

Dealing with representation, in the context of my study, is about 'un-closeting' gendered sexual identities in the classroom – including homosexual, bisexual, transgender intersexed and even the diversity within heterosexual identities. By deconstructing heteronormativity and patriarchal order, and then exploring the non-hegemonic identities that traditionally exist outside of these confines, I might be able to make topics related to sexual diversity salient and approachable to a wide range of audiences, especially when learners' identity work in schools include

> Struggling to acquire the means to represent [oneself] and others [...] occurs under socially given conditions which include structures of power and social relations, institutional constraints and possibilities but also available cultural repertoires (Epstein and Johnson, 1998, 116).

By bringing gender and sexual hegemonies to the forefront in classrooms, teachers could develop critical practices in their learners. That is, learners should be taught how to question the discourses they speak and how those discourses influence their ways of seeing, thinking, doing and believing. Critical literacy, as an approach to teaching and learning, allows us to do just that. Concerns with the positioning power

of texts (be they oral, written, visual, gestural or other) pulls the web-strings of power in society into view, not as the inversion of heteronormativity but the critical questioning of power in relation to all sexual identities in a given context.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter I explore the logistical aspects of the research project. In order to negotiate the gendered representations of sexualities in the classroom, it is vital that the structure of the materials I design and use, the audience I present the lessons to and the context within which a critical literacy approach is considered and understood. In doing so, I can be clear about what actions can be taken in class (pedagogy) and the content needed in order to act in those ways (content), as well as the means and functions of assessment in such contexts. I therefore consider the research site, time and the participants I have chosen, the ethics and limitations associated with these, as well as the kinds of data to be collected and the methods for analysing these data sets.

3.1 Mapping the project

The project itself is multilayered, in theory and data analysis. It therefore became useful to use Fairclough's (1989) model for critical discourse analysis not only as a tool for analysing different data sets, but also as a framework for designing my research project (see Figure 3.1 on page 89). On one level, the workbook I design becomes a source of data in itself. The project, then, revolves around the process of producing (Fairclough, 1989) this workbook as well as understanding the critical decisions that are involved in that production. A critical self-reflective process should allow me to consider and critically analyse the choices I have made during the production of the workbook and its form in final draft. This then leads to the collection of data during implementation of the workbook: field notes, notebooks, and assignments. At this level of data collection, the responses I get from students and the written products of each lesson and the course as a whole that serves as data.

To add to this, I have also kept a research journal in which I record my own notes on each lecture session. While I found that the majority of these notes are reiterations of the field notes, they also include reflections on interactions that I had with individuals and groups of students. Overall, the part of the data set that relates to the processes of reception (Fairclough, 1989) takes place when the students and I engage with the workbook. Finally, the workbook, its design, as well as its implementation and reception all occur within particular discursive and ideological structures (Fairclough, 1989). That is, the social context of this project and the theory related to critical literacy, sex, gender and sexuality all inform the production of the workbook. Also, institutions like the university, individual students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and even South Africa's historical context inform the reception of the workbook during implementation. Similarly, the design of students' own materials emerge from the same dynamics: students design and critically reflect on the design of their own materials. Thereafter, I use a critical discourse analysis framework to understand the processes of production and reception as well as the conditions of production and reception (Fairclough, 1989) of students' materials, drawing on thematic content analysis to help focus my analysis of discourse throughout the study.

To keep track of the data sets, I have thus coded the data in order to keep track of the information and where it appears:

Data type	Example	Explanation
Observation Field notes	A-L4:06	The first letter of this code refers to the first or second repetition of the course, where 'A' refers to the first and 'B' to the second repetition. 'L4' indicates the lecture session out of a total of five lecture sessions. The final number, in this example '06', is related to the section in the field notes that this particular extract comes from.
Notebooks	A14.4	Again, the first letter (A or B) relates to the repetition of the

		course that this notebook comes from, and thus the repetition that the student who produced this notebook attended. The first number (in this example 14) is the notebook number while the second number (4), after the point, relates to the section within the notebook that this extract comes from. Each section in the notebooks has been identified according to a particular idea that is being explored. For example, an autobiographical piece might be a section on its own, while drawings of men and women might be grouped together with definitions because they worked as part of the same activity in the lecture session.
Researcher's journal	RJB-L4:24	The research journal (RJ) entries are also coded according to the repetition of the course (as either A or B) and the particular lecture that I comment on in that entry (L4). The final number indicates the section within the journal that I have taken this particular extract from.
Students' materials	1.12W2A3	Students' materials have been coded by firstly identifying the stream (either 1 or 2) that it came from, and thereafter by a number that indicates its random position in relation to the other assignments that were submitted in that stream: hence, 1.12 in the example. Furthermore, the extracts referenced in the data analysis are located within particular worksheets (W2) and activities (A3) as they emerge in the data set. That is, each student produced materials that comprised of four worksheets with an optional number of activities in each worksheet which are identifiable by the characters W and A, respectively, in the coding for these items.

Table 3.1: *Data Coding*

The 'sections' that I have identified in each of the data sets are groups of information that relate to each other. In the field notes, I have organised the observational notes

according to their relation to the phenomena identified in chapter 5 of this paper and colour-coded them to indicate which course repetition and lecture session they come from. The field notes represent patterns of responses and the interactions that emerged during the implementation of the workbook in the critical literacy course.

Similarly, after each lecture session, I recorded my own notes in a research journal. Here, the 'sections' refer to each part of my entry that deals with a different topic. The information has not been reorganised in the same way as the field notes, but are coded in the same way to represent which lecture session and course repetition is being discussed. I then use this coding to name the extracts taken from the notebooks: the first letter (A or B) refers to the course repetition and the final number relates to the 'section' I have quoted from in the notebook. The sections in the notebooks are structured in the same way as those that are in my research journal. However, each notebook is also numbered (the middle figure in the complete code). This serves as a quantitative figure related to how many notebooks were submitted as well as a random name for each notebook that has no connection to students' registered numbers (student numbers) at the university, or their names and national identification numbers.

The data that is collected during implementation, then, is analysed in relation to hegemonic discourses (Gramsci, 1975/1992 and 1975/1996; Connell, 1995 and 2000; Butler, 2006), or the lack thereof. What cultural, institutional and taken-for-granted structures are informing the responses to the workbook? In order to understand these data sets, I use Fairclough's (1989) model for critical discourse analysis (CDA) as well as my own identity gem which considers how representations of sex, gender and sexuality are or might be conflated.

Mapping the project itself in the CDA framework allows us to see how the different components of the research fit into three main categories: text, processes of production and reception, and conditions of production and reception (from Fairclough's 1989 model for critical discourse analysis). The benefit of using a CDA framework is two-fold: Firstly, it allows for the design of a critically self-aware workbook, by foregrounding the decisions that I, as author of the workbook, make in the attempt to convey meaning, as well as the socio-cultural influences that inform my decisions. And secondly, a CDA model provides a structure for understanding how people (the research participants) make meaning from my text and the socio-cultural conditions that inform their meaning-making. Figure 3.1 (page 89) provides an overview of the research project using Fairclough's (1989) model for critical discourse analysis as a methodological and analytical framewor. I see the different layers of the model as nested into one another such that the discursive data provide a means for interpreting the processes of production and the conditions of production and reception provide the explanations for the data and their production and explanations for how they are read and taken up.

Conditions of Production:

As the author, the social concerns of inclusivity, voice and representation of conventionally marginalised or silenced gender and sexual groups is at the forefront of my research objectives. Therefore, within the context and theory of particular forms of gender hegemonies and heteronormativity, the process of design also becomes an exploration of how far cultural ideals can be pushed, and what regulatory systems are at work, which influences my own design choices. This, then, relates directly to how I construct the course (as it is based on the workbook) which becomes a condition of production of students own materials.

Processes of Production:

During the production of the workbook, there are decisions about design related to what to include and what to exclude. Whose interests are to be served and how? What voices, people, ideas should be foregrounded and when? What language do I use to speak and ask questions about gendered and sexual groups? Critical reflexivity is this useful for interrogating the processes of producing a critically aware educational material. Furthermore, what do students' own materials, and thus their own design choices, suggest about how they have received my workbook during implementation?

Texts:

At the centre of the model is the workbook which I have designed. The texts and pedagogical choices that I have made are evident in each draft of the workbook.

After implementation, however, the observational field notes, students' notebooks and assignments constitute the 'texts' that are subject to a critical discourse analysis that draws on thematic content analysis.

Processes of Reception:

At the point of implementation, this part of the model is concerned with how readers interpret and respond to the workbook itself. What meanings do the students involved make from the text? Do readers align themselves with the position of the text or resist it, and how?

Conditions of Reception:

In terms of reception, this layer can account for students' responses to the text in the context of hegemonic power. That is, what cultures, traditions and socio-political discourses are being drawn on by readers of the text to speak about and interact with the text? How does this relate to the objective of the text and the hegemonic and heteronormative structures under which it is trying to work? (adapted from Fairclough's, 1989, model for critical discourse analysis).

***Figure 3.1**: Mapping the two-fold benefits of Fairclough's (1989) model for CDA.*

3.2. Research Site, Time and Participants

Through this qualitative study, I am primarily involved in researching the design and implementation of an activity-based workbook for a critical literacy course that deals with deconstructing normative representations of gender and sexuality, as well as exploring other gendered and sexual identities. This is implemented with pre-service teachers taking a critical literacy course in their Bachelor of Education degree, at a university in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Initially, the study (and so the design of the workbook) was aimed at being implemented in high school classrooms (further education and training phase: grades 10-12) with in-service teachers. However, this proved difficult because of the need to train in-service teachers on critical literacy as well as on issues of sex, gender and sexuality. While it might still be possible to use and teach from the workbook without much training, it would be more accurate to gauge the workbook's efficacy if its users (teachers) have some background in critical literacy theory and practice. It was then decided that the implementation of the workbook would be more appropriate for pre-service teachers instead.

Being trained in critical literacy and having done previous research in the field, it was decided that I also teach the course myself. This would allow me to bring my understanding of the workbook into the lecture sessions and reflect on the design during implementation. However, it also implies that, as an authority on the text, I might possibly be unable to detach myself from my own views, prejudices or interpretations of the workbook activities. I, therefore, propose to work with the activities (and the pre-designed lecture presentations that are based on the workbook) quite closely. I do not change any of my design choices during the

implementation process, rather I propose certain changes after implementation, a critical reflection and an analysis of the responses from students.

The design of the workbook took place at the beginning of 2013, and took four months to complete. During this time, it was organised that I teach part of the critical literacy course for second and third-year students at the university, and that this was to become the site of my research project. The courses ran from August 2013 to September 2013 (see section 3.1.2 for further details for the courses). The students who attended these lectures were in their second or third year of study for a Bachelor or Education, and took English in education as their major or sub-major. They also ranged from foundation phase (grades 1-4) and intermediate and senior phase (grades 5-9) to further education and training phase (grades 10-12) specialists, all of whom were 18-years-old and older at the time.

3.2.1 The Workbook

The design of the workbook comes from a history of literature and empirical studies on critical literacy, sex, gender and sexuality in South Africa and internationally. It is based on Janks' (1993) *Critical Language Awareness Series,* where a variation of critical literacy, called critical language awareness (so named by Fairclough, 1992), is adopted as a pedagogical method for deconstructing texts under pertinent categories such as *Language, Identity and Power* (Janks, 1993) and *Language and Position* (Janks, 1993) through a number of activities. This entails using multimodal texts (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001) including visual images, maps, graphs and videos as sources of authentic texts that learners can deconstruct. It also includes critical questioning that picks out the elements of texts that are used to construct meaning: word choice, grammar functions and other linguistic devices.

The ‘critical’ in this form of critical questioning involves looking at lexicon: from the selection of words to the figures of speech that hide or make meaning ambiguous; transitivity and voice, where subjects and objects are considered in terms of their relationship with verbs and verb-phrases; nominalisation, as a method of turning actions into things; speech, turn-taking, pronouns and mood, where direct and indirect speech reporting influence how much voice and whose voice is foregrounded, as well as how voices are presented to the reader; polarity, tense and modality, whereby authority is given or taken from positioned arguments; articles (*the* and *a*); thematisation and rheme, as ways of presenting new information; and the sequencing of information, people, voices and themes (Janks, 2005a, 101-102). Such an awareness of how language can be used to create power relations becomes useful not only for analysing texts and teaching learners about critical literacy practices, but also for designing a workbook in a way that is critically self-aware.

In the data analysis chapter, *Designing the Workbook* (chapter four), I engage in a critical reflection on the process of designing the workbook itself. It is here that I map out the critical decisions that I made whilst designing the workbook and their possible implications for the students who use it. It is also important to note that this chapter focuses on the original print-based workbook that I designed for the research project. We begin, then, with a rationale for the workbook – its sections, activities and objectives – in part 4.1. In doing this, I situate my design choices and the objectives of each section of the workbook in the literature on sex, gender, sexuality, representation and power.

However, the students only receive this printed workbook at the end of the course. I therefore present the activities and texts from the workbook to the students

using Microsoft PowerPoint presentations as well as refer to resources in a course pack. Part 4.2, *Course Materials*, discusses the implications of these pedagogical decisions – to develop a course pack, provide the workbook only at the end of the course, and adapt and present the workbook using multimodality in digital/electronic spaces.

In part 4.3 of chapter 4, *Processes of Production,* I then delve into the processes and phases that I became involved in during the design of the workbook. It is at this point that I consider how the workbook has changed over time because of my engagement with theoretical concepts and the constant search for texts. This analysis will be helpful for understanding students' responses to the course and my workbook (which is explored in the second data analysis chapter), as well as for considering the possibilities for how my workbook could be redesigned.

3.2.2 The Critical Literacy Course

The critical literacy course and students' responses to it provides the data for assessing the implementation of the workbook. This course runs every year, but sometimes by different lecturers and covering different relations of power that critical literacy could be applied to. In 2013 I helped to develop and co-teach the course with the course lecturer, Prof. Hilary Janks (HJ). We begin with critical literacy concepts (taught by HJ), which were aimed at developing theoretical content knowledge. However, this study focuses on the last two weeks of the course where the workbook is used to focus on a real social issue. While a critical literacy approach is useful for creating awareness and even tackling issues of race, class, religion or age in relation to power and representation, this particular course looks at gender and sexuality specifically. Classroom observation, field notes and students' notebooks provide the

data for assessing students' responses to my critical literacy workbook on gender and sexuality. The aim is to understand how the workbook is interpreted, what responses it elicits, and the kinds of lessons it allows for.

The workbook is comprised of four main sections or 'chapters': 1. Language, 2. Policing and Subversion, 3. (Re)Design and 4. Social Impact. However, I present the workbook in five lecture sessions over two weeks and have thus separated the 'policing and subversion' chapter of the workbook into two lecture sessions: 'policing' and 'gender violations'. I also add more texts for analysis during these sessions and broaden the content due to the extended time frame allocated to me. Section one looks at the words we have available to us in English, and other languages which the students might have a repertoire, to speak about sex, gender and sexuality. The students and I look at what these words mean and how they, in relation to their contemporary connotations, already represent a conflation of meanings between gender and sexuality. Section two, on gender violations, considers what the possibilities for doing gender in subversive ways are. In this section we look at extending the concept of gender as social practice or performance. Section three is interested in how we, as readers, as teachers, as students and as social agents, police gender in both subtle and extreme ways. In this session we look at the Caster Semenya case as well as a McDonald's advert that represents the conflations of sex and gender and then gender and sexuality, respectively, in interesting ways. In section four we focus on (re)design to think about how we could represent some of the things we see in the first three lectures in new and possibly more equitable ways. Finally, in section five, we bring the issues of representation, gender and sexuality into the context of education. In this session, the students are required to think about what the social impacts of gendered representations of sexualities are for schools,

the classroom, teachers and learners. Topics such as homophobia, bullying and other possible reactions to these issues are dealt with. Table 3.1 (below) is a reproduction of the course outline:

Session	**Topic**	**Reading**
1: (2hrs) HJ	*Introduction to critical literacy:* What is critical literacy? Janks' model: • Representation – design and redesign • Power – little p and big P politics • Identity and diversity – producing the subject and access What is a text? Asking critical questions	
2: (2 hrs) HJ	*Tools for critical analysis:* Understanding grammar Visual literacy	
3: (1 hr) HJ	*Design:* Designing critical literacy projects for the classroom	
4: (2 hrs) NG	*Language*: In this session we will look at what language we use to speak about sex, gender and sexual diversity. What identities exist and how do they emerge? What are the socio-cultural events that take place to make us think about sex, gender and sexuality in the ways we already do? How can we map sex, gender and sexuality and their relationships with each other?	Bring definitions of: 1. Heterosexual (straight) 2. Homosexual (gay/ lesbian) 3. Bisexual 4. Asexual 5. Transgender (transsexual/ cross-dresser/ male-to-female/ female-to-male, etc.) 6. Androgynous 7. Intersexed 8. Metrosexual
5: (2 hrs) NG	*Gender Violations*: In this session we consider alternative (Other) ways that people do sex, gender and sexuality. How do these come to exist and represent themselves within certain social norms? What is subversion and how can we think about it and represent it?	McCarl Nielson, J., Walden, G. and Kunkel, C. A. (2000). *Gendered Heteronormativity: Empirical Illustrations in Everyday Life.* In *The Sociological Quarterly.* Vol. 21. No. 2. P. 283-296.

6: (1 hr) NG	*Policing*: How are we regulated by society? How do we regulate ourselves and each other to do sex, gender and sexuality 'correctly'? What is compulsory?	Greenfield, R. (12 June 2012). ***Runner Caster Semenya Looks a Lot More Feminine Than She Did in 2009***. Retrieved 15/05/2013 from http://www.theatlanticwire.com/entertainment/2012/06/runner-caster-semenya-looks-lot-more-feminine-she-did-2009/53446
7: (2 hrs) NG	*Design*: Using the various tools for deconstructing texts, how are we now able to (re)design texts that represent sex, gender and sexuality in more conscious ways? What is the role of the designer/writer in representing different groups?	
8: (2 hrs) NG	*Social Impact*: Why do we, as teachers, need to know about diversity in sex, gender and sexuality? What is the role of a critical literacy approach to misrepresented, marginalised and silenced groups in education? And, how do different groups respond to issues of sex, gender and sexuality in real life?	Judge, M. (1 July 2007). ***Teachers Never Intervened – homophobia in South African Schools***. Retrieved 20/06/2013 from http://www.tigweb.org/article.html?ContentID=14297
9: (1 hr) HJ	*Conclusion:* Drawing the threads together	

Table 3.2: *Critical Literacy Basic Course Outline.*

The critical literacy course runs twice over six weeks (each course, the same, is presented over three weeks). The students registered for this course have been split into two groups, and so the course is repeated for each group. There are three two-hour sessions and two one-hour sessions within which I cover the issues of sex, gender and sexuality and their conflations with each other using critical literacy. The first week is taught by the course lecturer (HJ) and covers all the theoretical content required for understanding critical literacy as an approach to teaching and learning English (Home Language). Weeks two and three are presented by me (NG) and cover the implementation of the workbook as described above. This ends with a brief on the assignment task, wherein we explore some texts, both normative and

subversive, in relation to using a critical literacy approach and designing critical literacy materials for the classroom.

During the classes, which I taught, classroom observation data was collected by my co-lecturer. Her observations were focussed by the following questions: How does the teacher respond to students' comments? What language (words, phrases, etc.) are used to speak about gender and sexuality? What aspects of the text do students focus on through their speech and questions? What comments do students make about the activities and the texts they are based on? What responses do students give to the teacher's comments and explanations? What language (words, phrases, etc.) do students use to speak about gender and sexuality? Is there any differentiation between gender, sexuality and biological sex? What do they differentiate and what do they conflate? Are there any cultural, traditional or religious comments?

Each student was also provided a blank notebook, within which they complete the activities that occur during the classes I teach. These activities range from drawing male and female figures to answering and developing critical questions for print, media and filmic texts. Those students who consent to participate in the study have submitted their notebooks to me for analysis and inclusion in this study, where I critically analyse them using critical discourse analysis tools from, primarily, Fairclough (1989) and Janks (2010a). Here, I am interested in understanding how students write about and visually represent different gendered and sexual identities.

In Chapter 5, the data is analysed to interrogate how and why students respond to the workbook activities and texts in the ways that they do. That is, students' responses in class have been theorised according to whether or not they conflate sex, gender and sexuality and the relationship this has with hegemonic structures

and ideologies about sex, gender and sexuality that might exist in South Africa. In order to present this in a meaningful way I have identified a number of key phenomena that occurred during the implementation of the course. Each phenomenon is discussed in relation to the patterns of responses that occur during the lessons. However, interesting things may not always appear in patterned form, and so this chapter also includes the analysis of a number of interesting moments and interactions that occurred as a result of the critical literacy course and my pedagogical decision not to reveal my own sexual orientation explicitly. Therefore, it becomes useful to use my model for mapping sexed, gendered and sexualised identities (the identity gem) as a theoretical framework for understanding how diverse identities are represented in class. Do students step out of gendered norms, heteronormative and heterosexist discourses and into conceiving identity as social practice or performance (Connell, 1995; Butler, 2006)? If they do not, what hegemonic structure could their understandings emerge from?

3.2.3 Assessment and (Re)Design

In the tradition of (re)design, the course's assessment task is focused on helping students express their own, possibly changed or changing, views and understandings of sex, gender and sexuality in representation, or even a redesign and critique of the workbook presented to them in class. The students are, therefore, required to produce their own educational materials for teaching gender and sexuality using a critical literacy approach. They are required to design a four-page worksheet that uses critical literacy to teach about an aspect of sexuality (and its conflation with gender or sex) and then write a brief rationale for their design choices. This means that students are required to choose an aspect of sexuality and how it is represented

through text – for example: family structures, relationships, sports and sportspeople, and so forth. Once they have identified an 'issue' they then need to identify what information learners should get or where they should look, and how the issue manifests in social spaces (through media, advertising, newspaper and other textual prints, and so on) (Janks, 2014). Finally, they are to develop activities that get their learners to deconstruct these texts, research the social impacts of these texts and then to (re)design for social transformation (Janks, 2014). It should be noted that the students are encouraged to think about how their learners' (re)designs could have real social effects within their schools and/or communities. That is, new visions for understanding and representing society in more equitable ways need to move beyond the classroom to create awareness, education and the possible transformation of local systems (see Janks, 2010a, on little-p *p*olitics, as well as the work of Vasquez, 2000 and 2001 on constructing a critical literacy curriculum). This means that learners' work should be encouraged to move out of the classroom and into the school, local community or other social spaces in order to explore more meaningful ways of socially transforming the world and creating a wider audience that will view the (re)designs.

A critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989) of, as well as the application of the identity gem framework to the written assignments will be used as analytic tools to give understanding of how the students have interpreted my workbook and the lessons in it. It should also allow me to see how their representations of different identities (or use of different representations that have already been produced) could possibly be located on the identity gem model in either equitable or problematic ways.

Furthermore, it is possible that the analysis reveals the extent to which students are comfortable with dealing with issues of gender and sexuality, by analysing their text choices and the ideas, voices and identities that they choose to foreground, background and even silence. In this sense, it might be possible to understand how the students themselves negotiate the gendered representations of sexualities throughout their material designs, and how their understanding of sex, gender, sexuality and representation shifts or stays the same. Furthermore, it may provide an indication of their quality of research and analysis: Where do they source texts from? What kinds of texts do they choose? Do students adopt a critical approach to dealing with representations of sex, gender and sexuality, or do they reproduce hegemonic ideals? Are they asking critical, analytic questions or only comprehensive, read-and-recall questions? And, is the opportunity for the redesign of texts created?

3.3 Ethics

The ethical concerns of this research project start with informed consent (Cohen et al., 2005). All participants were given a written brief on the structure and objectives of the project in comprehensive language, and further oral briefing has been conducted during the critical literacy course itself, as participants required more information or explanation. This briefing included the aims of the project, an outline of the workbook, the options available to students who choose to participate, and my roles as researcher and teacher. Furthermore, gaining permission from student teachers and the course co-ordinator(s) involved is vital. I have opted to use an adapted version of Bell's (1991, cited in Cohen et al., 2005, 56) *Conditions and guarantees proffered for a school-based research project* to structure the ethical

considerations of the research project. This includes addressing the following ethical concerns in relation to educational research within the context of this study: 1) all participants will be offered the opportunity to remain anonymous and/or confidential where possible, 2) all information gained from written feedback and oral responses will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, 3) all the participants involved will have the option to view a copy of the final report upon request, 4) this project is for assessment at the University of the Witwatersrand, with the possible opportunity to publish in the future, and 5) PDF and printed copies of the workbook I designed were given to the participants at the end of the course, as the workbook has been designed to benefit schools and their teachers, learners and classrooms.

Due to the controversial connotations associated with much of gender and sexuality, any participants who experience any trauma and require counselling can be directed to the Counselling and Careers Development Unit (CCDU) at the University of the Witwatersrand. The counsellors have been briefed on the study and the topics in the course itself.

3.4 Limitations

Conducting this project, and furthermore teaching this content, does pose some concerns. Specifically, there is the concern of researcher-as-authority-figure in that I will be conducting the lessons on gender and sexuality during the course myself. First and foremost, the students are registered for their critical literacy course and any research will not impede on this. Therefore, should participants at any point feel that their participation in the research is affecting their work, they will be advised to recall any submissions to the research project that they have made. Also, all assignments will be internally moderated by the course lecturer to verify that I, as

researcher and co-teacher of the course, do not grade students unfairly. This should limit the influence of research on the participation by the students and the work that they do for the university course.

As qualitative research, this study is geared toward understanding how gender and sexuality (and its inherent but somewhat un-/misrepresented diversity) can be taught in schools to create awareness and possibly even social change. Through the abovementioned process, I aim to delve into the issues related to teaching such topics, hoping that a sensitive topic, like gender and sexuality, can be confronted and dealt with in meaningful and critical ways by adopting a critical literacy approach. And always, as is the political aim of critical literacy, that education can be aligned with a human rights agenda.

Chapter four: **Designing the Workbook**

The design of the workbook is based on practices of deconstructing heteronormativity and gender hegemonies in order to consider how contemporary social norms have been constructed and continue to construct us. Furthermore, using the New London Group's (2000) concept of redesign, 'alternative' ways of doing gender and sexuality are considered as transformative identities within hegemonic social order. However, this was not an easy task. The workbook has been drafted and redrafted eight times and then adapted for projector-presentation (using Microsoft PowerPoint) in a university lecture hall. Despite the media changes for presenting the material, there were also concerns about what to include: What do teachers and learners need to know about sexual diversity? How much information should be given versus how much information should be gained through practical activities? And, what identities should be included and excluded?

In the following section, I will delve into the journey I took in order to design the workbook itself: From finding exciting and subversive resources online or in the media to the re-conceptualisation of the workbook after 'discovering' new and more profound theoretical discussions. The process of production that the workbook underwent shows the complex negotiations between theory, texts and socio-cultural context needed in materials design. I begin, however, with a rationale for the four main sections in the final printed workbook. It is vital to recall that the workbook was only made available to students after the course (on submission of their final assignment) as a resource for them to use in their own teaching practice. I therefore discuss other course materials that were included in the course, which were available throughout the lecture sessions, as well as the pedagogical move to present the workbook in Microsoft PowerPoint format.

Each section critically reflects upon how the final product came to be and, using Fairclough's (1989) model for critical discourse analysis, how different elements of the workbook are positioned. Because no text is neutral and every text serves the interests of only some (Janks, 2005b and 2010a), it is important to be aware of the design choices we, as teachers, make when constructing educational texts. In this way, I aim to consider how my design choices affect meaning and what assumptions, knowledge or experiences I may have been drawing on when making those decisions.

4.1 A Rationale for the Workbook

In this section, I examine my choice of activities and conduct a critical reflection of both the intentions and limitations of the workbook. I ask myself some critical questions about how the workbook is positioned in relation to my purpose for designing it: Who has been included and excluded? What are the affordances and limitations of my activities? And, to what extent is the redesign of an activity needed?

4.1.1 Language

The words we have to speak about sex, gender and sexuality can be slippery territory. Over time, words shift in connotation according to shifting socio-cultural circumstances and power relations. Different languages have different words and meanings that could be attached to those words. The objective, then, in this first section of the workbook is to consider what language we use to speak about sex, gender and sexuality, and how the meanings of those words have been conflated in various ways. When we speak about men and women, do we actually speak about masculinities and femininities? Do we know how to name gender ambiguous people

in non-discriminatory ways? What identities do we not actually have linguistic terms for, and what does this mean for both the people who inhabit those identities and the people who think and talk about those nameless identities? What words do different languages have or not have and what meanings do they convey? And, finally, what does language reveal about how different socio-cultural, political and possibly even religious contexts perceive diversity in sex, gender and, especially, sexuality?

To address these issues, the workbook begins with a task where students need to draw a picture of a man and a woman (workbook: page 1). A seemingly simple task, but it is one that should reveal how students differentiate between the sexes. Beyond this is the question of what visual markers are used to differentiate between sexes that are included and do they relate to representations of sex or gender? Here, I will look at dress, position of the body, colours, hair styles, or any other methods that students might use to mark different sexed and gendered identities.

The question now, however, is whether asking the students to 'draw a man and a woman' already suggests that they should draw on their knowledge of gender. Should the instruction really be phrased as: "Draw a person"? Without defining what kind of person they should draw, such an activity might open up possibilities for all kinds of representations. What would be interesting to note, then, is if the idea of a 'universal man' is still created to represent the generic human even in the absence of criteria for what kind of person to draw.

The main idea of this section of the workbook is to foreground the dilemma between connotation and denotation (linguistic terminology and meaning): what meanings are used in everyday life, by ordinary people? In the mass of social, cultural, political, religious and linguistic conflations of sex, gender and sexuality, do

we still remember (or did we ever really know) the denotative meanings of these words and how to use them? And, even though shifts in linguistic meanings have occurred, do we fully understand the social impact of these meanings?

However, while we may have diversity on one end of the linguistic spectrum,, we might also find absence and silence on the other: what happens when a word for an identity does not exist in a language? What is seemingly real and authentic, or even natural, can begin to be uplifted and revealed as social constructions (Butler, 2006).

This section also deals with the transformation of ideas. The students are given an activity on the concept of ‘gender violations’, a term posed by McCarl Nielson et al.(2000) in their article *Gendered Heteronormativity: Empirical Illustrations in Everyday Life*. The article defines a gender norm violation as "do[ing] things members of your gender category don't usually do or don't do things they usually do" (as cited in McCarl Nielson et al., 2000, 283). It is also referred to as a ‘gender transgression’. While these terms are useful for differentiating between normative gender behaviours and somewhat alternative behaviours for people of particular genders in the article, it is somewhat problematic on its own. I am hoping that this activity will probe how subversion of gender and sexual identity is sometimes interpreted as a violent, criminal deviation from what is seen to be traditionally and unquestionably normal and how language is used to construct this relationship of violent semiotics. Again, students need to think about the possible social impacts of using language through various forms of representation to construct subversive identities using negative and stigmatising discourses.

From social impact to social transformation, the next major step is to think about how an understanding of both normativity and subversion, in relation to

representation and the construction of identity can be used to redesign conventional representations. Therefore, the final part of this section (Workbook: p7) asks students to think about how they could reconstruct their initial drawing of a man and a woman in ways that might include non-heteronormative or even non-patriarchal gendered and sexual identities. The possibility of neutral representation thus needs to be questioned. Students are also required to think about what design choices they make when redesigning their own drawings; asking themselves some important questions for a critical reflection and awareness: Who will I include and who will I exclude? Will I differentiate between different kinds of people (for instance, according to gender, sexual orientation, race, class, religion, etc.) and how? What visuals will I use to represent different people? Are these representations fair? The main objective of this activity, then, is to reveal the constant positioning power of texts – that for every redesign a different set of interests are served (Janks, 2010a) –and that when it comes to sexual identity, a dichotomous gendered representation can be incredibly difficult to escape.

4.1.2 Policing and Subversion

In the second section of my workbook I focus the activities on how the language of policing, heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality is used "to examine heterosexuality as a political institution which disempowers women" (Rich, 1993, 227) as well as people who identify with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersexed identities. It is "[e]ducation that is critical of privileging and Othering" (Kumashiro, 2002, 44). Moreover, this section also looks at occurrences of the subversion (Butler, 1993 and 2006) of gender and sexual identities as ways of expanding our imagination beyond prescriptive gender performances, exploring

human agency in constructing identity through representation and, finally, considering whether or not sexuality can be made visible through performances of gender.

Although the ideas that are explored here are similar to the first section of the workbook, there is an important shift that is made. In this section, the workbook moves beyond cognitive understanding and upheaval of the terminology used to refer to sexual diversity. Rather, we begin to consider how these issues of semiotics are manifested in society through various modes of representation.

The first step in this process of unveiling the constructedness of normativity is to identify how something becomes 'normal'. Therefore, instead of jumping into a discussion of what is Other, it is my purpose firstly to allow students to come to terms with what has already been established and become dominant. By understanding how dominant ideologies and institutions have taken up the hegemonic seat in different contexts and at different times, we not only consider heterosexuality as powerful or normal, but also as *made*, *constructed* and *persuasive* in different ways and in different spaces. It also allows us to include heterosexuality in this study and to maintain a focus on sexuality as a whole, and not exclusively on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex identities – that is, 'Othered' identities. Such exclusivity can be threatening to heterosexual students (I have heard complaints of 'gay indoctrination' in my undergraduate years when we did a short course on gay and lesbian identities in schools) and stands a high risk of representing non-heterosexual identities as Other or as criminal without questioning the possibly oppressive context of their occurrences.

A main concept that this section teaches, amongst others, is that of heteronormativity. It is important to note, then, that some texts have been included in

the workbook because of their display of particular concepts. For example, activity two makes use of a McDonald's advertisement (Retrieved 15/05/2013 from http://www.funnycommercialsworld.com/mcdonalds-commercial-come-as-you-are-4003.html) that was originally designed for French television but was banned shortly after its first airing. I identify this advertisement as a clear illustration of how heteronormativity works in social settings.

Students move, then, from the subtleties of heteronormativity to the sometimes overt and ridiculous practices of policing compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1993). To scaffold this task, students are first required, in activity four (Workbook: p10), to think about what policing means. In order to do this, I have presented a number of short statements that are commonly used to comment on or reprimand different social practices: 'Sit up, sit straight', 'She's such a slut', 'Don't be such a girl!', 'Act like a man', 'That's so gay!', 'You're such a player!', 'Who wears the pants in this relationship?', 'Just buy her some jewellery', and 'Who's the wife and who's the husband?' Statements, commands and questions such as these can be heard and even used by family members, teachers, colleagues, ourselves in seemingly natural and understated ways. The question is, then, why do we say these things and what social impact do they have?

We start this activity by looking at examples of verbal policing that, I assume, many students will be able to recognise. While some are related to the things we, as teachers, would say to our learners, many of the examples I provide correlate with the policing of sex, gender and sexual identities. They are, then, tools for the everyday socialisation of people into heteronormative and hegemonic gender identities (Walker, 2004; Tirrell, 1999; Thurlow, 2001; Francis and Msibi, 2011; Martino, 1995; Msibi, 2012a).

Comments such as ‘Sit up, sit straight’ function to police our bodies and the physical spaces that we inhabit in schools (Dixon, 2001), while ‘She’s such a slut’ and ‘Act like a man’ condition us into doing femininity and masculinity in more socially acceptable ways. What they mean and how much authority they give their users will change according to time, place, person and culture. Different languages might even have their own versions of these phrases.

Over and above these, I also include phrases that police heteronormative ideals. Comments like ‘Who’s the wife and who’s the husband?’ reinforce that relationship, and more specifically marriages, are firstly between men and women and secondly involve traditional male-female gender roles. In other words, it can be used to assume a heteronormative construction of relationships (that it is between men and women only) or that even in same-sex relationships there is, or should be, male and female gender roles. A short question like this is based on a belief, conscious or not, that heterosexuality is the original and that other sexual relationships are mere copies of that authentic form (Butler, 1993). That is, it is assumed that relationships cannot exist authentically if they do not follow some heterosexual criteria.

An example of how we police each other and ourselves is illustrated quite vividly in an article about South African Olympic runner, Caster Semenya. I refer to the article by Greenfield (2012), *Runner Caster Semenya looks a lot more feminine than she did in 2009*, in activity four (Workbook: p11-12) for reasons discussed earlier (see section 1.1 Background). Students are required to answer some questions about the article and its representation of Semenya, both discursively and visually through its use of photographs. They are then given a tool for linguistic

analysis that is focused on uses of grammar and figurative language (from Janks, 2005a and 2010a) to deconstruct the article.

I use the Greenfield (2012) article in the workbook because of its explicit use of policing sex and gender, as well as its conflation of the two. The fact that this article only addresses Semenya's athletic career, and how the hormone treatment has adversely affected her running and qualifying times, in one final paragraph emphasises how media and society's concerns with correct gender performance and sex identification are prioritised over actual ability. It also reveals how a concern for gender performance and conformity is held in higher esteem than that of the underlying issue of biological sex, in the case of Caster Semenya.

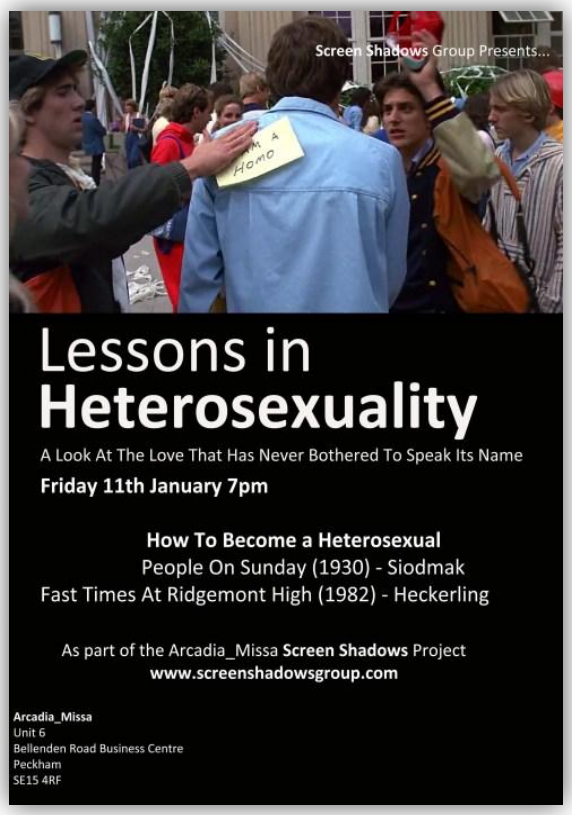
While there are questions that deal with policing gender specifically, other questions on sequencing and representation were also included in the activity. The role of the teacher at this point is to relate this back to the policing of sexuality, especially in its methods of establishing and maintaining heterosexuality as compulsory. Most importantly, however, is that all the questions used to get students to analyse this text were developed from, and lead onto, a more in-depth analysis of studying the linguistic features of texts (Janks, 2005a and 2010a). From Janks' (2005a) article *Language and the Design of Texts* and her 2010 book, *Literacy and Power*, we are given a table for identifying linguistic features in texts and then analysing their impact on meaning and representation.

This table allows us to see how particular word choices, layouts of information and arguments contribute to the positioning power of texts. Students, in this exercise, need to deconstruct the text according to the categories outlined by the table – that is, plot examples from the Greenfield (2012) article that fit into these categories – and then explain how they function in relation to power and

representation. From definite and indefinite articles, which indicate shared or common information; to modality, which positions statements or arguments as certain or at some level of uncertainty; to the sequencing of information, which makes us perceptive to what and who is deemed important as well as what has been included and excluded. Therefore, Janks' (2005a and 2010a) tool for critical analysis forces us to notice the minute workings of texts in their function to position readers.

Finally, this section ends with a reconsideration of heterosexuality as a dominant form. To do this, students are given an image (the first in the series below) of posters from a Canadian university course on "Lessons in Heterosexuality" (Retrieved 06/06/2013 from www.screenshadowsgroup.com). The written text has been rendered more legible in Table 2 which follows the images:

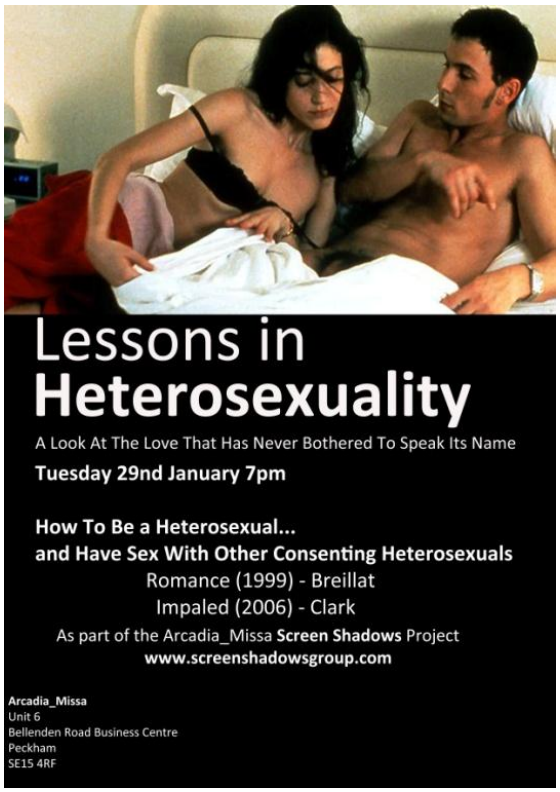
1.



2.



3.



4.

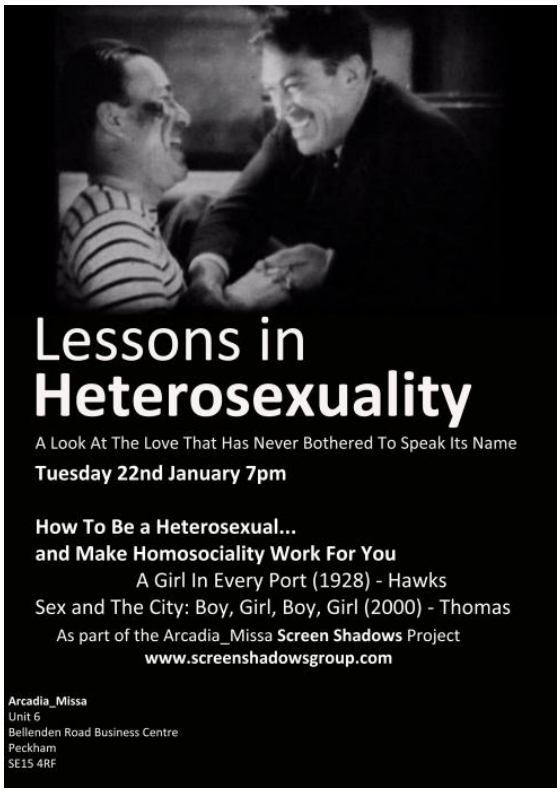


Figure 4.1: *Lessons in Heterosexuality series* by Arcadia_Missa Screen Shadows Group retrieved 06/06/2013 from www.screenshadowsgroup.com

Table 4.1: Lessons in Heterosexuality	
1.	Screen Shadows Group Presents... **Lessons in Heterosexuality** A Look At The Love That Has Never Bothered To Speak Its Name Friday 11th January 7pm **How To Become a Heterosexual** People On Sunday (1930) – Siodmak Fast Times At Ridgemont High (1982) – Heckerling As part of the Arcadia_Missa **Screen Shadows** Project www.screenshadowsgroup.com Arcadia_Missa Unit 6 Bellenden Road Business Centre Peckham SE15-4RF

2.	Screen Shadows Group Presents... **Lessons in Heterosexuality** A Look At The Love That Has Never Bothered To Speak Its Name Friday 11th January Tuesday 22nd January Tuesday 29th January As part of the Arcadia_Missa **Screen Shadows** Project www.screenshadowsgroup.com Arcadia_Missa Unit 6 Bellenden Road Business Centre Peckham SE15-4RF
3.	**Lessons in Heterosexuality** A Look At The Love That Has Never Bothered To Speak Its Name Tuesday 29nd January 7pm **How To Be a Heterosexual...** **And Have Sex With Other Consenting Heterosexuals** Romance (1999) – Breillat Impaled (2006) - Clark As part of the Arcadia_Missa **Screen Shadows** Project www.screenshadowsgroup.com Arcadia_Missa Unit 6 Bellenden Road Business Centre Peckham SE15-4RF
4.	**Lessons in Heterosexuality** A Look At The Love That Has Never Bothered To Speak Its Name Tuesday 22nd January 7pm **How To Be a Heterosexual...** **and Make Homosociality Work For You** A Girl In Every Port (1928) – Hawks Sex and The City: Boy, Girl, Boy, Girl (2000) - Thomas As part of the Arcadia_Missa **Screen Shadows** Project www.screenshadowsgroup.com Arcadia_Missa Unit 6 Bellenden Road Business Centre Peckham SE15-4RF

Table 4.1: *Lessons in Heterosexuality*

Because “[t]he ‘sexual mosaic’ of modern society is a dynamic network in which the optimisation of power is achieved” (parenthesis added: Spargo, 1999, 23), it is important to take a broader view of how power is negotiated in social contexts. Often we see power as a distinct negative, a thing to be held by someone or something. However, power relations, according to Foucault (in Spargo, 1999), are more complex than this. Power shifts from person to person or institution to institution. Like Gramsci’s (1975/1992 and 1975/1996) conceptualisation of hegemonic power and its constant need to re-establish and maintain itself in the context of socio-cultural change, Foucault’s imagining of power involves a similar fluidity. That is, power is negotiated between people and social structures, and is never gained completely.

A view of power as changing means that to resist or gain power for oneself does not always mean using a *reverse discourse* (Foucault in Spargo, 1999). Here, a reverse discourse means that language, relationships and representation move dominant groups to the margins and bring subordinated groups to the centre. Instead, power should rather be seen as a constant shift between these two: discourses of normative power and reverse discourses of resistance. Therefore, in my workbook we do not only consider the perspectives of marginalised lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersexed groups, but also step back to understand the hegemonic status of heterosexuality as it exists in different socio-cultural contexts. The identities that take centre stage in this workbook often change in order to deconstruct what is ‘normal’ and then to reconstruct ‘normal’ in order to imagine new possibilities for representation and identity – thus bringing hegemonic and marginalised identities, and their representations, into the centre at different times.

It is, therefore, important that we do not forget to study how normativity works through common sense skills like assumption and policing (even in its simplest forms). The texts provided by Arcadia_Missa Screen Shadow Group thus allow us to explore the dominant forms of sex, gender and sexuality, and in the workbook I ask a number of questions that pertain to the negotiation of power and the establishment of both the 'normal' and the 'deviant'.

4.1.3 (Re)Design

In a chapter in Vasquez's (2008) *Negotiating Critical Literacies with Young Children*, named 'Our Friend is a Vegetarian', we see young kindergarten learners engaging in critical practice. After an annual school barbecue, one of Vasquez's children wants to do a "hand-count survey" (Vasquez, 2008, 103) of what everyone in the class ate at the event, only to discover that one learner didn't eat anything because he is a vegetarian. They then go on to problematise the event itself and its assumption that meat-eating practices are normal, and thus the exclusion of vegetarians from this space. What I find particularly significant about this chapter is how, in a matter of minutes, young learners are engaged in discussions of fairness, equality and social transformation related to their own local settings – and all quite independently.

It is interesting to note how the learners identify a social problem: such as the marginalisation or exclusion of vegetarians from a school function that is meant to include all school learners and their parents. They spot a significant design flaw in the school's annual event and explored ways, with the help of the teacher, to transform it.

What is also noteworthy is that the learners seem to move quite naturally from big-*P* *P*olitics to little-*p* *p*olitics (Janks, 2010a): The problematic exclusivity of the barbecue was identified during a section on national deforestation issues in America:

> We all had been engaged in an inquiry about rain forests at the time of the barbecue and talked about the need to preserve the rain forests so that animals and people that live there would have food and shelter. We also talked about whose interests are served and who profits and benefits from materials harvested from rain forests (Vasquez, 2008, 104).

While '*P*olitics' involves a concern with larger global issues, '*p*olitics' includes a concern with more local, everyday instances of power (Janks, 2010a). That is, the latter involves a concern for the living of daily life in relation to fairness, social justice and human rights.

In section three, *(Re)Design*, of the workbook (p15) I have thus chosen to shift away from the study of heterosexuality, heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality as larger, overarching concepts to a more recognisable and local instance of these greater power relations. In the tradition of a critical and post-structuralist practice, this activity is an example of "the shift to a more micro-level of analysis that [lends] itself better to the complex interplay of different aspects of inequality" (parenthesis added: Barrett and Phillips, 1992, 4). This section thus begins with an analysis of a common restroom sign. It is normative in every way: there are two figures (male and female); there are two colours (pink and blue); and there are markers of differentiation (the dress and shoulder width). The question is, however, are these representations of sex, gender or sexuality and how have these identities been conflated? Furthermore, how do these representations, in their commonplace simplicity, position those who use these restrooms and the subversive

identities that exist beyond these representations? That is, what are the social implications of these signs?

This is, in a way, a reiteration of previous activities: section 1, activity 1 whereby students needed to draw a man and a woman; and section 1 activity 9, whereby students needed to redesign their drawings from activity 1. In this section we consider what choices have been made to represent different sexes and whether these design choices actually relate to sex, gender or sexuality. Or, as conflation goes, are markers of gender used to represent and distinguish between biological sexes?

This also should allow us to bring up the idea of the universal man (refer to Figure 5.1), men and/or masculinity as representative of humankind. With regards to domination, particular representations, especially in abundance, are used to create a norm. In some sense this recurrence of a particular representation, such as the universal man, creates the idea of an original Adam and his rib-subordinate, Eve, in binary male-female terms as normal and natural (Butler, 2006). But, this kind of recurrent representation also limits the imagination of what is possible: that women could be construction workers, that public spaces do not have to be separated into spaces for men and spaces for women, and that there is more diversity in performing identity. And, while this could be conceived as over-politicising a rather simple text, this activity might allow us to open our minds to the ways in which even the simple, almost invisible texts of our time create in-groups and out-groups and categories of appropriate and inappropriate.

Furthermore, as a (re)design task, this activity asks students to think about alternative categories for the human population – outside of the gender/sex binary. Questions such as: What/who will you represent? Will you show difference? How?

What differences will you show? (Workbook: p15) might get students to try and undo the categories they already know in the attempt to discover other, possibly more inclusive or discriminatory ways to represent diversity. The most important function, then, is to ensure a critical reflection on the process of (re)design, and the changing interests that their new texts serve in the discovery that

> 'Interests' [...] are precarious historical products which are always subjected to processes of dissolution and redefinition (parenthesis added: Pringle and Watson, 1992, 66).

In this way students might explore how texts are positioned and sometimes repositioned but they can never be neutral in their construction or the interests that they serve (Janks, 2010a).

The second major part of this section turns to advertising and visual literacy (Janks, 2010a; Ferreira, 2009; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001) as tools for constructing and reading texts beyond print. I consider this a good opportunity to get students to think about how adverts use and sell lifestyles as well as products, and the design choices that go into constructing a text that actively and visibly tries to position its readers.

In the first sense, advertising is a clear textual display of hegemony. Companies design texts – visual and print-based, online and interactive, audio and video – with a particular consumer market in mind which constitutes, in part, "the material organization meant to preserve, defend, and develop the theoretical and ideological 'front'" (Gramsci, 1975/1996, 52). While Gramsci goes on to look at the press in this notebook entry, he does also identify popular media, which I consider to include popular advertising media, as a mode of 'material organization'. This relationship between products and consumers themselves seems, then, to be established through representation.

From a history of industrialism and (post-)Fordism, the corporate companies that emerge from capitalistic societies need not only produce a thing to sell but also a consumer market to sell to (Ewen, 1976; Cope and Kalantzis, 1997). This means representing products in ways that both align themselves to the value systems and daily needs and aspirations of consumers (Gramsci's, 1975/1992 and 1975/1996, subaltern) as well as to construct consumer's lives as being in deficit without said product. In the first instance, "advertisers were concerned with effecting a self-conscious change in the psychic economy, which could not come about if they spent all their time talking about a product and none talking about the 'reader'" (Ewen, 2001, 35). The audience of the advert becomes an important group with regards to their likes, dislikes, needs, wants and aspirations. Identifying these categories, and more, should allow advertisers to speak directly to the lives and experiences of their readership, allowing for the construction of a very convincing text. Images and text can all be juxtaposed to create meanings that draw on the values of the consumer market, making the product and company that is advertised relatable, knowable or even compassionate.

In the workbook (p16), students are thus given some tools for the design of visual texts. In class, it is proposed, students would be required to think about how these tools work to produce a text (an advertisement) by firstly identifying how these tools have already been used in a number of provided texts (Workbook: p15) in relation to the representation of sex, gender and sexuality. In order to do this, students are taught the following terms (tools). The tools and explanations have been adapted from Janks (2010a) on visual literacy as well as Ferreira (2009) on *Reading Pictures*:

Visual Literacy Tool:	Brief Explanation from the Workbook:
Hypersalience:	Software and airbrushing allows people to appear flawless.
Text:	How does the text anchor the meaning of the image? Does it work the other way around?
Figurative language:	What visual qualities are associated with abstract qualities? For example: beauty = happy
Implications:	What do your choices imply about the positions you exclude?
Camera shot:	What do we get to see? How much are we allowed to see?
Vectors:	What is the line of reading that your eye follows? How does this influence the meaning you can make from the text?
Action:	What are people doing? Where? With whom? How do they feel about it?
Camera angle:	Do we look down on people, straight at them or up at them? What relationship does this establish with the reader?

Table 4.2: *Basic Tools for Visual Design (adapted from Janks, 2010a, and Ferreira, 2009.)*

A consumer's life is constructed as being in a state of deficit so as to create a need for the product that might not exist before the development of the product itself, as part of the objective of advertising. Therefore, the text designer needs to inhabit the description given by Walter Dill Scott:

> The man with the proper imagination is able to conceive of any commodity in such a way that it becomes an object of emotion to him and to those to whom he imparts his picture, and hence creates desire rather than a mere feeling of ought (1911, as cited in Ewen, 2001, 31)

The adverts need to address the desires of its readers and not just their socio-economic needs in order to maintain their ideological purpose (Fairclough, 2011). However, in order to address a wide population, it would seem that many advertisements adopt representations from a hegemonic standpoint. In relation to

sex, gender and sexuality, the dominant representation used by advertisements in South Africa include the nuclear family, heterosexual desire and patriarchal constructions of the female body. Any representation of nonconforming sexed, gendered or sexual identities are predominantly heterosexist (Wallowitz, 2004), stemming from compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1993) and the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1995). Such representation suggests the emergence of a 'hypersalient heteronormativity' – public and private spaces are bombarded with representations that work to socialise its readers into hegemonic order while silencing or marginalising non-hegemonic identities and forms of expression.

While studies from the United States suggest that representation of gay and lesbian identities in popular media and advertising are becoming more equitable – to some extent – in relation to the heterosexual norm (Oakenfull, 2013; Gill, 2008; Cover, 2000), it might not be the same situation for South Africa. Even with short, but progressive, adverts from Kia during the broadcast of popular series *Modern Family* in 2013, there is little noticeable progress in the representation of non-heterosexual identities within a South African context.

How, then, do we become subversive? It is at a point in the workbook that one might argue that "[students] need to be exposed to texts that are critical of dominant value systems; they need to be given texts that provide counter-histories and counter-narratives in general; and they need to read texts that are culturally affirming, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive" (Morrell, 2008, 212). While this is true for a critical literacy approach, the workbook includes the deconstruction of such texts in other sections. Under the heading of (re)design and especially in the final activity (Workbook: p16), I am more interested in engaging students in the process of critically *producing* texts. What are the decisions that go into designing an

advertisement? And, what are the social implications of those decisions – especially for people who have been decisively excluded from or marginalised in the text? Through this process, students might gain insight to the positioned characteristic of texts and the possibilities/ difficulties for redesigning more equitable texts in relation to existing hegemonic representations of sexualities.

4.1.4 Social Impact

Any critical approach to education aims to be socially transformative (Janks, 2010a; Kumashiro, 2002; Morrell, 2008; Vasquez, 2008). This is the same for a critical literacy pedagogy, where the idea of social impact is worked with in two main ways: one, that every text is positioned and positioning. Therefore, every text works to position its readers and to influence their ways of thinking about the world – but always in relation to their own agency. And two, texts and their meanings can usher a range of social responses: from anti-homophobia movements to organisations that want to preserve definitions of 'traditional marriage' as between a man and a woman. Transformation is elicited in big-P political movements as well as in individual and local little-p politics (Janks, 2010a).

In each case, readers not only make meanings of texts but use texts as social constructions that both enable and encompass social action. These texts are constructed to help an audience identify an issue, become informed about meanings and perspectives and then to contribute to those meanings and perspectives in socially and culturally meaningful ways (adapted from Janks, 2014). If this is done in alignment with the text, then we as readers are an ideal audience bent on maintaining the text's ideological position. However, a critical reader might be resistant: by expanding the perspectives on the text and its meanings that are

considered, by thinking about the text's social impact on silenced, marginalised and misrepresented readers, and by exploring alternative ways of constructing the text (Janks, 2014). The reader, then, becomes an agent of change by (re)designing texts as well as initiating social awareness and involvement based on the meanings that have been instantiated in the texts (Kumashiro, 2002).

But, how do we come to understand the emergence of social responses to texts and their meanings? Firstly, we need to consider language: What language is used in texts and by people, and how does this construct both the makers and receivers of meaning? That is, in order to understand where social responses like gay pride and various women's movements (both feminist and not) to homophobic and heterosexist acts, for example, emerge, we need to understand what actually constitutes homophobia and heterosexism in the first place.

As a result, the workbook then deals with an article that outlines some of the social impacts that language can have: *Teachers Never Intervened – Homophobia in South African Schools*, posted by TellUs in 2007 (retrieved 06/06/2013 from www.tigweb.org). This article includes a discussion about homophobic violence in South African schools and the voices of those students, now young adults, who experienced such violence. However, the main problem that is posed here is that of the role of the teacher under such circumstances. During this part of the critical literacy course I am interested in identifying the roles and responsibilities of teachers, whatever their position in relation to sexual diversity, and the perspectives of the students themselves. This is justified by a statement of an interviewee in the TellUs (2007) article:

> "High school was probably the worst…like being called 'gay' and 'faggot'. I'd walk out of a class and down the corridor, and someone would say, 'Shake that ass, baby'…Teachers never intervened." –

> recalls Bradley, a coloured gay man now in his late teens (TellUs, 2007, n.p.).

Such name-calling can be traumatic and have long-lasting effects on social and psychological development (Thurlow, 2001; McCarl Nielson et al., 2000). This is problematic because there is evidence of similar experiences from a variety of studies in South Africa, and across the world, where language is used to police and control identities without the intervention of teachers (Msibi, 2012a; Richardson, 2004; Young, 2001; Matebeni, 2011). More troublesome is that a lack of intervention by teachers, peers or parents enables such violence to occur – from name-calling to more intrusive and fatal attacks.

Non-intervention, then, can be equated to Connell's (1995) notion of 'complicity'. Although Connell (1995) uses this concept in relation to the maintenance of masculinities, it is also useful for understanding how the policing and subordination of sexual diversity as well as the promotion of heterosexuality as compulsory is enabled through complicity by observers of violence – both physical and symbolic. That is, to watch and be inactive is to allow violence to happen and to enable the construction and maintenance of a hegemonic order.

But, it is also not sufficient or helpful to criminalise the masses of people who are, in whatever ways, complicit to the range of violence in schools. And while it is useful to use this article and the notion of complicity (Connell, 1995) to advocate the need for teachers to become more aware and active school-citizens, we must also recognise that many teachers who do not intervene may not even recognise the social effects of their inaction.

It is, therefore, at this point in the course that reference back to the McDonald's *Come as You Are* advertisement, and the actions of the 'father' in that advert, can be made. Is the father's heteronormative assumption based on

homophobia and bigotry? Or, is it that the father's complicity with compulsory heterosexuality is so deeply socialised into him that he does not recognise the marginalising effects of his words? To what extent, then, can we label him a homophobe? Again, activity one of this section (Workbook: p17) is focussed on deconstructing the term 'homophobia' as well as understanding the responsibility of teachers in relation to 'homophobic' (heterosexist, sexist, racist, ageist, and so on) violence in schools – especially in relation to South Africa's secular and sexually progressive constitution, and the human rights discourse so evident in all learning areas of the current national curriculum documents (CAPS, 2011).

Furthermore, it is not only the response by a heterosexual hegemonic society that we need to look at. Rather, a critical approach to education involves a myriad of perspectives that both enable and resist hegemonic constructions (Kumashiro, 2002; Wallowitz, 2004). In activity two of the workbook (p18), students are asked to think about the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersexed organisations or movements that work toward activating human rights for these marginalised groups at a practical level and that respond to homophobia and discrimination in South Africa. The most salient of these movements, largely because of national news media coverage, are the various gay pride parades that take place in different cities across South Africa: from Cape Town, South Africa's 'gay capital', to Johannesburg and Soweto.

Gay and lesbian rights movements have a long-standing history in South African politics, which enabled sexual orientation to become a legitimate category for human rights in the South African constitution and bill of rights (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Cock, 2003). It is possible to re-read South Africa's apartheid history not only in relation to race-based oppression but also in relation to the oppression

based on sex, gender and sexuality. The first gay pride parade, in 1994 (GALA, 2006), and those that followed every year since, are but one way for lesbian and gay identities to make themselves visible and to test the constitution's equality clause in the public sphere.

Gevisser and Cameron's (1994) book, *Defiant Desire*, explains the correlation between racial apartheid and sexual subjugation in South African politics. In chapter 2 of this paper, we have already seen the effects of policing sexuality (Retief, 1994); the effects of race-sexuality discrimination through the prison experiences of Simon Nkoli (1994); and the cultures and subcultures of gay black men in a segregated southern context (McLean and Ngcobo, 1994) – all of which appear in Gevisser and Cameron (1994).

The workbook, then, moves students into an activity that questions gay pride parades by considering where South African pride emerges from. Looking at the intersections between sex, gender and sexuality with race, nationality and politics in this section allows us both to understand why gay pride movements have emerged as well as to question their efficacy in representing all minority sexual groups in South Africa.

This brings into question, then, the notion of queer private and public spaces (Brickell, 2000). That is,

> that claiming 'gay space' – the making of 'queer societies' and assertion of 'queer culture' – is always a precursor to the establishment of a lesbian and gay liberation movement. In South Africa, as elsewhere, there has been something of a progression from bar culture, to social support organisations, to political activism (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994, 9).

What gender performances are permissible in public spaces (Brickell, 2000), especially if they subvert and make visible nonconforming gender and sexual

identities? How effective are they for protesting against hegemonic sexual identities? That is, such 'gay spaces' are not always sufficient for including and embracing, equitably, all the identities in the LGBTI acronym. And while, according to Cock (2003), the inclusion of sexual orientation in the national constitution does enable movements to react against heterosexist discrimination, it does not always necessitate unity within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed 'communities' themselves (Altman, 1996). Instead, there are still significant divisions based on class, race and gender that do not always get represented:

> The Johannesburg clubs like Stardust are racially mixed but white dominated. Some clubs are racist and discriminate against blacks, they turn them away. Also, they discriminate in class terms. Heartland has a R200 membership fee and you're only allowed in if you're a member [...] Also, women do not always feel welcome. At the Skyline in Hillbrow women were not allowed in, whether they were lesbians or not (parenthesis added: Informant 4, interview, 2001 in Cock, 2003, 43).

Even within what is often seen as a unified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed 'community', discourses of difference emerge. What is particularly problematic is that these discourses of difference are largely negative and discriminatory. They are sometimes extreme and seem to borrow from the discourses and ideologies of apartheid's racial, cultural, linguistic and class segregation. It, therefore, becomes important work to displace even these perspectives as well as those of heterosexist ones, and to avoid glorifying non-heterosexual 'communities' by representing them as unequivocally unified by way of their shared marginalisation.

Overall, it would seem that there is a definite, albeit somewhat invisible or unnoticed, belief that difference – perhaps even diversity – is bad in South African society, whether it be based on race, class, religion, sex, gender or sexuality. It is because of this that section four of the workbook is designed to question our take on

difference in society and to consider the social effects of 'texts' – from the way we speak and gesture to each other in everyday interactions, to the facial expressions we make when we see subversive identities in public and media spaces. It is time for diversity to become a resource (Janks, 2005b) for education and social equity.

4.2 Course Materials

Alongside the workbook itself, the course includes two other sources of information and engagement: the course pack and the PowerPoint presentations that have been adapted from the print-based workbook. Because students only have access to the workbook at the end of the course (on submission of their final assignment), the course pack and the digital presentations allow me to present the activities in the original print-based workbook to the class in interesting ways. A digital space also affords engagement with interesting texts, while a course pack provides a combination of texts for analysis and academic articles to lay a theoretical foundation.

4.2.1 The Course Pack

The critical literacy course begins with a theoretical outline and a practical use of particular tools for critical literacy practices in the classroom. The course pack, then, includes a number of readings (journal articles and book extracts) that both explain critical literacy pedagogy and guide readers into some of the practices involved with reading texts critically through activities.

The following readings are included in the course pack (listed in order of appearance):

- Janks, H. (2013b). Section 4: Grammar as a Resource for Critical Literacy. In H. Janks (Ed.) *Doing Critical Literacy: Texts and Activities for Students and Teachers.* Routledge: USA.
- Janks, H. (2014). Critical Literacy's Ongoing Importance for Education. In *Journal for Adolescent and Adult Literacies.*
- Janks, H. (2009). Chapter 15. Critical Language Awareness: Teaching the Relationship between Language and Power. In A. Ferreira (Ed.) *Teaching Language in the South African Classroom*. Macmillan: Braamfontein.
- Janks, H. (2010b). Language, Power and Pedagogy. In N. Hornberger and S. McKay (Eds.) *Sociolinguistics and Language Education*. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon.
- Janks, H. (2013b). Section 4: Grammar as a Resource for Critical Literacy. In H. Janks (Ed.) Doing *Critical Literacy: Texts and Activities for Students and Teachers*. Routledge: USA.
- Ferreira, A. (2009). Chapter 14. Reading Pictures. In A. Ferreira (Ed.) *Teaching Language in the South African Classroom.* Macmillan: Braamfontein.
- McCarl Nielson, J., Walden, G. and Kunkel, C. A. (2000). Gendered Heteronormativity: Empirical Illustrations in Everyday Life. In *The Sociological Quarterly*, 41(2), 283-296.

While students are required to read through these outside of class time, it has been planned that some of the activities included in the readings should be completed in class with my help and the lecturer conducting the session. For example, students are to complete activities, in groups, from Janks' (2013) *Grammar as a Resource for Critical Literacy* in order to develop an understanding of the relationship between language and power. Using Halliday's (1994) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Janks (2013b) presents a number of activities that teach the various linguistic tools that are commonly used to construct meaning in English. From the role of modality in conveying levels of uncertainty to the manipulation of voice in order to obscure

agency and the subject position in a clause, each activity explains a grammatical tool as well as ‘teaches’ the use of that tool through a text-based activity.

The course pack, then, becomes a useful resource for locating the practices in class within a distinct theoretical framework and history of practice. However, it also includes a compilation of texts for analysis. These texts, which appear at the end of the course pack after the final reading, are a collection of articles, advertisements, online web pages, book extracts and images. Some of the texts in this section do appear in the workbook where clear activities have been developed for them, while many of these texts do not. Instead, they have been included for two main reasons: firstly, as reference points for discussions during lecture sessions. That is, these texts become useful to engage with as class discussions and activities progress. Also, because students only receive the workbook at the end of the course, this compilation also gives them access to the texts they need in order to complete particular activities. Secondly, these texts provide students with a starting-point for their final course assignment, wherein they will have to design a four-page worksheet on an aspect of sexuality using a critical literacy approach. Should students feel uncomfortable or unsure about where to search for appropriate texts, this collection provides a good indication of what texts and topics are available.

The course pack therefore provides students with models for critical literacy practice: from activities and theoretical frameworks and tools (available in the readings) to an array of multimodal texts, excluding video, that can be used in or to inspire their own critical designs. The course pack thus becomes a vital source of accessible information for students and lecturers during the course.

4.2.2 PowerPoint

In order to present the activities and texts in the workbook to students, without giving them the printed workbook itself, I decided to adapt the workbook into sets of PowerPoint presentations. This is dubbed ‘transduction’ (Bezemer and Kress, 2008), whereby the mode of material text is transformed. Here we move from a workbook or material in a printed mode to a digital or electronic mode. Microsoft PowerPoint has become a well-known software application for teaching in higher education institutions (Craig and Amernic, 2006; Apperson et al., 2008; Mu et al., 2008). It is a mode of presenting information that has become quite commonplace. In this section I reflect on my use of this digital/electronic mode for adapting and presenting my originally print-based workbook to the university students.

There are a total of five presentations, one for each lecture, titled as outlined by the course outline (p85-87 of this paper): 1. Language, 2. Gender Violations, 3. Policing, 4. (Re)Design, and 5. Social Impact. I identify three main pedagogical benefits of adapting the workbook to PowerPoint, a digital space, namely: pacing and sequencing; colour and animation; and expanding the multimodal threshold. Note, however, that alongside these “modal affordances” (Jewitt, 2008, 247) there are also certain limitations to using PowerPoint.

The process of transduction in designing materials includes four main design choices: Firstly, ‘selection’ pertains to making decisions about what to include and what to exclude. Texts and activities might be “selected according to what is pedagogically relevant in the new site, and modes are selected according to what is available and apt” (Bezemer and Kress, 2008, 20). Ideas in some modes are better, or rather just differently, represented and experienced through other modes. Secondly, the ‘arrangement’ of various modes of text influences the meaning that is

to be conveyed by way of genre, layout and reading paths (Bezemer and Kress, 2008). Print, visual, audio and motion text can be juxtaposed to anchor, confuse or expand each other's meanings within contexts. This, in turn, allows us to decide what information should be foregrounded (Bezemer and Kress, 2008) and, subsequently, what information should be backgrounded: What is made more salient? Which texts are used for anchoring? What modes are available in particular sites and how does this change the way information can be presented (Vasudevan et al., 2010)? Finally, because texts both emerge and are read in socio-cultural context, it is vital that designers consider the 'social relations' that texts afford between teachers and their learners/students, and between different learners/students during group and class interactions. That is, "[i]n recontextualization that is inevitably a *social repositioning*: A certain pedagogy emerges as the consequence of the re-contextualization" (original emphasis: Bezemer and Kress, 2008, 21). Here, re-contextualisation refers to the transduction of materials for new sites.

While everything in the printed workbook is easily reproduced on PowerPoint slides, the new digital/electronic site does have its own affordances. For example, in activity one (*Language*: Workbook: p1) where students are asked to draw a man and a woman, the original printed workbook does not include any images (examples of drawings) or questions about students' drawings themselves. This was a specific design choice that was based on not wanting students to pre-empt the reasons for the activity. If they had access to questions about design elements, markers of gender, sex and sexuality, or sexual diversity and inclusivity, they may have adjusted their drawings to answer the questions differently. However, PowerPoint allows different elements on a single slide to become visible at different times: either on command by the click of a mouse button or within a pre-set time limit. This allows me

to present the activity instruction first without revealing my own drawing which is used as an example, or the questions that they need to answer in order to critically reflect on their own designs. I am able to pace the activities in more meaningful ways and sequence the information to "construct a reading path" (Bezemer and Kress, 2008, 22) that enables a more critical engagement with students' own work.

As both a text designer and teacher, my work here is guided by the desire for effective pedagogical practice. Pacing and sequencing of information are concerns because any manipulation of these has an immediate impact on the ways in which students interact with information and each other. In addition, it affects their interest and engagement with what is being presented to them (Craig and Amernic, 2006). I am, therefore, required to make active decisions about the construction of the PowerPoint slides and their potential efficiency. Cope and Kalantzis (1997, 33) call this *overt instruction*: which

> includes all those active interventions on the part of the teacher and other experts that scaffold learning activities; that focus the learner on the important features of their experiences and activities within the community of learners; and that allow the learner to gain explicit information at times when it can most usefully organise and guide practice, building on and recruiting what the learner already knows and has accomplished.

Throughout the lecture presentations, pace and sequencing of information is a central pedagogical concern. It ranges from organising slides in relation to other slides, to considering the time and order that information on a single slide will be revealed.

In addition to pace and sequencing, the visual effects attached to both text (print) and images can also be said to enhance a viewing experience – for some, it may even promote better comprehension. Anderson-Inman and Reinking (1998) use

the example of a number of studies on electronic documents and graphics, whereby students who interacted with text-only modes of information were compared with students who interacted with text which was accompanied by graphics and/or some form of animation (Rieber, 1990; Rieber, Boyce and Assad, 1990; Rieber and Hannafin, 1989 in Anderson-Inman and Reinking, 1998). The students in the latter category seemed to indicate a high level of comprehension, especially for those with "low mechanical ability" (Anderson-Inman and Reinking, 1998, 169).

While this study is rather outdated, it does highlight a certain point about how interactions with text and their meanings can be enhanced through multimodality. In the transduction of my own workbook, it is the use of colour and the simple animation techniques available on Microsoft PowerPoint that make the presentation of the workbook more interesting. Colour allows me to highlight text and make particular information more vivid or to separate inexplicit categories of questions (see Appendix 2: slide 3, lecture 3 – *Gender Violations*). Furthermore, while the images on the slides are largely accessible in the course pack, they are only available in black-and-white. PowerPoint allows me to display these images in their original colour format. This is particularly important for making meaning from the text, because "[b]oth colour and lighting can be used to suggest particular moods or draw attention to particular aspects of an image" (Ferreira, 2009, 16). Colour, then, becomes a signifier of mood with its own socio-cultural connotations. It also makes features more salient: for example, compare the same image from Leland Bobbé's *Half-Drag* collection (in Brenda, 2012) reproduced in black and white print on page 9 of the 'texts for analysis' section of the course pack and the full-colour version produced in class on slide thirteen of lecture three (see Appendix 2: *Gender Violations*). The colour image

seems to illustrate that there is a greater and more apparent difference between the two gender identities being performed.

Similarly, the simple animation techniques available on PowerPoint – like fading, dissolving, sweeping, descending and rising, or peeking – allow me to introduce information in more dramatic and intriguing ways. Pedagogically, animation lets me manipulate the pace and sequencing of information by allowing me to change timing and to choose when certain information appears on screen. Furthermore, animations can also be used for emphasis: flashing, wiggling, tipping/tottering elements on a slide draws the viewers' attention. Colour and animation are thus complimentary semiotic tools for conveying meaning and holding reader/viewers' attention. Therefore, "the interpretation of movement, image, and color, [means that] students are engaged in a complex process of sense making. Multimodal analysis thus offers a way to broaden the lens of educational research and investigate the role of image and other nonlinguistic modes as well as to better understand the role of language as one multimodal resource" (parenthesis added: Jewitt, 2008, 258) in classroom practice.

The third "modal affordance" (Jewitt, 2008, 247) that comes with using PowerPoint is the ability to include video as text for analysis. Again, while the printed workbook does include an activity on a television advertisement – McDonald's *Come As You Are* (Workbook: p8-10) – it is only possible to print screenshots. This reduces the principle *motion* picture to a *static* one. Furthermore, all audio, such as tone and pitch of voice, background music and environment sounds, are lost as important contributors to the overall meanings that might be available in the original text. I have therefore chosen to hyperlink to this video in slide four of lecture three (*Gender*

Violations) so that students may view the television advertisement as it was broadcast in France.

To expand the multimodal threshold in the classroom, I use PowerPoint to also increase the number of videos that I show during the classes. Aside from the McDonald's advertisement, I have also chosen to use a number of other videos for teaching particular concepts. The videos, then, work in conjunction with topical texts in other modes and genres: from visual texts in advertising and photography to printed storybooks and autobiographical pieces. Following are the titles of these videos, their location in the lecture presentations and their online URL addresses in order of appearance during the course:

1. Misster. *Super Lover*. Posted by CoffeexPrince. Lecture 1- Language, slide 10 (music video). Retrieved 27/06/2012 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-sWSaHT9v4&feature=youtube_gdata_player
2. McDonald's. *Come As You Are*. Lecture 3 – Gender Violations, slide 4 (banned television commercial). Posted by yaggvideo. Retrieved 15/05/2013 from - http://www.funnycommercialsworld.com/mcdonalds-commercial-come-as-you-are-4003.html
3. Toyota. *No Authority: Auris*. Lecture 3 – Gender Violations, slide 15 (banned television commercial). Posted by TVCommercialsTV. Retrieved 18/02/2013 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YwOhpEH7fO&feature=youtube_gdata_player
4. Author unknown. *Is Being Gay a Choice? – How Straight People Respond When Asked When THEY "Chose" to be Straight*. Posted by Kim Smythe. Lecture 4 – (Re)Design, slide 8. Retrieved 15/05/2013 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4vC9TmUm5o&feature=youtube_gdata_player

5. United Nations Human Rights Office. *The Riddle: New Anti-Homophobia Message from UN Human Rights Office.* Posted by UN Human Rights. Lecture 5 – Social Impact, slide 8 (awareness campaign). Retrieved 23/05/2013 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYFNfW1-sM8&feature=youtube_gdata_player

The videos are sometimes read as confusing (for example, many viewers are not sure how many of the performers in the Asian pop-group, Misster, are men or women); sometimes unsettling, uncomfortable or ambiguous in relation to the transgendered model in the Toyota advert; or sometimes informative, like the 2013 awareness campaign, *Free and Equal*, which begins with the UN's first video, *The Riddle*.

In each case, however, the videos have been chosen for at least one main concept that they illustrate. For example, Misster's *Super Lover* video disrupts traditional dichotomous gender performance by presenting to the viewer androgyny. The performers' interesting, and rather intentional, play on biological physical features and dress allow them to become somewhat gender ambiguous. Furthermore, the five group-members appear to be courting a young, conventionally feminine Asian model in the music video. It may take some time to realise that this is an all-female pop-group courting a desired female, albeit through a heteronormative display of 'maleness' – the less feminine (and more masculine?) strut their plumage in order to attract the meek, feminine, desired other.

Similarly, the banned Toyota advert plays on viewers' assumptions about gender performance and the sexes those performances 'should' be attached to. In the beginning of the video we see a young feminine model with blonde hair, slim waist, in red underwear and a long black, fitted coat, holding a strong and defiant

gaze. The model almost looks passed or even *through* the camera, through us. The walk is a typical runway walk: firm, direct, purposeful and attached to somewhat exaggerated hip movements. The model struts toward the red Toyota Auris; cut to waist-to-knees shot from behind and we see the black coat fall; and the advert ends with the model, topless, turning around before the car and revealing a male chest. While this commercial begins by playing on viewers' assumptions about femininity, it also subverts those assumptions by disrupting who we think can perform such femininity.

Film and television, I expect, are genres that are recognisable to students. They can also be captivating in their use of imagery, text and audio. However, because of their wide accessibility, they are also a powerful means for representation: as we have seen with the Kia Modern Family series of advertisements in chapter 2 of this thesis, television can either reproduce or subvert conventional gendered representations of sexualities, if they represent non-heterosexual identities at all. Cover (2000, 72) becomes useful to quote at length here with regard to the impact that visual media can have on an audience:

> For a time, the only visual media that dealt with non-heterosexual issues was underground and counter-culture film (Field, 1995, p. 4)—media programmes that were not widely distributed, and were produced by lesbian/gay people for a lesbian/gay audience. During the last decade, there has been a proliferation of films with lesbian/gay themes and content emerging from the large Hollywood production companies, and this is an important development in available resources that constrain and reinforce discourses of sexuality, and especially for those people, predominantly youth, who have not been previously exposed to alternative resources (original parenthesis).

A critical literacy education should engage students with such modes of representation and their social impact. Such critical readings of commonplace texts

might allow students to see the social power of texts in maintaining or disrupting the binaries that marginalise and sometimes silence sexual minorities. They might also recognise popular media as a source of 'real' information as well as a confirmation of existence for people who do not have access to legitimate or real representations of their own identities (Cover, 2000). If we do not see ourselves in lived, social spaces – even the imaginary spaces of television – it becomes difficult to recognise the authenticity of our own identities.

4.3 Processes of Production

Following Giroux's (1987) understanding of literacy work in education, I have aimed to construct the workbook from the understanding that

> literacy [has] to be viewed as a social construction that is always implicated in organizing one's view of history, the present and the future; furthermore, the notion of literacy [needs] to be grounded in an ethical and political project that [dignifies] and [extends] the possibilities for human life and freedom (parentheses added: Giroux in Freire and Macedo, 1987, 2).

However, in order to construct a workbook that organises views of history, normativity and critically deconstructive practices, a number of processes need to occur. That is, the development and construction of a text, even an educational workbook, does not exist in a vacuum. From brainstorming and experimentation to the exploration and application of different theoretical approaches, I have been involved in several processes that informed and influenced my design choices for the workbook.

In an attempt to understand both the processes of production and the conditions of production (Fairclough, 1989 and 1992) of my workbook, I have mapped the processes that I followed from the initial and shaky conception of the workbook to the final product. Thereafter, I use this map as a framework for

discussing some of the defining decisions that I had to make within each of these phases and as a result of some continuing processes:

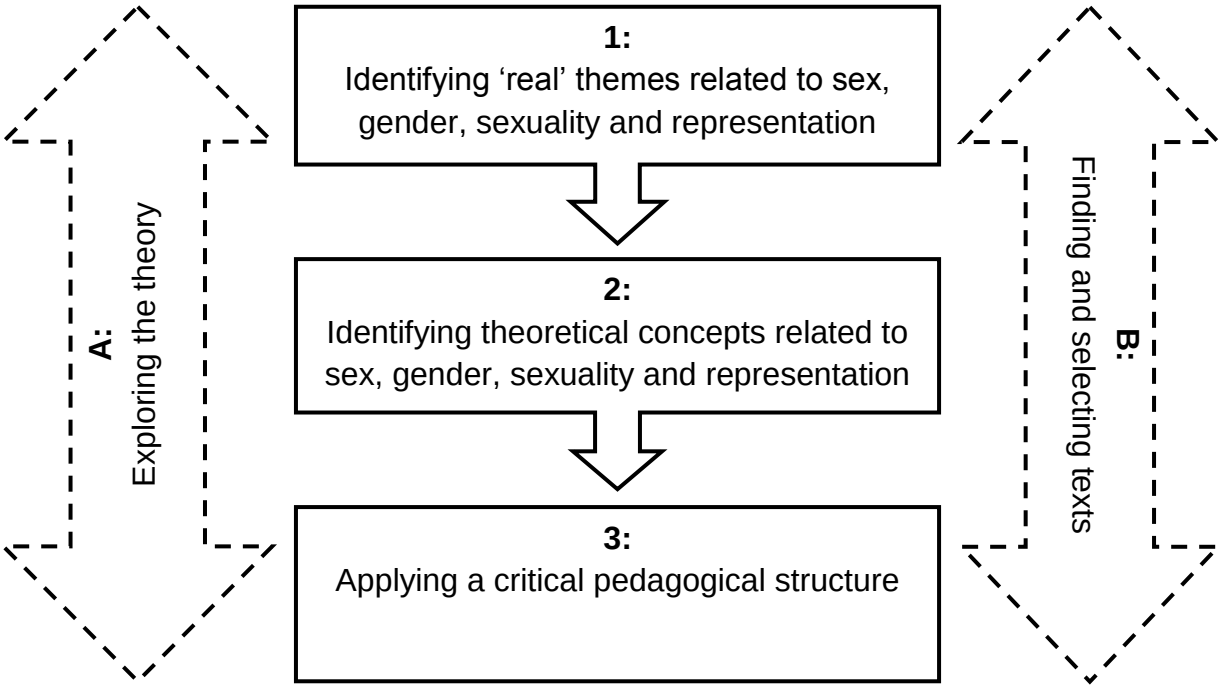


Figure 4.2: *Processes of Producing the Workbook*

The term 'processes' connotes an ongoing activity, however Figure 6 illustrates that within the overall process of production of the workbook there are three main phases with two continuous processes alongside. Here, I understand the term phase to represent defining parts of the overall process that end or are transformed at some point to give rise to a new, possibly more developed phase. There are three main phases that I identify as composite parts of designing my workbook: 1. Identifying 'real' themes; 2. Identifying theoretical concepts; and 3. Applying a critical pedagogical structure. Each phase that I underwent led onto the next phase until the final workbook was produced. It is possible that more phases could be added in relation to the intentions of the designer over and above the constant need to review and redesign texts (Janks, 2005a, 2005b, 2010a). What is

important to note, then, is that these three main phases were influenced, even directed, by my simultaneous and ongoing engagement with theories related to sex, gender, sexuality and representation ("A" in Figure 4.2) and the everyday texts that represent these theoretical perspectives ("B" in Figure 4.2). These two processes locate my workbook, and me, in a theoretical and social context, and give socio-cultural relevance to the workbook.

4.3.1 Identifying 'Real' Themes

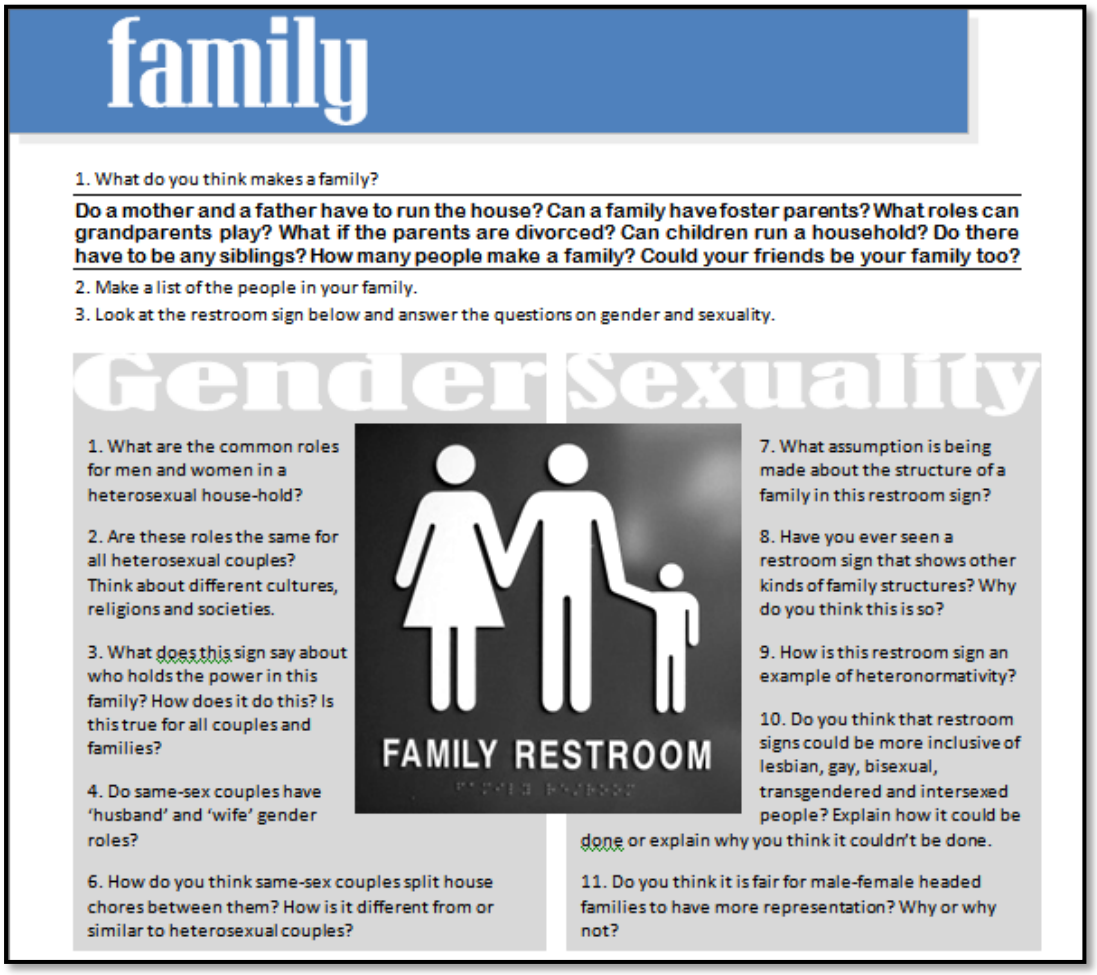
Often what is thought of as normal is something that has been *made* more apparent through repetition – we are constantly bombarded with sexualised texts from the time we awake (clock radios blaring news reports or radio-hosts' discussions on celebrity gender performance), to making our ways to places of work and school (billboards looming over high-density streets and highways advertising elusive products that seem to hide behind beautiful, sometimes intertwined and oppositely-sexed bodies), till homecoming in the evening (where nuclear families and the promiscuity of their children fill our televisions until bedtime). And this is just one example of my middle-classed, South African experience where I need to look, and look carefully sometimes, to find truly subversive representations – or, at the very least, equitable representations of the social categories that I inhabit.

What is significant to note through this daily journey of mine is the presence of sexualised materials that have come to appear common place. More significantly, however, are the power relations between genders (Connell's, 1995, patriarchal dividend) and the silencing of non-heterosexual identities or practices (Rich's, 1993, compulsory heterosexuality) that is evident throughout these taken-for-granted texts.

They are, from a socio-cultural and multimodal perspective, a kind of social policing that confines the imagination to traditional patriarchal and heteronormative tidiness.

Because the workbook is designed for use in high school classrooms, I began by identifying themes that I thought grade 10-12 learners would be able to relate to and where normative gendered representation was abundant – making them real to teachers and learners. This means that the initial design of the workbook was broken into sections, with each section focussing on a particular social phenomenon: family, sports, gender, and even pride. As I understood, these themes would be readily identifiable by learners and teachers, but I also understood that, as social phenomena, these themes are also readily represented within the bounds of heteronormativity and socio-cultural gendered hegemonies (Wallowitz, 2004; Vasquez, 2000; Janks, 1998) globally and all across South African contexts. These are the spaces within which we are policed into 'correct' gender performances and 'moral' sexual behaviour.

It was easiest, then, to begin by locating texts for analysis. From these texts, at least one would serve to illustrate how a particular theme is manifested through normative representations (Janks, 2014). Such representations could then be deconstructed to help learners understand the various ways in which normativity and socialisation works through language and texts. The following extract comes from a section on families that was designed during this phase:



family

1. What do you think makes a family?

Do a mother and a father have to run the house? Can a family have foster parents? What roles can grandparents play? What if the parents are divorced? Can children run a household? Do there have to be any siblings? How many people make a family? Could your friends be your family too?

2. Make a list of the people in your family.

3. Look at the restroom sign below and answer the questions on gender and sexuality.

Gender Sexuality

1. What are the common roles for men and women in a heterosexual house-hold?

2. Are these roles the same for all heterosexual couples? Think about different cultures, religions and societies.

3. What does this sign say about who holds the power in this family? How does it do this? Is this true for all couples and families?

4. Do same-sex couples have 'husband' and 'wife' gender roles?

6. How do you think same-sex couples split house chores between them? How is it different from or similar to heterosexual couples?

7. What assumption is being made about the structure of a family in this restroom sign?

8. Have you ever seen a restroom sign that shows other kinds of family structures? Why do you think this is so?

9. How is this restroom sign an example of heteronormativity?

10. Do you think that restroom signs could be more inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed people? Explain how it could be done or explain why you think it couldn't be done.

11. Do you think it is fair for male-female headed families to have more representation? Why or why not?

Figure 4.3: *Phase 1 extract: Family*

The main text that prompted the activities in this extract is that of the family restroom sign. It is the text that helped me to identify 'families' as a relevant issue for a workbook (Janks, 2014) that aims to deconstruct the gendered representations of heteronormativity, compulsory heterosexuality and gender hegemonies. Beginning with a real and authentic text that sparks interest, then, helps to focus an activity or section despite the vast abundance of other texts that actually exist. It allowed me, the designer, to pinpoint a topic, identify the issues within it and then to develop an activity that builds up to the main texts' notion of the topic, namely families.

However, this topic is a highly sexual one: normatively and historically, families have come to represent a unit for reproduction and are therefore 'naturally'

heterosexual (Dasgupta, 2000 in Connell, 2005; Goode, 1982). While Foucault's (1984a/1992) *The History of Sexuality* can be used to counter this construction, I do not discuss this due to lack of space. In relation to the workbook, however, I have made a definite choice regarding what kinds of imagery and ideas to use regarding how visible sexual attraction or intimacy should be portrayed. This is not to mean that I chose between images of sexual intercourse and those without. Rather, sexuality might also be displayed through certain, everyday intimacies: holding hands, kissing, hugging, holding bodies and gaze. Because the workbook is envisioned for use in a school classroom, I chose representations that I deem 'appropriate' for adolescent learners. Perhaps some of what I deemed 'appropriate' at the time of design was conflated with my fears of what might be read as socially inappropriate by my audience.

The representations of families, and in turn relationships, have been chosen according to their age appropriateness in relation to the intentions of the workbook. That is, the workbook is not intended for teaching sex education – although, with some adaptations, it might very well be useful for such a class. Instead, it is focussed on developing critical literacy skills for reading and writing/designing (normative) representations and the use of semiotics. It is also concerned with deconstructing seemingly innocent texts in ways that expose heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality.

The following texts illustrate the kinds of intimacy that I do include in the course and workbook:

Text:	Description:	Location:
KFC magazine advert	There are four people seated around a coffee table eating KFC take-out food. An older female and male are recognisably parents to one young girl child and an even younger boy child. The group's identity as a family unit is anchored by some relatively large red text at the bottom of the advertisement, which reads: "There's no time like family time". This text is positioned next to the KFC logo and slogan, "sogood". All the actors in this advert are white and middle class, which is identifiable by their surrounding furniture, the condition of their environment and their clothes.	Workbook p15 Lecture 4: *(Re)Design* Slide: 11
Dentyne advert	Three images are placed next to each other in comic book fashion, each with semi-transparent white text to anchor the image in relation to common social networking and text messaging phrases: "friend request accepted", "the original voicemail" and "the original instant message". The first image shows two women hugging. They are friends, as indicated by the first slogan. The next two images are more pertinent to the course and understanding normative representations of sexuality. "The original voicemail" shows what seems to be a man whispering into a woman's ear. The 'male' figure remains elusive because we do not see a face, however this person is somewhat masculine: baseball cap, unkempt hair, string cheek bone. Only gender markers can be used to assume a sex. The third image shows a man and a woman kissing. Such normative and socially acceptable displays of sexuality should be recognisable to learners and comfortable for teachers because of its now commonplace status.	Lecture 4: *(Re)Design* Slide: 19

Response to homophobia	The final text is a post by an unknown author. Similar to the Dentyne advert, it shows three square black-and-white images in comic strip form, or even in the likes of Kodak photograph prints (square image with a white border and white 'tab' below for writing a caption or notes usually related to the image). All the images are of couples photographing themselves in a mirror. The first picture shows a male and female couple with the male figure kissing the female figure's neck. Similarly, the second image shows two male figures, topless. One male figure kisses the other's neck, while the other has an arm wrapped around the first's head. Finally, the last image shows two female figures, with long hair and simple white vests, kissing. These images are a parody of normative texts that only represent heterosexual acts of intimacy as publically acceptable in many contexts. However, this text tries to extend what is considered appropriate public intimacy to include gay and lesbian couples as well. These images are then anchored by the text: "i'm sorry but i can't see the difference".	Lecture 4: *(Re)Design* Slide: 20

Table 4.3: *Representations of Family and Intimacy*

While these texts do not include explicitly sexual acts between people, I still found myself fearing how learners and teachers might respond to seeing same-sex intimacy. This led me to exclude the Dentyne advertisement and the 'response to homophobia' text from the workbook. Instead, I used them with more adult audiences in the lecture hall, for the critical literacy course where, hopefully, such intimacy might be discussed in relation to theories of representation and identity. The restroom sign, then, seems to become a safe representation that alludes to ideas of family structure, relationships, reproduction and intimacy without explicitly confronting these ideas –

there is space for discussing these allusions, should they be noticed, but there is also space for silence.

Furthermore, during the first phase of design I was also still exploring text and, more importantly, the theories on sex, gender and sexuality in relation to representation and education. While elements of the section in Figure 7 might be useful to incorporate into the workbook, it does still contain some fundamental design flaws which are characteristic of other activities and 'sections' that were constructed during this initial design phase. These flaws are largely due to a lack of theoretical cohesion: firstly, the activities do not always reflect the theory effectively and thus cover the content on sex, gender and sexuality by focussing on 'feelings' and 'personal responses' rather than informed criticism. Secondly, theory is sometimes incomplete, which means that the links between activities and theory can be rather hap hazardous. Figure 7 is an example of the latter, where gender and sexuality are still understood and represented as binary opposites instead of drawing on the identity gem, which was only constructed later. We see this in the visual separation of questions in the activity into those that pertain to gender and those that pertain to sexuality. My own developing understandings become visible, then, through the very texts and activities I have designed.

This meant that although it was useful to begin designing my critical literacy workbook by situating it in real-life topics, it was not nearly enough. These topics and ideas for activities further needed to be situated in sound theoretical approaches and understandings. Without a good theoretical grounding, the activities are only based on my own ideas about what the representations of sex, gender and sexuality ought to mean for education – ideas that may not recognise a history of work in the fields of literacy, gender and sexuality, education or power.

5.1.2 Identifying Theoretical Concepts

The theories on sex, gender and sexuality constitute a vast terrain of knowledge and perspectives about how to understand each of these social categories, how each is practised and the interrelations or conflations between them. Compounded on this are theories of power; theories related to semiotics and the functions of language and representation; as well as a myriad of pedagogical approaches and theories that can be combined in different ways to construct critical literacy curricula. However, bringing these fields of study together also allows us, as teachers, learners and students, to expand our capabilities for deconstructing and then reconstructing texts (Janks, 2005b) across modes and genres. Moreover, it should also allow us to ask the right kinds of questions about the texts we deal with, the everyday interactions we are engaged in and the ways in which we construct ourselves and others through our use of language and text.

It is thus imperative that educational practice be located in sound theoretical understandings of the world and the ways to be in it. This is not to say that theory is undeniable truth. Rather, as theory changes so too should our understandings of educational practice: from teachers' courses, materials and teaching strategies to learners' questions, learning strategies and thinking/reading/writing/speaking skills. However, this is also easier said than done when theoretical perspectives are often in conflict with one another.

During the design process of the workbook, the second phase involved reconsidering my initial designs by looking at them through various theoretical lenses. Deciding what theory to draw on and what texts to use, and when, became a process of compromise. While some texts are useful, they may only be useful for illustrating one theoretical concept. And, while some theories include important concepts, it is

difficult to find an authentic text that is appropriate for the classroom as well as the lecture hall.

I therefore discovered that designing becomes a negotiation between text, theory and, surprisingly, also interest. It is not always enough to teach or to study when one is not interested, intrigued or captivated by the content or learning/teaching styles. In this section, I explore phase 2 of the design process by considering how my continuous engagement with theory has shaped the design of my workbook by changing the decisions I had to make. Furthermore, I consider how fear and my decision to teach about Butler's (2006) concept of drag influenced my choice of text and when I thought it appropriate to use.

In the initial design of the workbook, sections were separated according to what I identify as 'real themes' and topics. However, the theory on sex, gender, sexuality and representation names concepts in somewhat different ways. Being concept-based, rather than just topic-based, becomes useful for a critical literacy approach where critical practices need to be applied to many contexts. That is, once a concept is taught, learners should begin to use that skill or idea in their own lives to bring real and relevant issues back into the classroom (Vasquez, 2000 and 2001). The teaching of a skill or idea in class, then, becomes a case-in-point with the potential for further application and use beyond the initial content.

I therefore began to reorganise the activities in the workbook using theoretical concepts as my guide: moving, adding and removing activities according to the skills and ideas I thought learners would need to deal with various issues on the representations of sex, gender and sexuality. Thus emerged the four sections of the workbook, which were also used to separate the classes in the critical literacy course: Language, Policing and Subversion, (Re)Design, and Social Impact. Issues

of *Language* draw on the need for definitions and standardising understanding. However, it also functions to disrupt commonplace discourses which emerge from my engagement with queer theory, feminisms, and new studies on constructing masculinities. *Policing and Subversion*, however, brings into focus the relationships of hegemonic power that have established places in the commonsensical parts of our lives: from subordination and marginalisation, to misrepresentation and silence (Connell, 1995). It is in this section of the workbook that learners engage with how semiotics is used as a tool for producing and reproducing power relationships in everyday texts. The theories on sex, gender and sexuality are merged with Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the critical skills given by critical literacy practitioners. But, understanding power is not necessarily enough. The theory on critical literacy, critical pedagogy and critical discourse analysis all advocate some form of transformation and reconstruction. I found it imperative to include a section that draws on the New London Group's (2000) notion of (re)design. This further allowed me to explore the concepts of multimodality (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Bezemer and Kress, 2008; Cope and Kalantzis, 1997; Milani, 2013). While learners would have dealt with various modes in previous sections, the (re)design section develops the skills for visual literacy in order to expand learners' semiotic artillery for actually designing their own texts. Finally, the theory on representation understands the positioning power of texts and the discourses they use (Janks, 2010a) as real social forces. The section on *Social Impact* thus draws on these perspectives to consider how whole populations, organisations or even individuals might respond to discursive marginalisation, misrepresentation or silence.

The McDonald's (2013) *Come As You Are* advert is a clear example of how the theory has helped me to reframe the workbook. While I started, in phase one, by

finding this text and then identifying the 'real' issue of assumption; phase 2 allowed me to reconsider how this advert could be used and for what purposes.

McDonald's is a well-known international fast food chain, whose media image seems to focus on representations of family, family-time and children having fun. Constructions of family – usually nuclear, heterosexual, middle-class white families – are associated with discourses of good food and eating as a social act rather than only the need for sustenance. Such connections are commonly used by food franchises to represent themselves as selling not only 'good food', but also entertainment, family bonding and social values associated with unity and togetherness.

However, this particular advert (McDonald's *Come as You Are* advertisement) is somewhat more subversive – albeit subtle in its ways of subversion – through its presentation of innuendo and ambiguity in relation to common sense assumptions. The advert begins with a young man sitting in a booth that is recognisably a restaurant. He pulls a photograph out of an envelope on the table before him, but it is not easy to identify the context in which the photo was captured. All we can see are a number of people posed: standing and sitting neatly within the frame.

In the next scene, the young man answers his ringing cellular phone and the following dialogue takes place in French. I present here the English subtitles that accompany the original audio. Please note that we do not hear the person with whom the young man speaks:

Young man: Hello?
I was thinking about you too.
I'm looking at our class picture.
I miss you too.

Hearing only one side of the conversation means that viewers of this text have to assume many things: What is the relationship between the young man and the person on the phone? It is easy, from this description and the screenshots in the workbook, to assume that they are school colleagues because of the line: 'I'm looking at *our* class picture'. In this sentence, the young man uses a collective possessive pronoun to signify his shared schooling experience with the person on the phone. However, the background music to the scene and the hushed, almost intimate tone of the speaker's voice makes it difficult to stick with this interpretation as a definite one. Something else is alluded to here and the viewer may not be so sure as to what it is

The camera then breaks to show an older man collecting a tray of McDonald's meals from the cashier counter. As he turns to walk away from the counter we hear the young man's cellular phone conversation as a voiceover:

Young man: My dad's coming. I have to hang up.

Again, the softened tone of voice and the rush to end the phone conversation elicit suspicion about the nature of the young man's relationship with the person on the other end of the call. Why all the secrecy? While keeping secret relationships from parents/guardians might not be unusual for young people, the advert goes on to reveal more information. Enter the young man's father, also the older man who retrieved food from the counter:

Father: Is this your class picture?
You look just like me at your age.
Let me tell you I was quite the ladies' man!
Too bad your class is all boys...
You could get all the girls.

The father initiates a rather masculinising discussion about him being a 'ladies' man' and the potential for the son to 'get all the girls'. This corresponds with the findings in

Deborah Cameron's (2006) *On Language and Sexual Politics.* In a chapter on young men's homosocial talk, Cameron (2006) analyses how masculinity is negotiated and owned through talk during a conversation between some young American university students. She notes how these young men objectify women's bodies – through talk of breasts – as a way of constructing their patriarchal power as men and establish their own sense of masculinity by differentiating themselves from other men who are assumed to be gay by merit of their gender performance – the wearing of striped socks. In this advert, the father establishes his own masculinity by stating his bygone attractiveness to the women with whom he attended school. It foregrounds, in a subtle but sure way, how the patriarchal dividend can be used to maintain hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). Here, a criterion of hegemonic masculinity involves men having more than one, oppositely-sexed, partner during their days of youth. His sexual or intimate involvement with more than one woman is used to measure his gender identity and possibly even his social standing (Foucault, 1984a/1992) amongst other men in his 'group' (where a group could encompass friends, family, school colleagues, community members, or other social attachments).

Furthermore, the father then projects this sense of masculinity onto his son by extending the 'ladies' man' label onto him: 'You could get all the girls'. Whether the son is heterosexual or not, the father tries to name his son in the same way that he identifies himself. Throughout his speech, the father makes assumptions about sexuality: in one sense, his assumption is situated in socio-cultural heteronormativity, while in another sense his assumption is that all men fit neatly into this normative understanding of masculinity.

What is interesting about this monologue is the commonsensical manner in which the speech is given by the father. Each statement is said matter-of-factly and without pause for response or contestation. As far as the father is concerned, there is nothing to respond to or contest. However, his speech does illuminate the contents of the photograph in the first scenes: an all-boys school picture. In turn, this reveals the identity of the phone-caller to be a male school colleague.

The 48-second advert ends with a fade-in of the words “venez comme vous ètes” (subtitles: ‘come as you are’), and then a fade-in of the McDonald’s logo – the ‘golden arches’ set in a simple green square – all on a black background. This locates the advert, the social practice of eating and the conversation as a part of the McDonald’s franchise. Again, this food chain, like so many others, does not just sell food and drink but it also sells us positions and lifestyles, or at the very least draws on subaltern values and lifestyles in order to align itself with the common people.

When searching for materials for the workbook and the critical literacy course, I decided to include this advert because of its clear illustration of how assumption works. In one sense we are shown the assumptions of male society in France (which, I believe can be applied to the South African context) within a framework of common sense (Gramsci, 1975/1992 and 1975/1996). The father’s understanding of gender dynamics is limited to the conflated male-female and masculine-feminine binaries, which is situated in heterosexual practices. There is no conceivable alternative, and so being a ‘ladies’ man’ is normal, natural, and expected. In another sense, the mystery behind the identity of the imaginary phone-caller-voice plays on viewers’ assumptions about who boys speak to intimately and what parts of our identities should be hidden or are inherently invisible. It is almost as if the advertisement itself wants to illuminate our own commonsensical

understandings of gender and sexuality by leaving the identity of the phone-caller unknowable and elusive. We are left to use our own socio-cultural understandings of gender and sexuality to mull over the identity of the phone-caller as well as the relationship between the young man we see and the person on the other end of the phone.

Innuendo is used quite effectively to play on the potential heteronormative assumptions of the viewer. The advert never really reveals the phone-caller directly. Instead, there are a number of hints that remain ambiguous enough for the viewer not to be sure:

Young man: I'm looking at our class picture.

However, the biological sex of the phone-caller is alluded to later, by the father, in his verbalised observation of the class photograph:

Father: Too bad your class is all boys...
You could get all the girls.

In order to turn reading this advert into a critical literacy activity, I drew on Fairclough's (1989) model for critical discourse analysis. In his books *Critical Language Awareness* (1992), *Language and Power* (1989) and *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (2010), Fairclough helps readers to distinguish between Description, Interpretation and Explanation as interrelated parts of the critical discourse analysis process. Each part is also known as Text, Processes of production and reception, and Conditions of production and reception respectively (see section 2.4 *Representation and Pedagogy*, for details about Fairclough's, 1989, model) which are represented diagrammatically as three boxes set within each other. Each box, or part of the critical analysis process, represents an overarching idea about texts and how they work as positioning constructions. From a concern with the text itself, to meaning-making processes when producing and

reading the text, to the socio-cultural situatedness of the text itself and the meanings made available by the context, this model allows us to construct questions that pertain not only to the text but also to how texts work in society and in relation to power.

When watching the advertisement online, ideas from my reading on heteronormativity were ignited. From the figure below, Figure 4.4, we can see the initial influence of the theory on my design. 'Heteronormativity' was to be a section on its own until further reading allowed me to see that it was just another form of policing of gender and sexuality. Subsequently, this activity was later incorporated into the workbook under the section on policing and subversion. Relocating this activity meant that we could look at heteronormativity in relation to how social policing has made heterosexuality the assumed norm as well as how the advertisement might also be read as a subversion of that norm. That is, while this advert was banned in the United States an understanding of subversion might allow us to explore the reasons and social implications of banning it.

The figure below is an image of the McDonald's advertisement as it appeared in an earlier draft of the workbook. It is followed by table 4.5 which makes the print-text in figure 4.4 more legible:

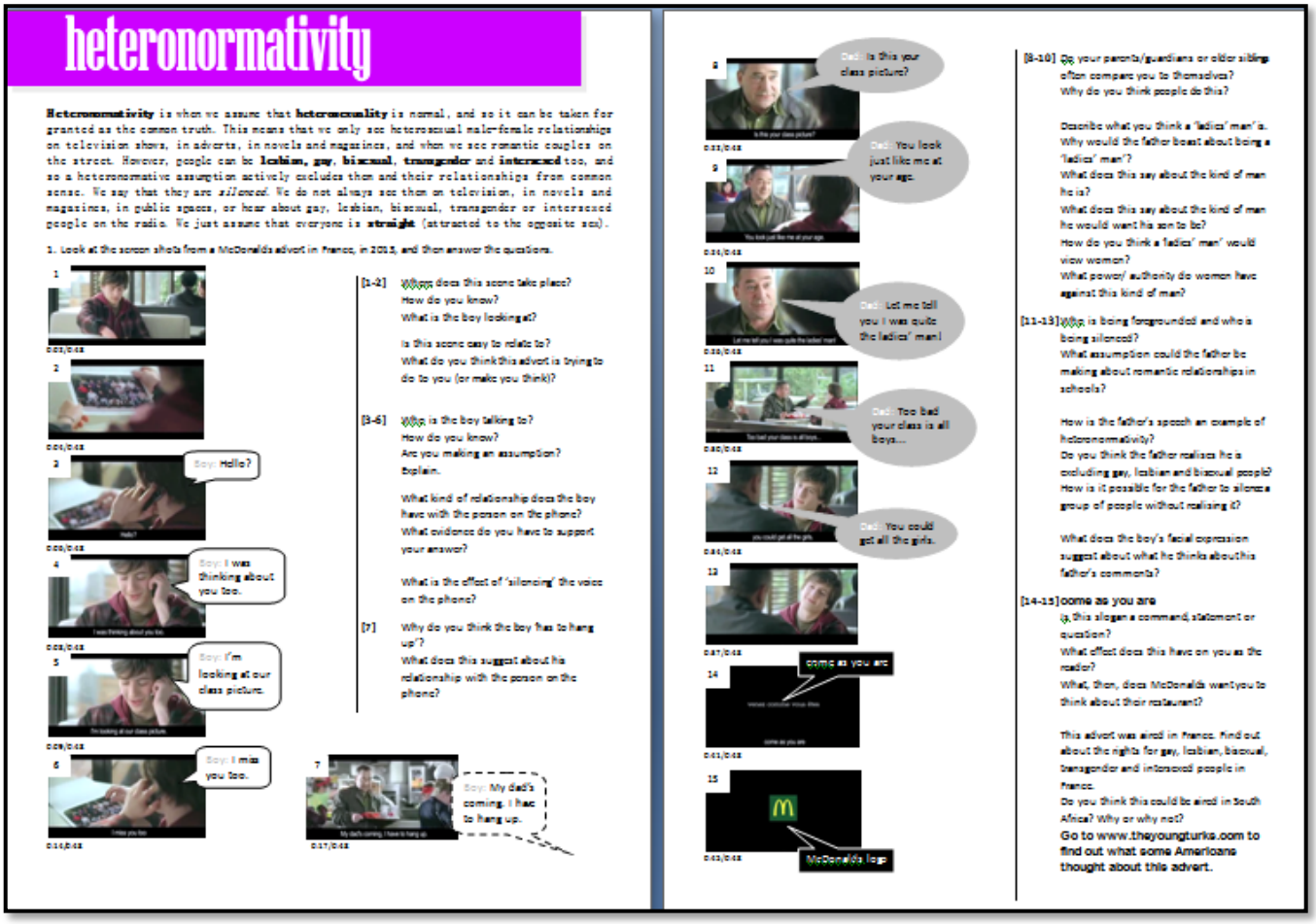


Figure 4.4: *Phase 2 extract: Heteronormativity*

Table 4.4: Phase 2 extract: Heteronormativity (written text only)

Heteronormativity is when we assume that **heterosexuality** is normal, and so it can be taken for granted as the common truth. This means that we only see heterosexual male-female relationships on television shows, in adverts, in novels and magazines, and when we see romantic couples on the street. However, people can be **lesbian, gay**, **bisexual**, **transgender** and **intersexed** too, and so a heteronormative assumption actively excludes them and their relationships from common sense. We say that they are *silenced*. We do not always see them on television, in novels and magazines, in public spaces, or hear about gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersexed people on the radio. We just assume that everyone is **straight** (attracted to the opposite sex).

1. Look at the screen shots from a McDonald's advert in France, in 2013, and then answer the questions.

[1-2] Where does this scene take place?
How do you know?
What is the boy looking at?
Is this scene easy to relate to?
What do you think this advert is trying to do to you (or make you think)?

[3-6] Who is the boy talking to?
How do you know?
Are you making an assumption?
Explain.
What kind of relationship does the boy have with the person on the phone?
What evidence do you have to support your answer?

What is the effect of 'silencing' the voice on the phone?

[7] Why do you think the boy 'has to hang up'?
What does this suggest about his relationship with the person on the phone?

[8-10] Do your parents/guardians or older siblings often compare you to themselves?
Why do you think people do this?

Describe what you think a 'ladies' man' is.
Why would the father boast about being a 'ladies' man'?
What does this say about the kind of man he is?
What does this say about the kind of man he would want his son to be?
How do you think a 'ladies' man' would view women?
What power/ authority do women have against this kind of man?

[11-13] Who is being foregrounded and who is being silenced?
What assumption could the father be making about romantic relationships in schools?

How is the father's speech an example of heteronormativity?
Do you think the father realises he is excluding gay, lesbian and bisexual people?
How is it possible for the father to silence a group of people without realising it?
What does the boy's facial expression suggest about what he thinks about his father's comments?

[14-15] **come as you are**
Is this slogan a command, statement or question?
What effect does this have on you as the reader?
What, then, does McDonald's want you to think about their restaurant?

This advert was aired in France. Find out about the rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersexed people in France.
Do you think this could be aired in South Africa? Why or why not?
Go to www.theyoungturks.com to find out what some Americans thought about this advert.

Table 4.4: *Phase 2 extract: Heteronormativity (written text only)*

In the final version of the workbook, I have also included questions that emerge from each of the boxes throughout the activity on the McDonald's advertisement:

Table 4.5: Policing and Subversion – Activity 2		
Aspect of Fairclough's (1989) model for critical discourse analysis:	**Frame number as it appears in the workbook.**	**Questions from the workbook on the McDonald's 'come and you are' advertisement:**
Description What emerges from the text itself? This aspect of reading is very closely related to traditional comprehension questions, where often the answers to these questions can be pulled directly from the text being read. It is still useful for getting students to identify parts of speech and figurative linguistic devices that are in the text. However, reading should not stop here but move from identification to meaning-making.	1-2 3-6 14-15	Where does this scene take place? How do you know? What is the boy looking at? Who is the boy talking to? How do you know? Is this slogan a command, statement or question?
Interpretation How do we understand the text? The interpretation aspect of the model is concerned with what meanings can be made from the text and its constituent devices. Furthermore, it is interested in what meanings went into the text during design. As readers, we use this box to try and understand the text as well as the intentions of the author. Stopping at this level means that we engage in *critical reading* (Cervetti et al., 2001), and not necessarily in critical analysis. In order to critically analyse the text we need to move beyond the text	1-2 3-6 7 8-10 11-13	Is this scene easy to relate to? Are you making an assumption? Explain. What kind of relationship does the boy have with the person on the phone? What evidence do you have to support your answer? What is the effect of 'silencing' the voice on the phone? Why do you think the boy has to hang up? What does this suggest about his relationship with the person on the phone? Describe what you think a 'ladies' man' is. How is the father's speech in frame 12 an example of

itself and into a consideration of how the text is socio-culturally situated.	14-15	heteronormativity? Do you think the father realises he is excluding gay, lesbian and bisexual people? What does the boy's facial expression in frame 13 suggest about what he thinks about his father's comments? What effect does this have on you as the reader?
Explanation Where do we get meaning from? Because texts emerge from different places, languages, times and ideologies, the meanings that go into their construction can be very specific to context and author. Similarly, we read texts in different places, languages, times and from different viewpoints of dominant ideologies, and so our readings of texts change in relation to context. What meanings are available to the author and the reader in their specific contexts, and how does this relate to the dominant socio-cultural ideologies under which we function?	1-2 8-10 8-10 11-13 14-15 14-15	What do you think this advert is trying to do to you (or make you think)? Do your parents/guardians or older siblings often compare you to themselves? Why do you think people do this? Why would the father boast about being a 'ladies' man'? What does it say about the kind of man he is? What does it say about the kind of man he would want his son to be? How do you think a 'ladies' man' would view women? What power/ authority do women have against this kind of man? Who is being foregrounded and who is being silenced? What assumption could the father be making about romantic relationships in schools? What, then, does McDonald's want you to think about their restaurant? This advert was aired in France. Find out about the rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersexed people in France at the time the advert was aired. Do you think this could be aired in South Africa? Why or why not? Go to www.theyoungturks.com to find out how some Americans responded to this advert.

Table 4.5: *Policing and Subversion – Activity 2*

As you can see, the questions that appear in the workbook activity on assumption and heteronormativity can be categorised according to the three concepts of Fairclough's (1989) model but appear in the workbook activity in various places. However, this is because the activity itself is split according to scenes (each scene is made of a number of frames) that I have identified. Students move from dealing with the text (that is, with a scene) to thinking about authorship and readership as well as contextual elements and impacts of that scene. For example, in the first scene, which is comprised of two frames, students have to begin their reading of the text by identifying what is taking place and where this scene takes place. They then move into answering a question on how they relate to the meanings that these first two questions pose, and then finally considering the positioning power of the text.

What is important to note about this activity is that by placing it after an extract which explains heteronormativity and then asking questions that relate to issues of sex, gender and sexuality, the activity itself pushes its users into a rather queer reading of the text. Would students make the same readings of the text without specific questions about sex, gender and sexuality? It is arguable that my construction of the activity and my own reading of the text was informed by my reading in the field of sex, gender and sexuality as well as that of critical literacy and critical discourse analysis. While these theoretical frameworks are what my workbook is based on, I think it is vital to consider the *conditions of production* (Fairclough, 1989) that allowed this activity to be. Without my own reading in these fields, would I have read and understood the text in the same way? What questions, then, could I have asked to open up the critical analysis of this text to other fields: like those pertaining to race, class, nationality, age or access to digital media? What

issues would students identify if the questions did not themselves identify practical displays of heteronormativity?

Similarly, concepts such as Rich's (1993) compulsory heterosexuality and McCarl Nielson et al.'s (2000) gender violations have been used to create sections and activities in the workbook. What is important to note, however, is the extent to which my engagement with theory has influenced the design of the text: From identifying and sequencing whole sections, to the construction and organisation of individual questions and activities.

Theory did not just influence how I separated sections and main ideas. It also influenced how I understood sex, gender and sexuality in relation to gender performance, power and representation as whole and intersecting fields. As this understanding changed, so too did the content that I wanted to include and the ways in which I represented that content. In the first section of the workbook, *Language*, I was determined to present students with a visual representation of the relationship between sex, gender and sexuality that expanded upon the normative notion that heterosexuality is the only legitimate or natural orientation. Drawing on queer theory's agenda to dispose of essentialised binary relationships, I began designing a model for thinking about sex, gender and sexuality, and the conflations between them. This model, most importantly, also needed to be flexible enough to include a vast array of nonconforming identities.

With each new theoretical or conceptual discovery, from Butler's (2006) gender performance to the more empirical research by Tucker (2009) and Gevisser and Cameron (1994) that revealed the myriad of gendered and sexual identities in South Africa, I needed to begin *un*learning the gendered language that I had grown up with. It was a language that came to me so naturally, but also one that so sternly

resisted change. For a long time, I was confused about what pronouns to use for transgendered and intersexed people; I began to notice that my conversations with people constructed us-them positions between heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals, between homophobes and 'moral' or 'good' people, and even between myself and other gay men. I came to realise that the language I was using to talk about myself or even my partner could sometimes be homophobic.

I needed to begin organising my ideas around what each of the concepts of biological sex, gender and sexuality meant and how they related to each other. With an affinity for the visual text, I thus began to draw the theory I was reading and the experiences (or rather, epiphanies) I was having. The following figures show the progression of the way I mapped sex, gender and sexuality in order to come to terms with them and their conflations. Next to each diagram, I have given a rationale for why they look the way they do, and what shifts in knowledge and understansding lead to shifts in representation:

<u>Diagrams in chronological order</u>:

1.

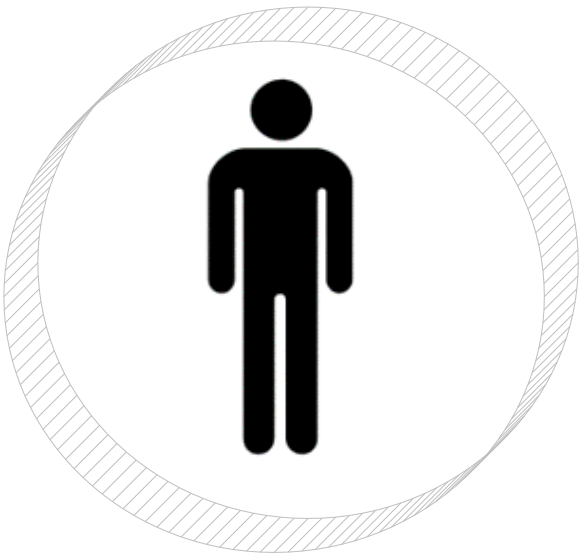


Figure 4.5: *The Universal Man*

Where have you seen this sign before?

What other signage is this figure used in?

Why do you think this could be a gender issue?

What kind of person does this represent?

What kinds of activities have you seen this figure doing?

Is it normal to see this figure? Why or why not?

Removed from workbook

Initially, I thought of starting with the concept of the ‘universal man’. By deconstructing this symbol, I was hoping to get students to recognise and understand the presence of male dominance in representation. And, that the universal male symbol establishes an original gender, of which femininity is a copy, as well as an original sexuality, where homosexuality and bisexuality are constructed as distorted copies of an original and authentic heterosexuality (Butler, 1993). However, this is not mapping sex, gender and sexuality. Even if this exercise does reveal some of the power relations inherent in these concepts, it does not visually represent sex, gender and sexuality in a comprehensive way. This, in short, was not nearly enough.

2.

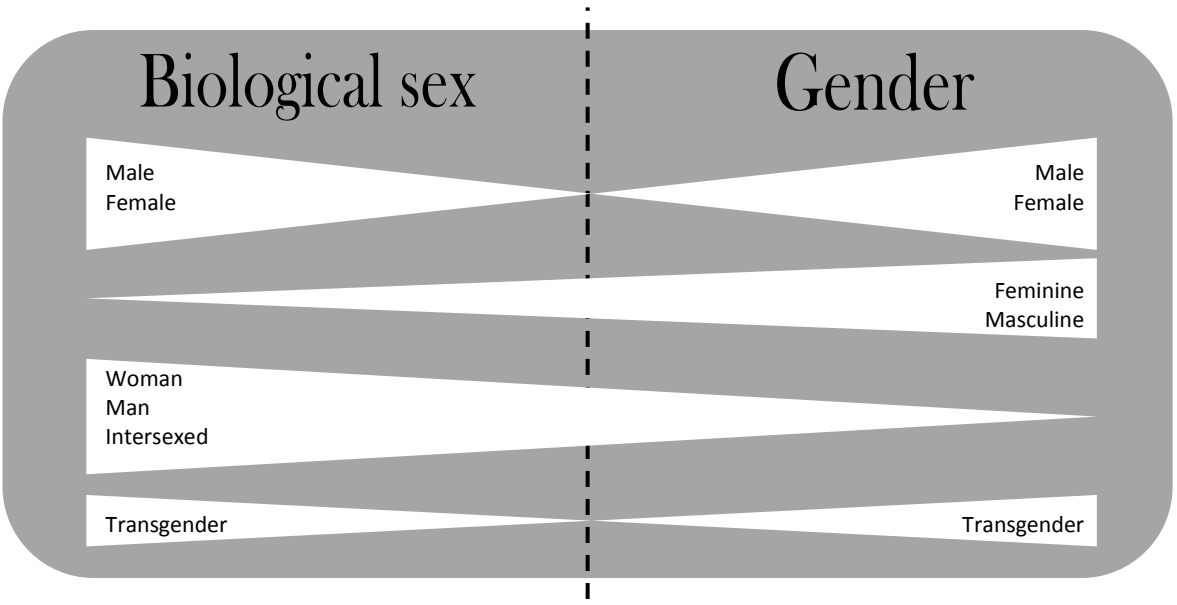


Figure 4.6: *Sex/Gender Model*

Removed from workbook

I then moved to trying to separate the concepts, in order to understand them, by categorising them according to 'biological sex' and 'gender'. That is, what does the language we use actually refer to? When we speak using words like 'male', 'female', 'man' and 'woman', are we speaking about biological sex or, due to conflation, are we using them to actually speak about the socio-cultural practices of gender performance? Do we know when to use 'masculine' and 'feminine'?

In order to represent this conflation of meanings, where words for gender are used to signify biological sex, I used the tapering effect given by the triangles in the diagram. I imagined that these words, and their meanings, were like molten sugar: when it drops at an intended spot it is thick and settles as a blob. But, the sugar can be stretched and pulled into new spaces while still leaving the initial blob in its original position. I imagined that meanings had shifted in the same way. Words that refer to biological sex, that in some sense had originated as terms for biological sex,

had been pulled over into the social realm. Their meanings had been conflated with gender while still maintaining some sense of their original reference to biological sex.

However, there are two significant problems with this representation: 1) it neglects any representation of sexuality. It does not show where sexual identities fit into the scheme of things, and thus is not congruous with the aims of this project. Furthermore, 2) this representation essentialises the identities that it does include. There are only three distinct sexes and two genders, and what I consider an unsatisfactory representation of Transgenderism. That is, this diagram does not illustrate the diversity of transgender identities. Again, this diagram was not enough.

3.

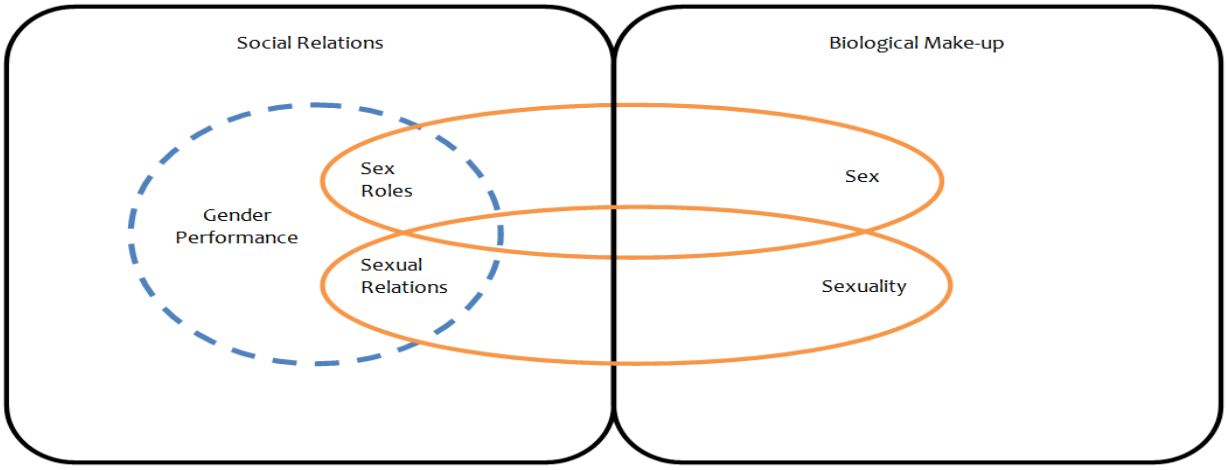


Figure 4.7: *The interactions between Foucault's (1984a/1992) Social Relations and Sexual Relations being enacted through Butler's (2006) Gender Performance* (Reproduced)

Included in research paper, but not in the workbook

This representation is based on Foucault's (1984a/1992) theorisation of the interaction between social relations and sexual relations, as well as Butler's (2006) theory of gender performance. What I aimed to show in this diagram is how, on one level, our social relations are influenced by our sexuality, and visa versa. That is, the

socio-cultural value systems that govern our sexual relations can be transposed onto our social relations. If, as society may see it, a same-sex sexual relationship (through identification as gay, lesbian or other identities based on same-sex sexual relationships) is considered 'deviant' or a 'violation', that judgement might influence one's social relations – in the workplace, at schools, with family and friends. We see this in the condemnation of celebrities who come out as gay in controversial ways or in the serious stigmatisation of early childhood teachers who come out as gay or lesbian as being represented alongside paedophilia. Our sexualities, which are biological, are brought into the social arena through socio-cultural value judgements.

However, identifying another's sexuality, if they have not actively 'come out of the closet', means that many people draw on gender performance as a marker of sexual identity. The conflation between gender and sexuality means that effeminate men and butch women, or even androgynous people, are assumed to be 'gender violators' (McCarl Nielson et al., 2000). Gender performance, then, becomes a way to measure social acceptability and therefore could affect our social relations.

But, this representation is not perfect either. It still creates a rather simplistic binary between the biological and the social. It also misrepresents sexual relations (as a social enactment of sexuality) as a form of gender performance, when there may not actually be a gender performance during sexual contact between two people. And, finally, it might even be problematic in its use of the term 'sex roles' as a social manifestation of biological sex instead of the term 'gender'.

4.

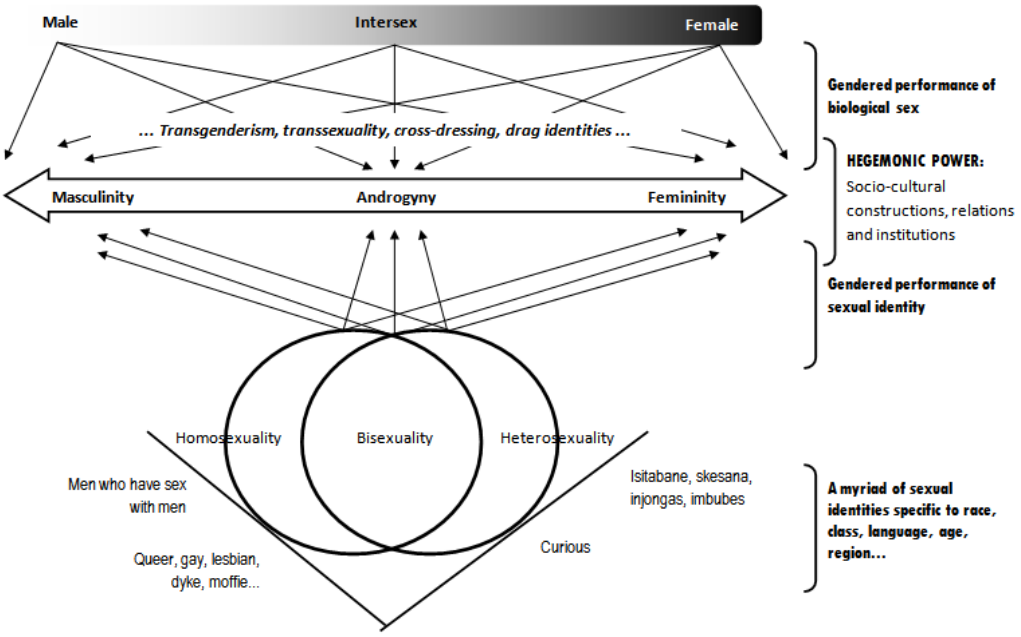


Figure 4.8: *The Identity Gem (Draft 1)*

Removed from workbook

This representation, initially dubbed 'The Gender Diamond', developed out of an understanding that I was still conflating sex, gender and sexuality in my own writing and speaking, despite my reading in the field. I needed to separate the three concepts from each other and step out of the biology-society binary that I found myself confined to before. It was, quite poetically, a breaking out of boxes, which is evident in the removal of the use of squares that seemed to haunt my previous illustrations. Instead, I needed to begin seeing sex, gender and sexuality as fluid, changeable concepts with spaces between. These gaps were just as important as the drawing itself because they signified a sense of space – space for the creation and imagination of new, different, interesting and subversive identities that could resist or hold on to hegemonic structures. I needed to see that there is in fact space for identification, personal and social, that exists outside of my own imagination and understanding.

The main feature of the representation is that of the continua: first, biological sex is shown to have nuanced differences between the concepts of ‘male’ and ‘female’. That is, even in the traditional male-female binary, there are hormonal, chromosomal and genetic differences between people who identify within the category of ‘female’. The same nuances exist in the ‘male’ category. More importantly, however, the continuum of biological sex also recognises intersexed identities as a legitimate and ‘real’ sex category. Again, within this category there are also differences between people’s biological structures and anatomy.

Second, the gender continuum recognises that masculinity and femininity, within specific contexts, are also idealistic concepts. Instead, there are a myriad of ways of understanding, inhabiting and identifying with gender, and these possibilities are available to all variations of biological sex. From the hegemonic and Othered variations of female femininity to the largely pathologised masculine woman, gender identity includes a broad spectrum of social practices that change over space and time. The traditional gender binary becomes, quite visibly, a construct of hegemonic institutionalised power relations. And, amidst the expanded view of the binary, lies gender ambiguous identities of androgyny. These too have been included in the spectrum of gender because it signifies both a possible personal identification with ambiguity as well as a resistance to socio-cultural gender binaries.

The third aspect of the diagram involves representing sexual identity as heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual. While these are quite clinical terms for sexualities, they help to identify the larger categories of sexuality. However, because there is no single sexual identity, be it as gay, straight, or bisexual (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994), I have also opted to include other sexual identities like ‘men-who-have-sex-with-men’, ‘injongas’ and ‘skesanas’, and ‘curious’. In this diagram I have

also used two adjacent lines as a bracket to signify that these ‘other’ identities are related to heterosexuality, bisexuality and homosexuality, but that the individuals who self-identify as one or a combination of these ‘other’ identities’ do not always identify with heterosexuality, bisexuality or homosexuality as well. That is, there are diverse ways of interpreting and classifying one’s own sexual identity without necessarily consulting heteronormative or patriarchal value systems. Ironically, however, the lines used as a way of linking these ‘other’ identities with hetero-, bi- and homosexualities also seems to act as a boundary line. It fragments sexual identity into normative sexual categories and Other sexual categories instead of suggesting that there may be a relationship between these identities.

The areas of gender performance lie between each representation of sex, gender and sexuality. That is, between sex and gender lie the socio-cultural practices of gender that are commonly attributed to specific biological sexes. However, the arrows that fill this space illustrate the possibility for diverse biological sexes to perform gender in a variety of ways. A range of masculinities and femininities, and interpretations in between, are available to all the sexes. Similarly, between gender and sexuality lies the gendered performance of sexuality. Due to the conflation of gender and sexuality, many people use gender performance as a marker of both sex and as a way of identifying one’s sexual identity, or even as a tool for making one’s sexual identity visible. That is, a gay man might actively perform a feminine gender practice to indicate his homosexuality or interpretation of homosexuality - think back on the South African identities of skesanas and injongas, where active and passive (conservative heterosexual roles of male and female) are performed in same-sex African relationships (Tucker, 2009; Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Retief, 1994).

The problem lies in the placement of transgender identities. While some transgenderism might be based on a gender performance that allows a transgender person to match their outer appearance with their internal psychic identity, there are also possible biological characteristics. Furthermore, there are implications for sexual identity when sexed identities change during medical transitioning (consider the stories of transgender people in South Africa in Morgan et al., 2009). Locating transgenderism, then, is not as simple as placing it in the realm of gender performance. Instead, it is an identity that can only be categorised, it would seem, based on the understanding given by the people themselves.

5.

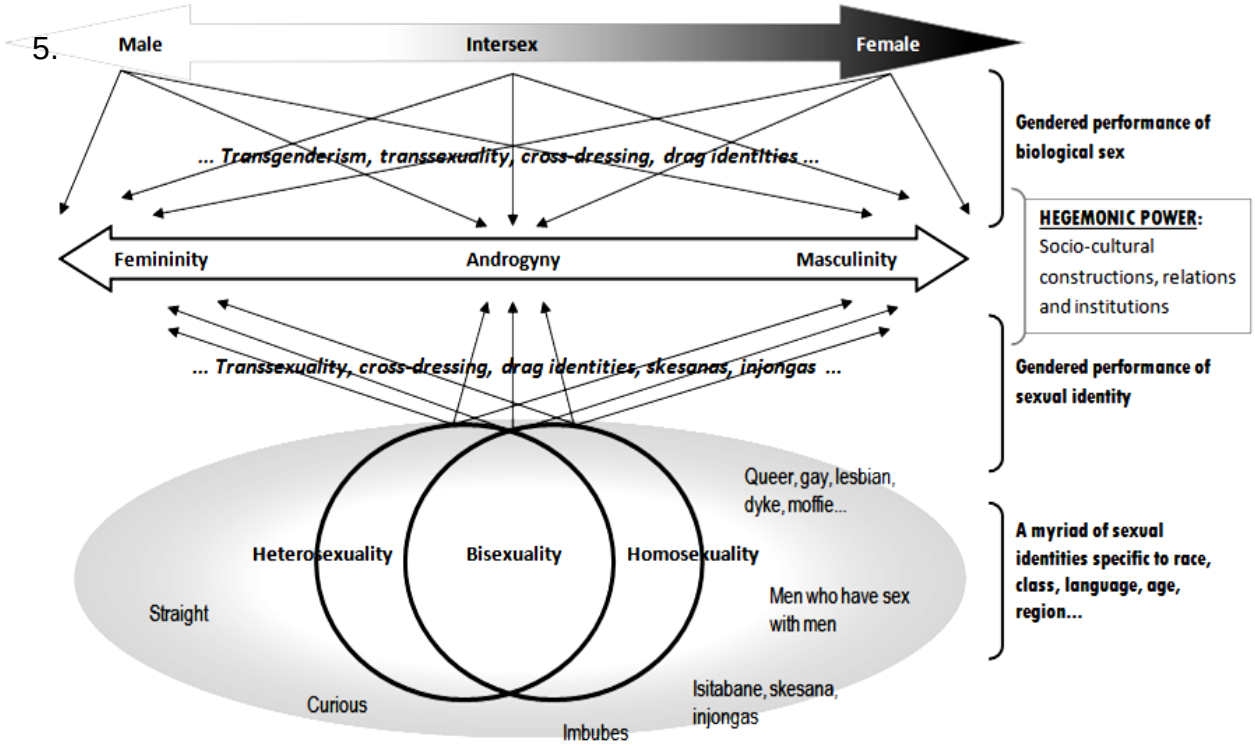


Figure 4.9: *The Identity Gem – Mapping Sex, Gender and Sexual Identities*

(Reproduced from Figure 2.2)

The final model for thinking about sex, gender and sexuality is the 'identity gem' from chapter 2 of this paper. It encompasses the three main representations: of sex, as a continuum ranging from male to female but also including biological variations in sexed identities such as intersexed; of gender also as a continuum,

which spans over masculinity, femininity and androgyny as available forms of gender identity; and sexuality, which includes interconnections between and beyond heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual identities represented within a cloud of self-identified sexualities by different communities. Again, the spaces between these main representations involve the gendered performance of either sex or sexuality. They are socially and culturally bound practices, and the deviances from those practices, that make sexed and sexualised identities visible. However, it is also within this space of gender performance that the gendered hegemonies of our time, place and culture police our identities and how we conceive of them.

Furthermore, transgenderism, transsexuality, cross-dressing, drag, skesana and injonga identities have been included as possible gendered performances of sexual identity. While they might not necessitate a particular sexual identity, or sexual orientation, they also are ways for an individual to make their sexual identity visible. That is, we could actively use gender performance as a way for displaying our sexual orientation or physical attraction, usually in relation to hegemonic gender ideals.

Further, while some texts and theoretical concepts seemed permissible for use in the workbook, I did also fear using others. One of the concepts that I was apprehensive to use in the workbook, but found exciting to use in the critical literacy course presentations, comes from Judith Butler's work on gender, sexuality and discourse. From the literature review in chapter 2, we are able to see that Butler's (2006) notion of drag originates from the understanding that gender is a performed socio-cultural practice (Butler, 1993 and 2006; Connell, 1995). When confronting and engaging with this notion, I was immediately intrigued by Butler's argument that traditional drag performance, as a construction and satire of normative gender

hegemonies that is associated with homosexuality, is also applicable as a 'heterosexual gender performance'. That is, there exists a heterosexual drag (Butler, 1993) that has become commonplace. It hides in plain sight. Drag, then, becomes a notion for understanding how we, as humans that are normatively categorised by conflations of sex, gender and sexuality, perform gender in particular ways in order to represent an 'appropriate' and socially accepted sexual orientation.

However, discussing drag in the classroom would probably be seen as inappropriate for many schools, teachers and parents because of its common association with homosexuality and gender deviancy. I began to question and fear how even the learners would respond to the images I wanted to use for discussing drag as a theoretical concept: surely there would be the risk of homophobic remarks (Thurlow, 2001; Reddy, 2002). The images I use come from Leland Bobbé's *Half-Drag* photographic collection (see Lecture 3: *Gender Violations,* slide 13). Furthermore, if it is not dealt with correctly, there is also the risk or reproducing the misunderstanding that drag is a marker of homosexuality (or any sexuality for that matter).

In the course, where I have included a short section on drag as a subversion of traditional gender performance, I try to counteract reproducing drag as only associated with homosexuality by exploring not only Bobbé's series of photographs but also well-known drag performers: Pieter Dirk Uys and Eddie Izzard. In both cases drag is not directly linked to sexuality. Dirk Uys, a famous South African comedian, uses drag only as a theatrical performance for the stage, television screen or as a persona in the newspaper and online. Evita Bezuidenhout, the drag identity, exists quite separately from Pieter Dirk Uys' actual identity, which does include being a gay man. On the other hand, Eddie Izzard, a UK-based comedian, identifies himself as a

heterosexual transvestite (see Williams, 2010). Here, the homosexual-drag correlation is disrupted and no necessary *equivalence* exists between subversive (drag) gender performance and sexual orientation.

What is interesting to note at this point is that students in the course sometimes associated drag with bisexuality. It would seem that these students read a drag performance as being a dual-identity, one male and one female. While this draws from conventional sexed and gendered binaries, these students also associated 'dualism' with bisexuality. This is, however, somewhat of a misconception because bisexual identities are not necessarily fragmented or split into halves as these students' readings suggest. Having made this analysis, however, Mufioz-Plaza et al. (2002, 56) do urge me to recognise that bisexuality "suggest[s] a more fluid approach to sexuality" (parenthesis added), which could suggest a more fluid approach to gender performance. Again, however, while there are links between gender and sexuality, they are not wholly the same thing. Breaking down the conflations, then, is still a tricky obstacle course.

Despite this, I thought that adult university students not necessarily settled into their own ways of teaching might be able to look at drag from a theoretical standpoint rather than an emotional one. Also, the course is part of the teacher-training programme (the overall Bachelor's degree for education) whereas should the workbook be used by current in-service teachers there is no certainty that they will have training in how to use the workbook. Without such training, and thus understanding of the theory on sex, gender, sexuality and representation in the workbook, I fear that there would be a high risk that the concept of drag might be misunderstood to maintain normative gender-sexuality conflations.

4.3.2 Applying a Critical Pedagogical Structure

The structure and sequencing of the workbook, which gave rise to the structure and sequencing of the course presentations, emerged from a question of how to make education, and those who partake in it, aware of social injustice and then to act upon it. That is,

> How can teachers work together in the interests of developing critical subjectivity among themselves and their students that can begin to rehabilitate the pathological development of homophobic discourses in current school policy and practice? Further, how can teachers and students develop a collective praxis that takes up in a politically charged and pedagogically progressive way the contradiction between social relations of homosexuality and the social form of "alterity" (one's relationship to the "other")? (original emphases and parenthesis: McLaren, 1995, 109).

Such questions are not new ones. They have manifested in various forms regarding social injustices of, amongst others, race, class, language and gender. But, what I find significant about these questions is their reiteration of the need for *praxis*. Education bent on a human rights and social equity agenda is not stagnant and does not fixate on the theoretical, or speculative (Bradbury Huang, 2010), possibilities of social equity. Instead, it is the development of a critical and socially equitable *theory-informed-practice*. We can see this in the work by Paulo Freire, Norman Fairclough, Vivian Vasquez, Hilary Janks, Kevin Kumashiro and so many other critical literacy or critical pedagogy educator-researchers.

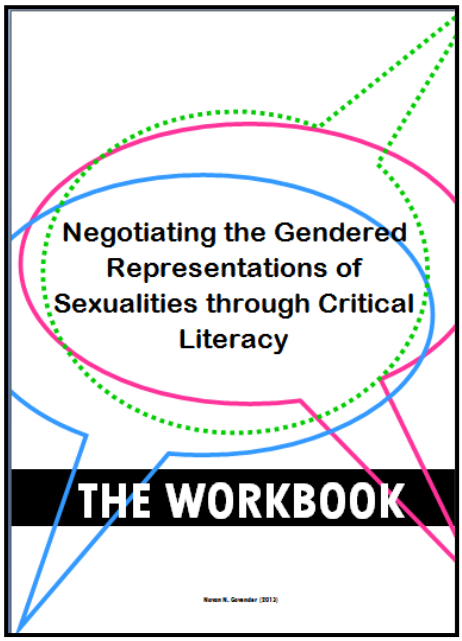
I have identified before in this paper that I align the structure of the workbook to Kumashiro's (2002) notion of "education that is critical of privileging and othering" (44), but also to his notion of "education that changes students and society" (50). Using these approaches, each section in the workbook was designed to include an analysis and deconstruction of a commonplace text, critical questions about

normativity and social impact/movements, and in some cases a redesign activity. It is redesign (New London Group, 2000) that I think moves the workbook, and those who use it, from a cognitive endeavour to a more practical one. This is not to say that there is not any potential for the workbook to become more practical, especially in ways that give students or learners more voice and control over the content or texts that are used in the classroom.

However, while Kumashiro's (2002) work has been highly useful for helping me frame the workbook and understand how an antioppressive education works, I found that I was also drawing on Janks' (2014) article, *Critical Literacy's Ongoing Importance for Education*. In this article, Janks (2014) identifies 5 key elements of a critical literacy project: 1. Finding and naming the issue; 2. Linking the issue to learners' lives; 3. Assessing relevant information; 4. Textual design; and 5. The social effects. Each of these elements contributes to an overall critical structure for teaching. That is, they are fundamental parts of a process that teachers and learners are to take when constructing a critical literacy project or curriculum. They are also not finite elements, but recurring processes that should be re-evaluated as new and more pressing issues are named (Janks, 2014).

The issue I have named for both the workbook and the critical literacy course is that of the gendered representations of sexuality. This encompasses a myriad of issues related to sex, gender and sexuality in relation to representation, language and power (see Figure 4.10 for the front cover of the workbook which names the issue). The second element, as given by Janks (2014), is to make the issue relevant to the lives of the audience. This is particularly interesting when looking at the workbook because it relates to the students of the critical literacy course in two main ways: On one hand, it is a course for pre-service teachers. That is, there is always a

question of how these activities and the content presented are relevant to teachers. Students question such relevance in relation to their own subject area, the level of education they intend teaching in, their own moral or religious positions, their cultural or even racial positions, or their own liberal or conservative positions and understandings of sex, gender and sexuality. On the other hand, the activities always try to begin by working with what students already know (see Figure 4.11 for activity one, section one from the workbook) before exploring methods of deconstruction or more subversive or nonconforming ideas and identities.



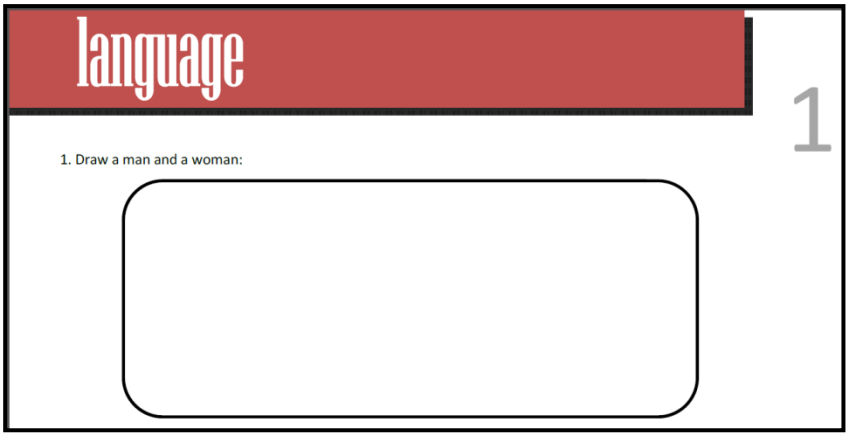


Figure 4.11: *Phase 3 extract: Language*

Figure 4.10: *Workbook Cover*

Here, the first activity draws on students' knowledge or ideas before moving into defining and reconceptualising what they already know.

Engaging with theory on pedagogy also revealed that relating information to learner's lives (Janks, 2014) is not limited to drawing on learners' prior knowledge. It is also, perhaps more effectively, an engagement with the experiences of learners. In activities seven (Workbook: p5) and eight (Workbook: p6) I introduce language as a

tool for writing our own stories. The autobiographical piece written by Robert Hamblin (in Morgan et al., 2009), *My Name Is...*, describes how, as a transgendered man, he is able to reflect on his identity. Being transgender, however, allows him to speak both about issues specifically related to transgenderism as well as the fluidity and complexity of sex, gender and sexual identities. He uses devices such as repetition and incomplete sentences to present a simple and powerful description of his identity, which becomes effective in putting forth the notion of normality that is present in a single transgendered, sexed, gendered and sexualised experience.

Robert Hamblin's story then becomes a model for trying to conceptualise a moment in which the student might have been policed or socialised to do gender in a particular way – a socio-culturally 'appropriate' way. Students are asked to think about this and to write a short piece on such a time. By relating it back to the student, the idea of being positioned and policed is not such an abstract concept. Instead, it is something to reflect on in their own lives, to understand how their identities and ideas about the world may have already been influenced, and how their own identities are related to the worlds in which they live. By analysing the stories that students produce, if they do have time to complete the task, their use of language for describing and discussing their own experiences might give an indication of their own understandings of gender.

These activities, however, do not emerge from nothing. Again, my concern with language in this part of the workbook, and the course, has developed out of a concern for the conflated meanings we attach to words, and how this contributes to inaccurate understandings of what sexuality, and furthermore sexual orientation, means. A language that does not see sex, gender and sexuality as separate, albeit interrelated, concepts provides a foundation for false assumption, generalisation and

stigmatisation. It is a space that measures people's performance of a norm using problematic tools, or, in Terry Myers Zawacki's perspective,

> our experience of gender and the use of language are wrapped up in the politics of manipulation and marginalization based on socially constructed gender differences, and we need new ways to use language to explore that relationship (Zawacki in Alexander, 2005, 49).

And, in order to confront this conflation, a critical approach asks that we explore alternative perspectives in interesting ways. Perhaps there are other stories available for teachers and learners to explore.

Jonathan Alexander's (2005) *Transgender Rhetorics: (Re)Composing Narratives of the Gendered Body* highlights how writing is a gendered practice of subjectivity, from a queer feminist perspective. The gendered subject emerges as a result of social norms and gendered hegemonies that position writers, subjects, humans, always in relation to male-female, masculine-feminine and heterosexual-homosexual dichotomies. Like Hamblin (in Morgan et al., 2009), we need to transition from our internal sense of gender to another so that we may try to understand the Othered person as well as ourselves as socially influenced beings. It is a strategy for exploring and coming to terms with "the intersections among gender, the body, and the body politic" (Alexander, 2005, 47): What is a real man or woman? What is biologically given and what is socially practised? Who gets to decide whose identity is legitimate, and what subject position each person is allowed to take? And finally, what are the contradictions that we embody when we try to uphold gender hegemonies?

This task, then, is a form of reflection. I use it to get the students to reflect on the issues of language we have dealt with so far in relation to their own constructedness. However, due to the lack of time to really develop this activity into a

long-term writing exercise, I can only hope that some students tackle it outside of the allotted lecture time and use it to grapple with the issues of how we use language to construct identities of sex, gender and sexuality in complex and even conflated ways.

What students do in class has emerged out of the phases and processes of production of the overall workbook. We can refer back to Figure 4.2 here to consider how shifts in conceptualising the workbook took place in phases one and two as a result of the ongoing processes (A and B in Figure 6) of exploring the theory and the texts that exist in social forums. Such an abundance of information and textual designs (Janks, 2014) meant that I had to be selective of what I thought students and learners should do and the kinds of questions and topics that would be appropriate. Note that even the kinds of texts that are available for analysis influence what is included and excluded, as well as the role included texts play in the overall workbook and course materials. What we can see from figure 6 is also how the first four elements from Janks' (2014) article can work in integrated and fluid ways. Sometimes an issue is named when we read a text or come across a theoretical concept, while at other times it is the process of exploring learners' lives that reveals more pressing issues or misinformation because of the texts they have already been exposed to. It is the convoluted negotiation between these elements and their interactions with each other that requires a teacher, or materials designer, to consider the intent of a course and the social effects that that course and its components could have.

This means, then, that engaging with these elements has also required me to always consider the social impact of the decisions I have made. This is the final element that Janks (2014) argues must constitute a critical literacy project. Therefore, the decisions I have made when designing the workbook and the course

presentations have very particular effects on the audiences who engage with them. Had alternative decisions been made, the implementation of this workbook could have resulted in very different findings. Furthermore, the workbook could have been used in very different ways or given rise to very different conversations in the classroom.

In the next chapter, I present the findings from the implementation of the workbook. I look at the various kinds of responses that occurred during the sessions of the critical literacy course: from observational recordings of classroom interactions in the field notes and extracts from students' notebooks, to my own reflective journals on the conversations I had with students about the course and my own identity.

Chapter Five: **Implementing the Workbook**

Throughout the critical literacy courses field notes were recorded based on the responses that students gave to activities and texts while working through the PowerPoint rendition of the workbook. Upon analysis of these field notes, I have identified five main themes that recur in each of the two three-week courses. This analysis is also interspersed with data collected from students' notebooks to help give more reliable evidence for the following sections: 5.1 The Biology versus Society Dilemma, considers students' engagement with the 'realness' of sexed, gendered and sexual diversity. It encompasses a discussion on how students grapple with the biology-society binary when thinking about sex, gender and sexuality as well as the difficulty associated with understanding transgenderism, all in relation to the *identity gem* model. 5.2 looks at The Meanings of Words: Connotation, Denotation and Multilingualism, wherein I explore how students engage with the linguistic terms used for sex, gender and sexuality in English and other languages. I also, briefly, discuss some of the misunderstandings of terms that students seem to display. 5.3 deals with issues of policing: on one hand, students engage with the general concept of policing and what it means, while on the other hand students also deal with the concept in the context of the Caster Semenya case. This leads to 5.4, a section that deals with redesign. In this section I look at students' difficulties using redesign to step out of conventional gender binaries. However, there is also an interesting critique of the course that is worth noting in this section. 5.5, A Question of African-ness: Intersections with Racial Identity, Culture/Tradition and Religion, focuses on a discussion between myself and a number of students who seem to move seamlessly between narratives of race, culture/tradition and biblical religious scripture in order to maintain their opposition to non-heterosexual identities.

While the above five themes represent categories of recurring and patterned themes over the six-week period of data collection, there are also a number of possibly happenstance events discussed in part 5.6 of this paper. These are defining moments that presented something new and interesting based on my pedagogical choice not to reveal my own sexual orientation at any time before, during or after the course in any formal manner. I call this 'The Pedagogy of 'Coming-Out' (part 5.6), and it reveals some noteworthy reactions and (im)possibilities that emerge from making such a decision.

5.1 The Biology versus Society Dilemma

"Should sexual orientation be considered to fall on a continuum, or should heterosexual women and men, bisexual women and men, lesbians and gay men be studied as discrete groups?" (Rothblum, 1994, 214) is one of the fundamental questions that I ask students in this course. The question itself, although phrased here to pertain to research related to the mental health of gay and lesbian people (Rothblum, 1994), initiates discussions primarily on the fundamental authenticity, 'realness' and 'naturalness' of sexuality being diverse rather than within the confines of a heterosexual norm. That is, what is biological and what is social? Moreover, it is re-learning that heterosexuality has been constructed as an original, and that non-heterosexual identities are actually an imitation of nothing (Butler, 1993).

Language becomes a particularly important concern here. The words we have to speak about sex, gender and sexuality can be slippery territory. Over time, words shift in connotation according to shifting socio-cultural circumstances and power relations. Different languages have different words and meanings that could be attached to those words. The objective, then, in this first section of the workbook is to

consider what language we use to speak about sex, gender and sexuality, and how the meanings of those words have been conflated in various ways. When we speak about men and women, do we actually speak about masculinities and femininities instead?

To address the issues of conflation, the workbook begins with a task where students need to draw a picture of a man and a woman (workbook: page 1). A seemingly simple task, but it is one that should reveal how students differentiate between the sexes using their previous understandings of sex, gender and sexuality. How they choose to represent sexed identity, then, might emerge as a result of their perhaps already conflated conceptions of what it means to be male or female, and whether these are easily represented in a drawing. Again, is it not to be expected that the normative and commonsensical conflations of sex, gender and sexuality will be represented?

Before I present the responses given by students during the critical literacy course, it is important to recognise the limitations of the biology-society argument. Firstly, it is a crass simplification of human relations. Although humans are considered social animals as well as natural organisms, there are a number of factors that influence human development and interaction: from the social and biological, to the psychological and existential. It is important to understand that while the biology-society argument played a large role in the conversations in class, it does not exist in and of itself. Rather, we use this essentialised binary in class to help students grapple with the disruption and use of a language they thought they already knew.

Let us begin, then, with activity one's (Workbook: p1 *Language*) instruction to draw a man and a woman. Students spent the first few minutes of this class constructing their drawings in their notebooks. From chapter four of this paper, we

know that I am interested in the markers that students use to identify and represent male and female sexed identities – albeit, I too maintain this binary and thus position my students within a normative framework. However, students have produced a number of interesting images that can be plotted on a Venn diagram: from conventional markers to distinguish male-female biological sex, to more ambiguous representations, to what can be considered 'gender neutral' representations that still need to be problematised. It thus moves from 'conventional' to 'less conventional'. However, there are still overlapping areas, where representation might be somewhat less conventional but still draws on traditional or socio-culturally hegemonic markers for identifying sex or gender.



Figure 5.1: *Categories of Male-Female Representations*

In order to discuss each category that I have identified on this Venn diagram, examples from students' work will be analysed in relation to the theories on representation as well as those on sex, gender and sexuality. Each example is representative of its category, and therefore all other images that fit into that category also contain, to a large extent, the same characteristics. The following table outlines the criteria for each category:

Category 1: Conventional representations	Category 2: Ambiguous Representations	Category 3: 'Gender Neutral' Representations
Dress:		
Traditional differentiation of male and female sex by identifiable garments. Men wear nothing (the universal man) to trousers, fedoras or ties while women wear dresses, skirts, high-heeled shoes or don handbags.	In this category there may be a disruption of normative gender representation such as women wearing trousers or ties.	In order to maintain 'neutrality', figures in this category of representation may not have any gender-identifying garments.
Hair:		
Men have short to no visible hair while women are represented as having longer hair styles (pony-tails, bobs, loose and long hair, etc.).	Men are represented with longer hair, and women are either shown to have normative long hair or wearing a hat.	No representation of hair.
Accessories:		
Women may be wearing handbags, and are covered with flowers or warm feminine colours (pink, orange or red). Men may be wearing hats (caps or fedoras) and are associated with cold masculine colours (blue or green).	Colour-to-gender associations might be inverted if shown at all. Men and women might wear bags.	No representation of accessories.

Table 5.1: *Criteria for Representing Sex and Gender in the Continuum of Male-Female Representations*

Out of a total of eighteen notebooks that were submitted, sixteen fall into the first category of a normative representation of men and women. For each of the latter two categories there is only one drawing available. Already, there is an indication that the markers for sex and gender that these students use, draw on hegemonic conceptions of how to identify as either biologically male or female. While we cannot say that these notebooks represent the whole of the student body that attended the critical literacy course in 2013, it can be safely assumed to still represent the

proportions of different understandings of sex and gender that might exist in many higher education classrooms. That is, in a population of students (in this case student-teachers) and perhaps even in a population of school-going learners it is safe to assume that the majority understand sex and gender in conventional binary terms that are somewhat aligned to hegemonic order. Furthermore, from the literature we can see that hegemonic constructions of sex are in themselves conflated with gender performance, and this becomes highly evident in students' drawings.

Because of the abundance of conventional representations, I have chosen to analyse three examples from students' notebooks. This should help to illustrate the range of representations that have emerged within this category as well as the range of ways that socio-cultural markers of gender have been used to represent biological sex in hegemonic ways. Here, we can begin to see the extent to which sex and gender have been conflated in commonsensical ways.

In the first example (Figure 5.2) we see a rather simple drawing of a man and a woman. Anatomically, the two figures are the same. The cartoon-like style of the drawing seems to suggest a generalised concept of sexed identities. What sets them apart is their performed gender in dress, hair and accessories. The female figure wears a dress donning a pink flower, has longer hair that is tied back with a pink hair band as well as curled eye-lashes. She is also accessorised with pink earrings and shoes. In contrast, the male figure is only identified as such by his shorter hair (a single curl at the top of his head) and blue shorts.

On one hand, difference in gender performance is all that identifies each figure as either male or female. However, and perhaps most importantly, is the quantity of gendered 'stuff' that is needed to identify each sex: performing a female identity requires a significantly greater amount of work than performing a male

identity. Maleness, then, is a ‘natural’ given identity – even without shorts, it is easy to assume that we would be able to identify the second figure as male, and not female.

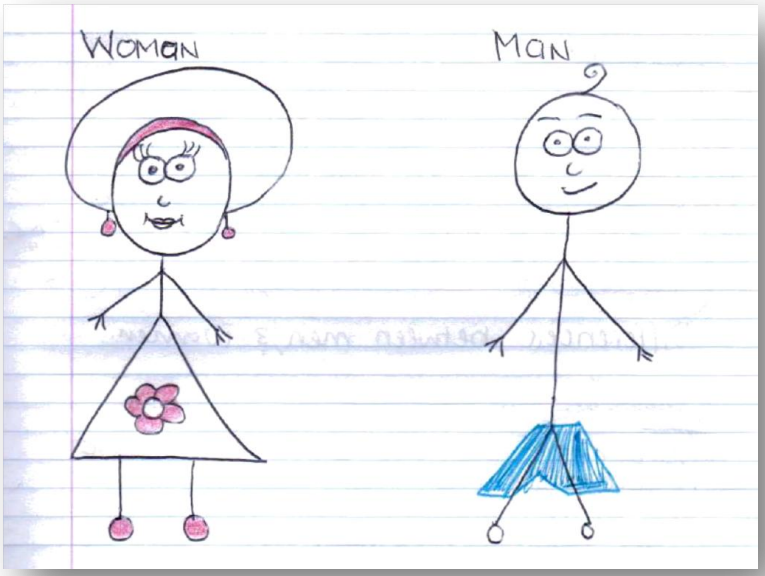


Figure 5.2: *‘Conventional Representation’ – Example 1 - Extract from A09.1*

Such a normative representation confuses the markers for representing biological sex with those socio-culturally defined markers that actually indicate gender. And while there is no visible suggestion of sexual identity, these figures seem bound to the hegemonic order of gender.

Figure 5.3 suggests similar ideas. In this image we are presented with a far more detailed illustration of male and female identities. Again, we see the reproduction of hegemonic ideas regarding dress, hair and accessories. However, I have chosen this image because of its inclusion of more anatomical features that differentiate male and female bodies. This includes shoulder width, the curvature of waist and chest/breast and stance.

In Figure 5.3, the male figure has been drawn with broader shoulders. His chest moves in a straight line down to his waist and legs. The female figure, however, has been depicted with narrower shoulders, a bump that suggests the presence of breasts (rather than a flatter, male chest), a tighter waist which

emphasises wider hips, curved (and exposed) legs in high-heeled shoes, and an arm that is hoisted up so that the hand can be positioned on the waist. These markers suggest anatomical differences between men and women. However, they are also stereotyped and conventionally generalised anatomical differences that are used by mass media to represent male and female bodies (Gill, 2008). With more time, I question whether the student would include other physiologies in body shape and size. That is, not all women may identify with this version of a female figure in the same way that not all men may identify with this male figure.



Figure 5.3: *'Conventional Representation' – Example 2 – Extract from B02.1*

This illustration also includes some interesting design choices in relation to the position of the body. I have already identified the position of the female figure's arm and hand, but there is also great significance in the choices behind the gaze of the two figures (Ferreira, 2009; Gill, 2008). While the male stares directly ahead and makes eye-contact with the reader, the female figure looks obliquely to the side.

Eye-contact is avoided. While this suggests power/ authority and sub-ordinance respectively, it is also seemingly a technique for making the must-have curvature of the appropriate female body visible. If this female figure were to stand straight and gaze directly toward the reader, we might not see the arch of her breast, legs or jaw line. We can begin, then, to think of the positioning of the body as a gendered performance and not merely a 'neutral' presentation of physique. Straight lines become easily associated with masculinity and curves become an indicator of both the female sex and femininity. It would be interesting to note, then, how these figures might be read and understood if the position of their bodies had been switched around.

Finally, the third example (Figure 5.4) in this category allows us to consider the relationship between the two figures that students were required to draw. One of the questions that students had to answer after drawing a man and a woman was: What relationship do they [the figures] have to one another? While most students did not think there was necessarily any visible relationship, the image in Figure 5.4 suggests that there is one. Specifically, it would seem to be a heterosexual relationship. That is, the two figures are accompanied by a red heart between them which, conventionally, can be read to signify love or intimate/sexual attraction.



Figure 5.4: *'Conventional Representation' – Example 3 – Extract from A10.3*

But, we do need to question whether such a reading can be made. Firstly, the activity instructions require that only one man and one woman need be drawn. Any 'relationship between the figures', then, is ultimately confined to either a heterosexual or a plutonic one – there is no space for any other sexual identity. Secondly, it is impossible to know if this student drew the heart before or after the activity's questions were revealed and the class discussion took place. Therefore, while the image does allow us to consider whether or not sexuality can be represented in these images and through this particular activity, it needs to be considered in context.

What the constructions in this category do show us is the dominance of hegemonic understandings of sex and gender, and the ways in which they have been conflated. We can see quite clearly that the majority of students use socio-cultural markers of gender in order to represent and differentiate between sexed identities. However, this is not necessarily done out of pure ignorance of or complicity to hegemonic ideals. In the following field notes from a discussion in class, a student (S2) reflects on their drawing and the issues that come with trying to represent biological sex after I (N) question the nature of their constructions:

N: Have you drawn gender or biological sex: **caused puzzlement**

S1: Gender

S2: Sex and gender are different – gender socially constructed – but these are for kids. You are drawing for kids so not going to draw physical anatomy (extract from A-L1:01).

It becomes understandable, but not necessarily permissible, why some students may *choose* to use gender to mark differences between the sexes. In the case of this student, they drew on their identity as a teacher to question the appropriateness of

representing biological sex by using more explicit anatomical markers, such as genitalia or other sexual organs. How, then, could we change the way we mark sexed, gendered or even sexualised identities in the classroom? What is 'appropriate'? What is *comfortable* for the people who have to deal with these typically taboo or sensitive ideas? And, ultimately, *how* do we step out of the gendered hegemonies that seem to define what we *feel* is appropriate and inappropriate in representation?

In each of the other two categories, 'Ambiguous Representations' and ''Gender Neutral' Representations', we see students imagining sexed and/or gendered identities beyond convention. When searching the keywords 'transgender signs' in Google-images, one of the images that can be selected is a half-male-half-female symbol:



Figure 5.5: *Transgender Symbol*

Compare this with the image produced by the student:

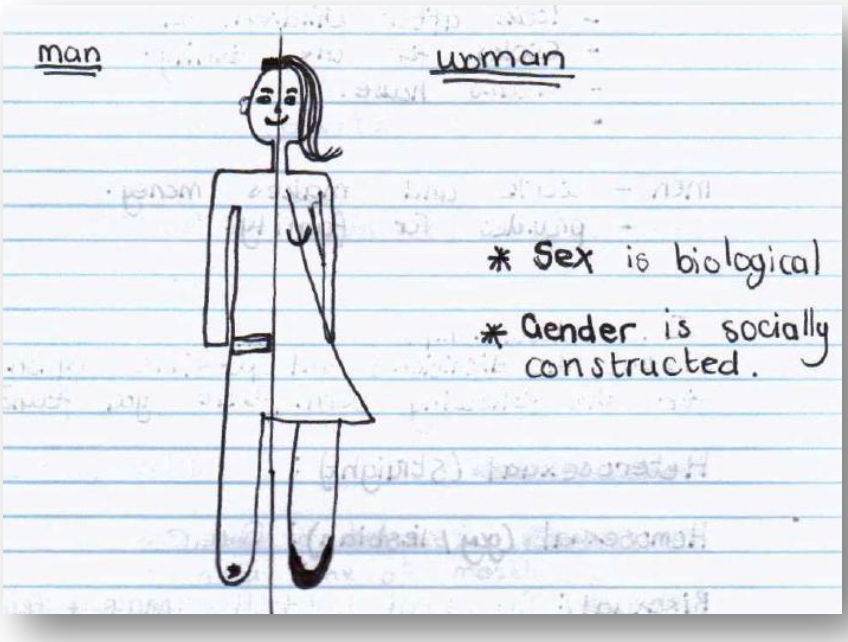


Figure 5.6: '*Ambiguous Representation' – Example – Extract from A03.1*

It is interesting to note the similarities between figures 5.5 and 5.6: Both represent conventional sex-gender conflations in ways that were evident in the examples that I have analysed under category one. Both images, however, also merge the male and female figures which suggests the possibility of either both sexed identities (as male and female) or both gendered identities (as masculine and feminine) being present in the same person. However, this latter reading could be rather optimistic. With ambiguity comes dual possibility, and so the same halving technique that can be read to suggest unification (Thompson in Janks, 2010a) could also be used to suggest incomplete identity formation. That is, to what extent does the design of figures 5.5 and 5.6 draw on pathologising discourses on how nonconforming gendered identities are half-hidden because of their associations with disease, criminality or sin:

> Telling the priest about their sins, describing their symptoms to the doctor, undergoing the talking cure: confessing sins, confessing

> diseases, confessing crimes, confessing the truth. And the truth was sexual (Spargo, 1999, 15).

Drawing on Spargo's (1999) words, to what extent does figure 5.6 represent in some way nonconforming sexed and gendered identities as the hidden that must be confessed – so that it may be healed, fixed or brought to order? While this figure may not actually encompass such pathologising extremism, it is useful to consider the negative readings that are possible in its design.

What, then, are the possibilities of a 'gender neutral' symbol? Figure 5.7 depicts one student's drawing and resistance to the binaries of sex and gender and the assumptions that they allow us to make:

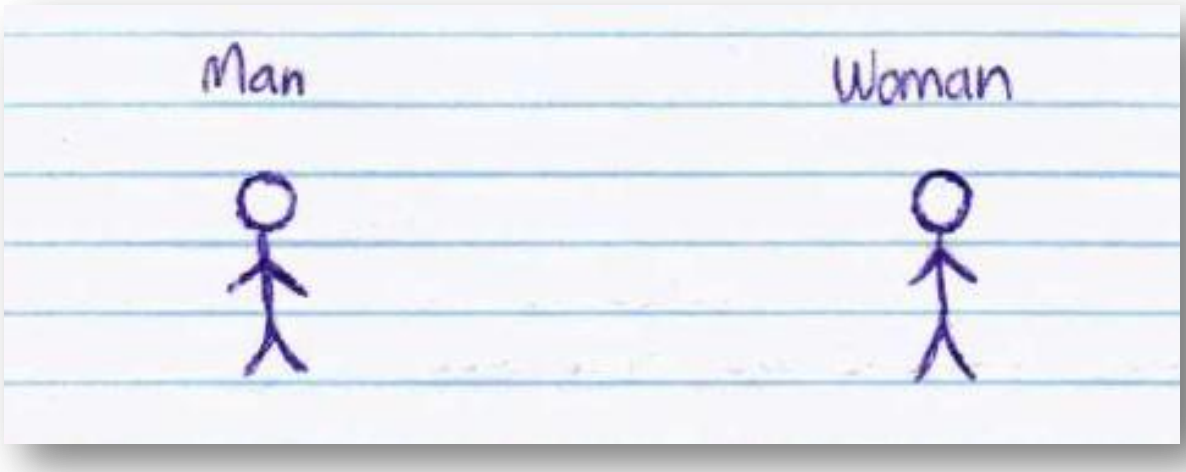


Figure 5.7: *'Neutral Representation' – Example – Extract from A02.4*

Here we see two figures that are the same in every way used to represent both 'Man' and 'Woman'. They are simple stick-figure drawings. However, in their simplicity and resemblance, they usher in both an essentialisation of identity and the refusal of difference. By essentialising sexed, and possibly gendered, identities, this student denies diversity in both biological and social terms. This is similar to what Janks (2005b) calls discourses of sameness. By unifying male and female identities into sameness, Figure 5.7 seems to attempt to represent equality while marginalising

the biological and social diversity inherent in human beings. Such unification is further instantiated in some text that follows this image in the notebook:

> They wear nothing. No differences/similarities. They are standing. I don't want to draw chairs. They are side by side. I don't know what relationship they have. They are pencil lead race. I don't know how old they are (extract from A02.4).

These short, somewhat seemingly disjointed statements are answers to the list of questions in activity one of section one (*Language*) in the PowerPoint version of the workbook.

While we see the discourses of sameness at work, we can also see that the student recognises that they do not have all the answers. The repeated "I don't know..." (A02.4) might signify a lack of motivation or wont to answer the questions, but they might also signify the recognition of individuality. The 'people' in Figure 5.7 are individuals, albeit exactly the same, and their complete identities are not visible: we cannot see their sexual identities, their age, or their race. They are, first and foremost, just people.

What remains, then, is a question of how students understand sexuality and sexual orientation: as biological or as social? While many students agreed that sexual orientation was something we are born with, some students thought otherwise. Non-heterosexuality, for some, was considered a choice. One student offered the following example in class:

> S3: Lesbian females chose to be with women because of history of abuse before that she was 'fine' 'perfectly normal' (extract from A-L1:05)

While this situation may be possible, we need to be careful of how we represent it. The sequencing of information here seems to construct lesbianism as a result or

consequence of opposite-sex domestic violence. In this example, the student also overlooked the possibility of same-sex domestic violence and the extent to which sexuality is controlled by fear of a particular sex rather than as an attraction to a particular or range of sexes.

Moreover, their example is particularly problematic in their use of heterosexist discourses: “before that she was ‘fine’ ‘perfectly normal’” (A-L1:05). Such an utterance has overtly constructed lesbianism as a pathological identity while implying that heterosexuality is ‘normal’, ‘natural’ and present in healthy relationships. It seems to insinuate that if you do heterosexuality wrong, then you are forced to become something that is not ‘fine’ or ‘perfectly normal’, something broken. It is also out of a woman’s control because it is her heterosexual partner that either keeps her in normalcy or pushes her toward deviancy.

So far, then, it is clear that many students come from and engage in heteronormative practices. This is particularly evident in how, on many occasions, students read gender performance as an indicator of sexual identity. When asking students to try and identify the sexual orientation of a figure from Leland Bobbé’s *Half-Drag* series, a number of students responded with the same answer:

N: Half half face: what are the markers of the gender performance? What is his sexual orientation?

Ss: Bisexual (extract from B-L2:06)

While earlier in the course one student made the following comment:

S4: Homosexuality is a mind state. Comes from individual’s mind in how to choose to act and to behave (extract from A-L1:02).

In this statement there is no recognition that a sexual orientation is defined by sexual or intimate attraction to another person. Rather, as a ‘mind state’, homosexuality is

regarded as purely performative (Butler, 1993 and 2006) in relation to actions and behaviour. This is despite the exercise in which students have to find definitions for key terms, two of which are ‘sexuality’ and ‘sexual orientation’. On the other hand, it might also be possible to read this statement in a more positive light. That is, it might show the recognition that how sexuality becomes visible in social context is dependent on the ‘mind state’ and understanding of the person. To some extent, we might choose how to use gender performance as a way of making our sexual identities visible (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2009).

In another scenario, one student identifies effeminacy in men, specifically in gay men, to be a tactic for fitting in:

S5: It’s now a thing of trying to fit in. Takes off the body language of ultra camp. Can be a fashion statement. Try to fit in with girls (extract from A-L1:03).

I find this a particularly interesting argument because it is not evident in any of the literature that I have read. However, such an argument of ‘fashion’ might be explicable in view of a relative increase in gay and lesbian representation in popular media and television (Cover, 2000; Wallowitz, 2004; Brickell, 2000; Gill, 2008) even in South Africa that is, to a large extent, still based on stereotypes, and the relative increase of gay and lesbian movements on one of the university’s campuses (Milani, 2013). However, the annoyance in this student’s tone of voice suggested that camp behaviour is a negative attribute in the men who use it. It almost seems to imply that there is an idea of ‘homosexuality as performance’ that emerges out of this student’s conflation of gender as a social practice (Connell, 1995) and a somewhat invisible sexual orientation (Butler, 2006). Such performance is viewed as a way for gay men to enter female groups, which does seem to contradict the ways in which male masculinity works to uphold the patriarchal dividend in Connell’s (1995) writing.

Where Connell (1995) states that even gay men use the subordination of women to their advantage through, mainly, complicity, this student sees gay men as trying to enter and possibly invade female spaces and identities instead.

5.2 The Meanings of Words: Connotation, Denotation and Multilingualism

*Students working on defs [definitions]: looking up online. Talking to each other; interested; engaged.

S6: Biological sex either a boy or a girl;

N: What about people who are born with both?

Ss: Hermaphrodites

N: Non pc [politically correct] term why

S7: Because is it a boy or a girl

N: Who gets to decide? Hermaphrodite attach boy or girl meanings to child not sure what to do when child does not fit the norm.

N: Pc term intersex continuum, if life-threatening may operate and decide at birth

S8: Shouldn't there be a law preventing this? (parentheses added: extract from A-L1:01).

In this extract from the field notes, the students and I are engaged in defining the various key terms and identities that we will use in the course. I also use this to try and dislodge any hold that students might have on traditional binary understandings of sex, gender and sexuality. In this particular scene we see the students' lack of knowledge about the term 'intersexed'. Instead, the more clinical and pathological term 'hermaphrodite' is known and used with ease. However, while the denotative meanings of 'hermaphrodite' might be appropriate for describing any organism with a

combination of ‘male’ and ‘female’ sexual organs (gonads), it is not always an accurate description of intersexuality as an identity or as an anatomical state.

A number of studies on the intersexed body, both psychosocial and medical, have been conducted in the attempt to unravel the problematic terminology used to describe intersexuality as being contrary to a natural and real phenomenon. There seems to be an overall agreement that conventional constructions and conflations of sex and gender influence how doctors reassign sexed and gendered identities to intersexed infants (Kessler, 1990; Kitzinger, 1999; Turner, 1999; Dreger et al., 2005; Dreger, 1998). That is, because socio-cultural hegemonies dictate that there are only two sexes and, consequently, only two genders, many doctors who are confronted with intersexed children at birth find themselves morally bound to choose a gendered and sexed identity for the child. How this happens and the yardstick used to measure what sex and gender to choose is, however, highly problematic.

It is found that even

> in the face of apparently incontrovertible evidence – infants born with some combination of “female” and “male” reproductive and sexual features – physicians hold an incorrigible belief in and insistence upon female and male as the only “natural” options (original emphases: Kessler, 1990, 4).

The term ‘hermaphrodite’, then, implies that female and male identities are of the natural order, and that any ‘other’ sexed identity is deviant. The traditional binary for biological sex is presented to parents, intersexed people and the world as an original identity, or which the intersexed person does not fit. It is only through the medical expertise of the physician and sex reassignment surgery that biological order can be maintained.

However, usually, the sex of a child is determined based on a socio-cultural conception that sex is directly related to gender, which is further related to the

maintenance of heterosexuality as the compulsory, ‘natural’ sexual orientation: A “team of clinicians reveals their phallocentrism, arguing that the most serious mistake in gender assignment is to create ‘an individual unable to engage in genital [heterosexual] sex’” (Castro-Magana et al. in Kessler, 1990, 20). Here, anything other than a substantial and functioning penis (the biological attributes taken to be the main indicator of the male sex) is warranted for ‘gender reassignment to a female sex. However, while this implies a certain sexism – that female sexed identities are easier to construct and function only as passive recipient of sexual intercourse with the objective to please her partner (Kessler, 1990; Turner, 1999) – there is also a certain heterosexism. That is, any gender/sex reassignment is to some extent dictated by the socio-cultural need to maintain ‘correct’ heterosexual sex as the accepted practice.

However, when speaking about people, whose sentience seems to have given us top-dog position in the ecological food chain, the words we use need to be both accurate in their meanings as well as non-pathological. In this way, we can attach more positive and non-criminalising or non-stigmatising meanings to the people who wear these labels. In turn, this might allow us to think of and treat nonconforming people as people, and not anything less than that.

The term ‘hermaphrodite’, then, is a complex issue of identity: To what extent do we essentialise sexed and gender identity? Does ‘intersex’ help us to imagine identity beyond the male-female binary, or does its location at the midpoint of the ‘sex continuum’ (refer to the identity gem model in this paper) still construct intersexed people as in-between or incomplete instead of as whole, real identities unto themselves? While there are some problems with the denotative meaning of ‘hermaphrodite’, there are also more stigmatising and inaccurate connotations that arise with the social use of this word.

Advocating for the use of ‘intersexed’ might then be argued to combat the persistence of derogatory connotations of having gender ambiguous identities (Tirrell, 1999). This is not to say that any relexicalisation (Janks, 2010) of a word necessitates the redefinition of the power relations it signifies. Rather, there is a *chance* to re-imagine our understandings, and thus our relationships and social regard, for people who identify as intersexed. There is, unfortunately, always the possibility that any derogatory meanings attached to ‘hermaphrodite’ could become attached to ‘intersex’ (Tirrell, 1999; Brontsema, 2004) despite anyone’s attempt to reclaim their social identity.

In the classroom, the beginning scene of this section also illustrates how students use connotation and denotation in the process of deconstructing the relationships between language, power, identity, diversity and social action. It is used as a way to break down what already exists in order to move toward more transformative ways of thinking, and to understand how words work in socio-cultural context. There are, then, two main uses for connotation and denotation that can be identified in the classroom: as a pedagogical tool for deconstruction, and as a tool for using multilingualism to place understanding in socio-cultural context.

As a pedagogical tool, we can see from the example at the beginning of this section that denotation and connotation allow us to see both the intended meanings of words as well as their social meanings respectively. That is, we are able to move beyond standardised language structures so that we may consider what meanings and impacts words can have on understanding, interpersonal relationships, psychological and existential/spiritual worldviews in different social and cultural settings. It is a consideration of how different meanings privilege some while disempowering others in order to create, maintain and reproduce power relations.

This is done in the same way that other linguistic features related to lexicalisation, overlexicalisation, relexicalisation (Janks, 2010a) allow a text designer to choose particular words in order to convey particular meanings. Similarly, readers of text need to understand the possible meanings and double-meanings of words in both the context the text was designed and the context within which the text was read in order to grasp the language-power relationships that exist.

While terms such as ‘hermaphrodite’ or ‘straight’ are easily understood by the students, it is the hidden and variable connotative meanings behind them that we also need to understand. Their abundant commonplace usages seem to make them socially acceptable, but during a discussion about the connotations of words a student began to critique the terms I was using to speak about different identities:

> S9: Is straight an acceptable description for straight? Does this mean that gay people skew? (extract from B-L4:12).

By using the common term ‘straight’ to refer to heterosexual people, I was constructing non-heterosexual identities as deviant and ‘skew’. On one hand, this student was engaged in a critical reading of my teaching; on another hand, this student also used connotation as a pedagogical tool. By phrasing the critique as a question, this student briefly took the role of the critical literacy teacher in order to make me think about my own lexical decisions and the meanings that I was inadvertently conveying.

Such meanings are also useful for understanding how language itself can influence imagination. In the course we briefly explore the words that different languages have to identify or label different sexed, gendered or sexual identities. While I do not explicitly identify any specific non-English terms in the course materials, PowerPoint and workbook, I do ask in all of these materials that students

consider what words other languages have to express different identities (see p2, activity 4 in the workbook).

The students bring with them a cornucopia of languages. Many black students speak the indigenous languages of Southern Africa and a group of Indian students even questioned what words were available in Hindi:

Ss: Iskeban [isitabane] – translate into English – refers to hermaphrodite but also used to refer to gay men not women

S9: Nkokule – it means boys who are acting ... [illegible] **uproarious laughter**

N: If don't have the word[,] have to use m/f binary

S10: Indian...??? from girls

N: Word in Hindi for castrated men used for gay men

S9: Prior to openness re [regarding] gay people no words in Zulu. 100 years ago no language. What about gay people in the past? Taboo. People did not recognise it (parentheses added: extract from A-L1:04).

The term 'isitabane' is an interesting one. The word itself is used to refer to gay men in some South African languages, like isiZulu, but can sometimes also be taken to translate to the word 'hermaphrodite' in English (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2009; McLean and Ngcobo, 1994). That is,

> to be called stabane is to be seen as having both a penis and a vagina. However, those identified and referred to as stabane rarely have intersexed bodies; instead, in contemporary Soweto and elsewhere, there is a widespread assumption and co-created understanding that those who self-identify as lesbian or gay or engage in particularly

> gendered same-sex encounters may be intersexed (Lock Swarr, 2009, 525).

Furthermore, the derogatory connotations attached to the word 'isitabane' "is associated with disgust and hatred for the 'queer'" (Msibi, 2012b, 255). While the word 'hermaphrodite' is an English biological term for an organism that displays both female and male sex organs, it is not commonly used today to refer to people. It is scientific and clinical, and does not connote a particularly human identity. Instead, the term *intersexed* is used. It is more politically correct because it does not necessarily come with the stigma of clinical disease or malformation. From my model on sex, gender and sexuality (the identity gem) it is a whole identity, and biological sex, in its own right.

However, 'isitabane' has been rationalised in terms of biology in order for whole communities to make sense of gay male identity in African tradition:

> A belief in hermaphroditism is a logical consequence of the polarity of gender in broader society. It provides the 'physical cause' [...] This 'deformity' safely locates homosexuality within the catalogue of clinical disorders, thereby making it at least explicable and, to a degree, acceptable. That someone would chose [choose?] to be a homosexual simply because he likes other men is unacceptable to most people because it questions the most basic patriarchal assumptions about men and women (parenthesis added: McLean and Ngcobo, 1994, 169).

Furthermore, in order to maintain same-sex male relationships, gender roles are still significant attributes to display. This means that isitabane identity can emerge in three possible ways: as *skesanas*; as *injongas*, or as *imbubes* (McLean and Ngcobo, 1994; Tucker, 2009). "A skesana is a boy who likes to be fucked" (Linda in McLean and Ngcobo, 1994, 164), and so this 'boy' plays a more passive and submissive role in same-sex coupling. It is a performance of a kind of femaleness that allows him to

identify as a passive sex partner; a performance of sexuality using normative gendered representation and hegemonic gender binaries. On the other hand, an injonga is a man who plays the more dominant and active role in same-sex coupling, as a way of displaying his masculinity. In such a case, this man may not identify with words such as 'gay' or 'homosexual', but rather a *man-who-sleeps-with-men* (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2009). Keeping with patriarchal and heteronormative order, "[t]here must be a 'man' and a 'woman' in a relationship. A man must act mannish in his behaviour and his talks and walks. But a female must be queenish in every way" (parenthesis added: Thami in McLean and Ngcobo, 1994, 164).

The 'imbube', however, is flexible: sometimes adopting an active role and sometimes a passive role. He is one who "tends to be treated either with mild tolerance as someone who can't make up his mind, or with some irritation as someone who wants to play *morabaraba* (a board game played with bottle-tops) but doesn't know the rules" (McLean and Ngcobo, 1994, 168). Interestingly enough, this is a response common for people who identify as bisexual. The idea of 'sitting on the fence' or 'not making up one's mind' about their sexual identity goes back to our need to definitively classify people. It stems from a tradition that makes it difficult for us to see sex, gender and sexuality as continua, as fluid, or as dynamic. Socio-cultural performances of gender, in order to signify biological sex and/or sexuality, becomes a 'game' with rules and regulations, winners and losers, and our language is but one aspect that allows that.

The general exclusion of lesbian identities in African language or culture seems to build on the idea that sex, gender and sexuality in many South African contexts function on the maintenance of patriarchy. Even same-sex coupling needs

to function within the realms of patriarchy in order for there to be the possibility of acceptance (Tucker, 2009). However, the absence of lesbianism does also suggest the complete taboo of it. Again, if the language to express or even scorn such an identity doesn't exist, then the identity itself might be perceived as something that should not exist. It makes one wonder if this is a contributing factor for the predominance of 'corrective rape' as a response to lesbianism (sometimes represented as a 'cure' for lesbianism) in South Africa. Is it the possibility that lesbianism so out rightly defies patriarchy, and in some ways, is a powerful resistance to male domination? And that lesbianism instils fear in the patriarchal man:

> It seems more probable that men really fear not that they will have women's sexual appetites forced upon them or that women want to smother and devour them, but that women could be indifferent to them altogether, that men could be allowed sexual and emotional – therefore economic – access to women *only* on women's terms, otherwise being left on the periphery of the matrix (original emphasis: Rich, 1993, 236).

The limitations of the activity (that is, activity 4 Workbook p2) is that I do not explicitly deal with the terms 'isitabane', 'skesana', 'injonga' or 'imbube'. These are only examples of what words could emerge in a classroom and from only one language or set of cognisant African languages, and it is thus dependent on the linguistic and cultural identities of those in the classroom at the time. My reason for excluding these terms in the workbook is based on my desire to lead students into discussions about words that they know and relate to. The concerns and knowledge given by the students are what should be foregrounded, but still guided through critical questioning.

In the extract, we see that while students may have a repertoire of words that refer to sexual diversity, they have not necessarily questioned the social impact of these words. That is, what is the implication of the word 'isitabane' and its

connotative associations with ‘hermaphrodite’ being used to identify gay men (Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2009)? Similarly, what can we understand about how people view homosexuality in Hindi-speaking communities when their label for gay men has connotations related to male castration? S9 begins to recognise the marginalising contexts from which these word associations emerge by linking connotation, denotation and ‘openness’ to sexual diversity. Without the language to speak about sexual diversity, ‘[p]eople did not recognise’ (extract from A-L1:04) such sexual diversity as being real. Even in current contexts, the lack of vocabulary for referring to lesbians, transgendered and intersexed people implies a particular taboo and invisibility of those groups in different linguistic communities.

However, silences can also signify the unmarked hegemonic ideal. We can see in this last extract from my field notes that it can also be useful to note what words different languages have for ‘heterosexuality’:

Ss: No words for hetero[sexual]

S11: Isebane??? [isitabane] Gay man

N: Hermaphrodite – biolog[ical] term for intersexed people

S12: Stabane – lesbian and gay man

Ss: Are the African languages words derogatory

N: What does it mean if no word for hetero[sexuality]?

Ss: Goes without saying (extract from B-L4:07).

Again, we see that students begin to question the connotations and social impacts of words by asking if words are derogatory. However, it is the fact that many of these students did not have words for heterosexuality in the non-English languages that they spoke and that they associate this with heteronormativity. That is, hegemonic heterosexuality ‘goes without saying’ because there is nothing to question. It just is.

Using connotation and denotation as linguistic tools for analysing language and deconstructing normativity has allowed us (not just the students) to consider the ways in which language works to empower, marginalise, misrepresent and silence different groups. It allows us to see how language and power function in a kind of selective legitimation of identities that

> justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives. It is important to understand that legitimation has a cognitive as well as a normative element [...] Legitimation not only tells the individual why he *should* perform one action and not another; it also tells him why things are what they are (original emphasis: Berger and Luckman, 1967 in Hall, 1993, 72).

These affordances also work in multilingual settings to analyse how different linguistic groups view the same concept. My only wish, then, is to elaborate on the extent to which students can grapple with multilingual and multicultural constructions of sex, gender and sexuality in future renditions of the course – should time afford it.

5.3 A History of Policing: Students' Autobiographical Writing

In lecture two (*Policing*), slides 13 and 14, the students were asked to read Robert Hamblin's (in Morgan et al., 2009) autobiographical poem about being a transgender man. Using this as a model, students were then asked to write their own autobiographical piece as a reflection of how they were socialised into gender roles. These were written in their notebooks. However, because of the time constraints of the course and the content that I wanted to cover in my allotted five lecture sessions, we did not have the opportunity to discuss students' own writing. Instead, we focussed on their responses to the Hamblin text, making the writing activity non-compulsory. Therefore, in the data set of eighteen notebooks that were submitted for

use in this research project, only six notebooks contain autobiographical pieces which I analyse now.

At no point during the course, or this activity, did I ask students to identify their own sexual orientations. One student did, however, implicitly self-identify as heterosexual while another self-identified as 'unsure': "It is still assumed that I am heterosexual. I am unsure". It is important to note that while I use this activity to help students identify and understand how policing works in real-life circumstances, I also use the safety of gender identity as a topic rather than sexual identity. This is because asking students to identify their sexual orientations can be rightly deemed as unethical practice. We will consider this issue in more detail in part 5.7 (*The Pedagogy of 'Coming-Out'*) of this data chapter.

While students' written reflections on gender policing in their own lives varied in length and content, they all presented a definite theme that gender is a social practice. This mirrors Connell's (1995) work on hegemonic masculinities and other studies that see gender practice and performance as socio-culturally situated and regulated (Beffon, 1994; Butler, 1993 and 2006; Connell, 1995 and 2000; De Lauretis, 1993; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Luyt, 2012; Rich, 1993; Tucker, 2009). The following extracts are quoted directly from each of the notebooks' autobiographical stories, and refer explicitly to gender being a process of socialisation:

- "I grew up and was socialised to respond and maintain characteristics of a girl" (A12.5);
- "I became socialised into a gender category through religion" (A01.5);
- "I was raised to be a respectful young lady. I had to behave like a girl..." (A03.5);

- "'Proper' gender is falling into a category of either male + masculine or female + feminine created by societies" (A02.6);
- "When you grow up, you are also obliged to attend an initiation school for two months being taught on how to behave like a man" (B01.10); and
- "In my religion Islam teachers us ladies to be modest + conservative in our dressing" (A14.4).

While this position on gender was given to students in the course and activity instructions, it does indicate that evidence of this understanding of gender is identifiable in each of these students' lives.

What these extracts and the rest of their stories also reveal is how gender exists through its intersections with other aspects of identity. In the same way that Gevisser and Cameron (1994) emphasise that there is no one gay identity in South Africa, there is also no single, essentialised identity for gender, race, culture/tradition, religion, and so on. Instead, each is integrated into other identities. Furthermore, identities, and their intersections, are also formed in relation to spaces (local, regional, national, and global spaces) that can be heteronormative or queer (Milani, 2013; Ritchie, 2010). The students draw on a myriad of elements that inform and are informed by gendered identities. The following table briefly outlines these intersections of identity evident in the students' writing:

Gender intersecting with...		**No. of occurrences**
Race		1
Sexuality		2
Religion		3
Culture or tradition		4
Age (5)	Childhood	4
	Coming of age	1
Class/ Socio-economic status		0
Place (15)	Home	4
	School	4

	Community	3
	“Society”	3
	World	1
Role models (6)	Family	4
	Community	1
Language (4)	Media	1
	Language use	3

Table 5.2: *Autobiographies: Intersections with Gender*

It is clear that the institutions of civil society (Gramsci, 1975/1992 and 1975/1996) play a definitive role in the schooling of gendered identities. From the ‘home’ to what is used to refer to an elusive and generic ‘society’, to the recognition that gender and sexuality are issues around the “real world” (A14.4), it is the spaces in which we exist and interact that these students understand as being places for coming to know and live gendered identities. That is, whether these students consciously recognise it or not “[s]pace can be filled with all kinds of social, cultural, epistemic, and affective attributes. [That] then becomes ‘place’, a particular space in which senses of belonging, property rights, and authority can be projected” (parenthesis added: Blommaert, 2005, 222 in Milani, 2013, 206-207). Here, we are concerned with the issues of belonging, or not belonging, and the relations of authority and power that exist within these spaces in order to understand how students have represented gender and even sexuality.

As we can see from the figures in table 5.2, the local and lived spaces of daily life are the ones most prominent for being socialised into hegemonic gender order because it envelopes our everyday interactions. It is the life-long engagement with these interactions, in these spaces, that our ways of being, acting, speaking, and understanding are subjected to relationships of power. It is also within many of these spaces that gender intersects with the other attributes of identity, like race, religion, language, or sexuality.

In this particular data set, only one reference is made to race, “I am an Indian”, which is sequenced alongside a declaration of religious identity: “I am a Muslim. I am an Indian”. After these statements, this student goes on to focus on religious identity, social spaces and gender construction. Race seems to be sidelined, but can be said to exist in silent juxtaposition with religious identity. We can see this in the way that this student has written about their understanding of the male-female binary and the gender roles associated with it:

> “...in our culture men are given the status of superiority... Breadwinners, Money makers. Women are looked at as housewives + mommies. It’s questioned when mom’s rake in the money” (extract from A14.4).

It is uncertain whether ‘culture’ here is used to refer to Islamic culture, the Islamic religion or an Indian culture because of the religious and racial declarations that they make earlier in the text. However, it is through all of these social institutions that the sexes and their appropriate gender roles and performances are made clear.

Religion and culture/tradition are regularly foregrounded as institutions that regulate gender construction and performance in this data set. In each of the autobiographical pieces, there is some reference to at least one of these social institutions. Each reference to religion, culture or tradition, however, is still compounded by an intersection with age:

- “Kneeling was expected of a girl in my culture especially when serving adults” (A12.5);
- “Due to my culture and religion, once you’ve become matured, there are certain things that become compulsory to do on a daily basis and the manner in which it is done is different for males and females” (A01.5).

Or it was compounded by an intersection with language:

- “[I]n my culture there are many words that have separate words for male & female. e.g. in the Arabic language the “Hu” at the end of an object is for males and the letter “Haa” is for females” (parenthesis added: A01.5);
- “’Because you are a girl’. One phrase I have heard and hated my entire life” (A02.6).

And, in some cases it is even compounded by painful intersections with the conflict between family structures and personal aspirations:

> After my mother died, my step dad expected me to cook and clean whilst my studies were sidelined. I will never hate anything as much as I hate this period of my life where I have to cook, clean and be subservient to a man because I am a young woman (extract from A02.6).

In each case, these students have engaged with a critical reflection of their own lives and the social structures that have come to influence their identities and social circumstances. I am grateful for their stories and only wish that we could have explored some of these issues further in order to work toward some form of personal or social transformation wherever it was possible. What is evident, however, is that making the critical move of relating information to students’ lives (Janks, 2014) develops a real understanding and applicability of information and wider social issues.

This work has become especially important for understanding how education can work in relation to issues of sexuality. And, although this activity was specifically designed to deal with issues of gender construction and practice in students’ lives, it has also come to reveal some information about how some of these students understand sexual diversity.

For the student who self-identifies as ‘unsure’ about their assumed heterosexuality, we can deduce that there is a ‘queerness’ to their understanding of

sexuality. That is, being ‘unsure’ about one’s sexual identity could signify an understanding that sexuality itself is not necessarily fixed. This follows from queer theory’s objective to uplift the binaries of sex, gender and sexuality, and thus the way in which we view how identity is developed in relation to sex, gender and sexuality. D’Augelli (in Bilodeau and Renn, 2005, 28) is said to present

> human development as unfolding in concurring and multiple paths, including the development of a person’s self-concept, relationships with family, and connections to peer groups and community. This model suggests that sexual orientation may be very fluid at certain times in the life span and more fixed at others and that human growth is intimately connected to and shaped by environmental and biological factors.

When this student states that their sexuality is ‘assumed‘ to be heterosexual, we see that their somewhat queer take on sexuality exists within a heteronormative context. We can read their expression, then, as a resistance to heteronormativity. Suddenly, the workbook, in whatever small way, has become a space to resist hegemonic gender norms (Connell, 1995; Butler, 2006) as well as the hegemonic functions of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1993).

However, this is not always the case. While a critical approach to education may open up spaces for some students to express resistance to normativity or social authorities, it may also be a space for the maintenance of previous understandings. One student who implicitly self-identifies as a heterosexual positions themselves as both conservative, because of their Islamic religious identity and Indian racial and cultural identities, and liberal by their alignment to the idea that “the world is free”.

Such a stance seems positive and reflective of a liberal discourse, especially when posited with the recognition of sexual diversity as being real:

> “In the real world there is a variety of sexuality – Gays, lesbians, bisexuals” (extract from A14.4).

However, this is followed by their personal feelings toward sexual diversity, which is not as positive:

> "Do I believe in all? Maybe not... Actually no!" (A14.4).

Within the national context of South Africa, and the cosmopolitan setting that is Johannesburg, this position is, of course, acceptable. There is a recognition that sexual diversity exists and is real, while there is disagreement that non-heterosexual identities are 'right' or 'correct'. This is referred to as 'tolerance' and is an example of the discourses of social transformation evident in the national educational policies (CAPS, 2011). However, this student thereafter reverts to the liberal discourses of freedom which is only problematic because their use of 'freedom' is only expressed as a kind of 'freedom of *choice*':

- "The world is changing so is society. People are free & open to choose his/her sexuality" (A14.4); and
- "The world is free. Sexuality is your choice!" (A14.4).

Again, there is the maintenance that non-heterosexual identities are formed as a choice, thus negating non-heterosexual sexual orientations as biological attributes of humanity – a negation that does contribute to the lack of understanding that non-heterosexual identities are in fact real and whole identities.

Looking at the policing of gender in relation to the lives of students has thus been helpful for students to grasp onto how the policing of identities happens in authentic contexts, and for myself as the teacher for understanding students' positions in relation to sex, gender and sexuality, the conflations between them, and the possibilities for personal and social transformation within an educational setting.

5.4 Redesigning or Reiterating Normativity?

New London Group's (2000) concept of redesign follows from critical literacy's agenda for social justice and the promotion of human rights discourses and practices. However, this is a slippery path to walk because every text, every design and redesign, is always positioned and positioning (Janks, 2010a). That is, even the redesign of a text that can be viewed as a more equitable, more socially just representation of a particular group is still situated within a particular ideology or set of ideologies. Similarly, these redesigns also work to position their readers in different ways – even if they are in ways that are more inclusive, human rights oriented or equitable. It therefore means that even redesigned texts are constructed within socio-cultural context which requires the designer to make choices about who to include and exclude, what markers or semiotic tools to use for the representation of different populaces, and even who or what to foreground and background (Janks, 1993 and 2010a; Fairclough, 1989 and 1992). Power always functions through any linguistic practice.

The slippery path, then, comes with identifying the ultimate purpose of a critical literacy practice and its advocacy to redesign texts and social settings. That is, why do this work if nothing changes? Is this approach to education just the over-politicisation of language and texts? How much power to instigate and implement change do teachers and learners have? These are some of the kinds of questions that the students of the critical literacy course began to ask. And while this may seem counter-productive, I view it as one of the greatest developments of the course. Because, in this practice of questioning critical literacy itself, students have come to use their critical skills in ways that are productive and, ultimately, inquisitive to the

possibilities beyond what is presented in class – from the content to the very skills we teach.

When redesigning their drawings in activity one, section one, of a man and a woman, the students began to see the strong hold that gender hegemonies have on people in social context:

> S13: Redesign – just face with long or short hair. (diff[icult] to escape gender binary) (extract from A-L4:02).

The persistence of normative representations of gender and sexuality, and the generally accepted conflations between them, have become ingrained into whole populations. This course, then, is not necessarily long enough to produce extensive social change. Even in students' attempt to redesign their initial 'man and woman' drawings into more equitable representations of sex (by including intersexed identities), gender (by including transgender, androgynous and drag identities) and sexuality (which include heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual identities), they found themselves reproducing, to a large extent, hegemonic representations of sex, gender and sexuality.

These redesigns, then, emerged as part of one of the following two categories: 'Halved Identities' or 'The Androgynous Figure'. Figures that featured the halved-identities seem to draw on the symbol for representing transgenderism (Figure 5.5 in this paper). Therefore, is this a representation for 'gender neutral' or 'unisex' spaces or a representation of transgendered people? Students need to think about the possible readings of their designs. On the other hand, students also turned to representing a kind of androgynous figure to represent gender neutrality or to signify an all-gender inclusive space. However, in view of established normative representations, these androgynous figures look rather similar to the 'universal man' symbol that is often used to represent humanity, as well as the male sex, in public

spaces (see Figure 4.5 in this paper). Overall, none of the images represent sexuality, which might indicate the understanding of sexuality as an invisible difference (Butler, 1993) rather than something that is represent-able through socially constructed markers of gender performance.

Furthermore, students also critiqued the course, the content and the practices we were engaging in. One particularly critical student stands out in this regard. The following statement, recorded in the field notes for lecture two on policing identities, emerged during a discussion on Caster Semenya and the number of articles written about her sex and gender performance (see Greenfield, 2012 and Ndebele, 2009):

> S14: (With passion) This young woman did not choose to be the way she is. I don't like this critical literacy. Not ok to talk about these articles too private. Don't like the way she is being talked about. Not suitable for classrooms. She is not there to defend herself (extract from A-L2:02).

We see the student resisting the path of discussion in class, which, admittedly, did begin to diverge from issues of representation to focus on Caster Semenya herself. Such a critique brought the lesson back into focus and illustrates two main ideas: on the one hand, a lesson using a critical literacy approach needs focus and structure that can be adhered to. While a teacher should be able to develop the lesson according to students' or learners' concerns (Vasquez, 2000, 2001 and 2008; Janks, 2014), it also needs to be defined in relation to its purpose. This is important because in order to move toward some form of social transformation and engagement, the participants in the lesson need to move beyond merely discussing and criticising social ills. Instead, work needs to be done to learn new information and then to use that information to redesign texts, recreate social structures and change perceptions (Janks, 2010a; Vasquez, 2008; Kumashiro, 2002).

On the other hand, this students' critique is also an indication that education should be open to critique and redesign. This student illustrates that the use of critical skills in the classroom does not need to be directed to only abstract content, but also to the processes and structures that govern students' or learners' learning. What information are we exposed to? Who decides what perspectives we get to see in the classroom? How much authority over my own education do I have, as a student? I consider this an important development in the course because of its revelations about the power relations between teachers, their students or learners and the content being studied.

I then use this critique to inform the repeated critical literacy course. In the same lecture, when dealing with texts on Caster Semenya, I decided to ask students how they could critique what I was doing in class:

N: I was criticised for using this article why? Why did I use it?
Ss: Shows gender issues ... C.S. [Caster Semenya's] case is controversial, shows the gender issue
S15: Context as S. [South] African ... we know and can relate; issue of culture
S16: But aren't we doing exactly what the article is doing? Isn't this hypocritical?
S15: Semenya doesn't get to speak like article
N: Yes. Focus on rep. [representation] What do they do in the images? (extract from B-L2:06).

When the students in this class did not seem to critique my lesson in the same way as in the first running of the course, I chose to use the critique myself to help illustrate to the students that they *should* be viewing the course itself with a critical eye – and not just the content I was presenting.

Any critique of the course, then, should become a resource for understanding how education can be transformative and equitable. Moreover, any critique becomes

a resource for developing in students, and the teacher, a deeper understanding and transformation of the social power relations in the classroom. I understand this to mean that students in the course, when they aired their views, also had influence on the direction of the course. While it is possible that students could have had more say – thus developing a more authentic critical literacy curriculum (Vasquez, 2008) – I do still believe that they had some authority to contribute to the classroom and the course itself. In a way, the final course assignment can be rationalised as a space for students to (re)design aspects of the critical literacy course itself.

5.5 A Question of African-ness: Intersections with Racial Identity, Tradition/Culture and Religion

From table 5.1 of this paper, we can see that issues of sex, gender and sexuality exist in relation to their intersections with each other as well as other contributing factors such as race, culture/tradition, and space. However, during the course I began to notice a particularly interesting relationship between some students' talk of gender and sexuality through discourses of race, culture/tradition and religion.

It has often been my experience that the discourses of conservative religion and culture often tend to have a heavy bearing on speech when confronting sensitive or 'taboo' issues, such as that of sexual diversity. It may well be that sexual diversity itself has become a taboo subject because of the strict and dominating positions that many religions have against non-heterosexual identities and practices, as well as those identities and practices that subvert traditional gender roles. In this section we deal mainly with Christianity and traditional Southern African culture/tradition. These are religious and cultural/traditional subject positions taken up by a small group of

Black South African students in the class. I look at, firstly, the structure of arguments that I observed during the course. These observations, recorded in my own reflective field notes after every class, draw on the small group interactions that I had with these students in class (while they were completing activities) or after class (as they were leaving the lecture venue). This is already an indication that more conservative positions were sometimes held back during whole class interactions, and that these students only felt comfortable airing their ideas about the course and its content in less 'public' circumstances. Having stated this, however, when one student did air their views about gay pride using discourses of conservative Christianity, they were met with opposition from another student in the class.

In the more 'personal' spaces of small groups and 'after-class' discussions, a group of Black South African students who self-identified as Christians were rather conflicted about how to deal with the course and how the issues of sexual diversity could be relevant to them as teachers. These students, then, drew on the common, and somewhat recognisable language of conservative cultural/traditional and religious positions through their use of words and phrases like 'wrong', 'the Bible teaches us that', and 'we believe'. The first word and phrase were commonly used by the students to align themselves with the moral integrity that is claimed by religious teachings and texts. The 'wrong' was often used to refer to the identities and practices of gay and lesbian people in relation to the Bible – note here that the term 'LGBTI' for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed people that we often used in class was reduced to the more common and simplified 'gay and lesbian' category. While these students did not quote directly from religious text, they did often speak about the Bible as an authoritative text that condemns all but heterosexuality and 'proper' gender roles especially for learners:

> The logic of much conservative discourse is the desexualisation of children and young people. The child, even the young person, is produced in this discourse as not legitimately sexual. This is part of the same logic that exalts heterosexual and preferably Christian marriage as the 'mature' form of the sexual (Epstein and Johnson, 1998, 62).

Within the framework of conservative cultural/traditional and religious upbringing, that is all aligned neatly into a racial identity, these students sometimes even negate the need to discuss issues of sexuality in the classroom.

However, this is not a new discourse or position on sexuality. It is easy to access this language when researching 'same-sex marriage rights' using the Google search bar. It can be found in newspaper articles and in public statements by many religious leaders around the world. It can be read on the picket signs of religious and cultural groups that, almost ironically, march alongside gay pride parades – it is even possible that these groups are the most avid attendees of various gay pride events. And, unfortunately, it can be seen, heard and felt in the words and social implementation of policy documents around the world; from the legal criminalisation and prosecution of gays and lesbians in most African states to the sometimes violent opposition to same-sex marriage acts in America.

However, within this small group setting, it became remarkable to note how each of the discourses of race, culture/tradition and religion were conflated when arguing against homosexuality being socio-culturally acceptable. The structure of such an argument could be represented as a generic formula because of its distinct and consistent form during my interactions with these students:

'In Black culture, the Bible says...'

Figure 5.8: *Argumentative 'Formula' for Conflating Racial Identity, Culture/Tradition and Religion-based Morality*

The various ways this structure presented itself enabled students to declare their own subject positions – as constituting of race, culture/tradition and religion – as being in opposition to sexual diversity.

In one instance, a student from this group (S17) aired this argument during a discussion on gay pride parades and was met with resistance by another student (S18):

S17: They know what they are doing is wrong.
N: Display of something you disagree with
S18: Come with reasons and arguments; not spurious resistant readings (extract from A-L4:06)

In one sense, religion, culture/tradition and race were valued as positions, or rather a single conflated position that defined right and wrong. This moral position, then, was constructed as excluding homosexuality. That is, "what they are doing is wrong" when they (participants of gay pride) are 'doing homosexuality'. The pride parade, then, is constructed as a performance of sexuality, which it might very well be because of its intention to make marginalised sexual identities more visible. However, this student also uses their racial, cultural/traditional and religious identity, and the conflated discourses that bind them, to maintain their alliance with hegemonic orders of heterosexuality. That is, "heterosexuality is viewed as right and proper while homosexuality is stigmatized" (Anderson, 2002, 861, on Butler, 1997). S18 retorted, with what sounded like frustration, that religious arguments were not actually arguments at all by differentiating between 'spurious resistant readings' and 'reasons and arguments'.

The interaction between these two students in class and the generic structure that is sometimes used by students to conflate race, culture/tradition and religion brings into question whether a critical approach to education should use a moral

yardstick when critically analysing and arguing for or against certain textual and social positions. And, if so, whose moral yardstick should we use?

In much of the literature on critical literacy it has been recognised that a moral yardstick is needed in order to fulfil critical literacy's agenda for social justice (Janks, 2010a; Kumashiro, 2002; Vasquez, 2008; Freire and Macedo, 1987; Fairclough, 1992). In a South African context I would consider the national constitution and its bill of rights, being one of the most progressive in the world, to be an appropriate yardstick (Cock, 2003). While, at an international level, various human rights documents and global policies govern human rights regulations that are useful for education. But, these are large and often hazy documents that are not easy to relate to in everyday circumstance. And while they are exceptional for understanding ways to negotiate and cope with diversity and legitimate equitable social practices, it might be that students/learners and their teachers should be able to construct documents for fairness, equity and acceptance within their own daily spaces: from the school grounds to the spaces we inhabit behind classroom desks. In view of most schools' use of 'rules and regulations' documents, even a reconstruction of those texts might be in order as a critical exercise in itself (Reichert, 2001; Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Vasquez, 2000; Earl Davis, 2001).

The slippery slope of negotiating sexual diversity and its gendered representations in education is littered with the complexities of also negotiating race, culture/tradition and religion-based morality. And, while critical classroom practice should neither refuse nor overlook the stubbornness of sometimes conflated religious, cultural and racial discursive positions, it is also important to recognise the contributions that these subject positions can make toward developing a more well-rounded and equitable moral yardstick that treats all forms of diversity as a resource

for education. As teachers, in a secular state that is rich in diversity, it is still our responsibility to protect marginalised groups of learners and parents through our own classroom practices.

5.6 The Pedagogy of 'Coming-Out'

The issue of 'coming-out' is a highly contested one in the field of sex, gender and sexuality. In the educational environment, it is particularly difficult to decisively say whether identifying your sexual orientation should be a requirement for teachers and learners, especially because there are questions about *who* should come-out and why. Over and above these concerns, there is also the fact that privacy is a human right. This process is theorised within the concept of 'the closet'. Miller (1989 in Hekanaho, 2007) calls the closet the 'open secret':

> The open secret defines the boundary between public and private, thus constituting the idea of homosexuality as an alternative "impossible" to think and express (Hekanaho, 2007, 89-90).

It is a psychic space where sexual identity exists metaphorically and can be brought out into the public sphere through discursive practices. Because sexuality is an invisible difference, it is only through gender performance and outright declaration that we, as subjects, can make our sexualities publically visible.

Often, however, "'the closet' in much contemporary literature has [...] come to represent a barrier that needs to be broken through" (Tucker, 2009, 9). But, this can be contested. If the closet is conceived of as a barrier, does it not maintain that non-heterosexual identities are 'abnormal' or 'deviant'? That is, by coming-out of the closet and declaring one's sexual identity as being lesbian, gay or bisexual or gender identity as intersexed or transgendered, that person still maintains a sense of difference (Tucker, 2009) from an established norm. But, it also makes visible an

identity that is so often marginalised or silenced, where "a 'coming-out' represents the end of inauthenticity and self-alienation for the individual and the wider community" (Tucker, 2009, 9). On the other hand, does 'remaining in the closet' mean that you actively silence your own identity, or is it rather an act of normalising non-heterosexual identities? That is, is it possible that silence, as an assumption, could actually represent the normalisation of sexual diversity?

When it came to teaching the course, I made the decision to step into the critical literacy classes without identifying my own sexual orientation to the students. As a gay Indian male in South Africa, I made this decision not from fear of marginalisation or reproach, although these are legitimate fears, but rather from the intention to construct sexual diversity as normative. That is, it may not even occur to a heterosexual teacher to identify as a heterosexual when teaching university students or school-going learners. It is a remarkably unnecessary identity trait to declare in the classroom. Similarly, a non-heterosexual identity should not need any declaration – unless a different decision is made by the person who identifies with a non-heterosexual sexual identity. In this sense, it is not about staying in 'the closet' (Tucker, 2009) but about giving a gay identity normative status in a way that might also be adopted by other gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed educators. Therefore, while this 'silence' may be a contested position to have taken, it has also had its affordances for this research project. In the following section I will discuss three main events that occurred as a result of my not coming-out, or rather my presentation of sexual identity as an *invisible* difference, in order to try and understand students' views and assumptions about sexual diversity in education.

It was after the class on *Gender Violations* that a young Black female student, 'Interested' (pseudonym), approached me. While the other students were

leaving, Interested walked up to the podium where I was standing. She thanked me for the course and briefly stated that it was helping her and her friends to understand sexual and gender diversity. However, after I responded with thanks, Interested asked me if I was gay. I paused, I smiled and proceeded to interrogate the reasons for her question: Why would you like to know? Would it make a difference? What makes you think I might be gay? She answered briefly, but also both courteously and confidently, that it didn't matter within the context of the classroom.

However, she then proceeded to make the following analysis. Please note that these are quoted from my own reflections after each lecture and thus may not be exactly, word-for-word, what Interested said. However, these recordings were taken shortly after each class in the attempt to maximise the accuracy of my memory:

> You remind me of my brother. He is gay, and you both act the same. You know, the hand movements and stuff (extract from RJB-L4:24).

It is clear, then, that Interested had been reading how I had been performing my male gendered identity (Butler, 1993 and 2006; Connell, 1995; Luyt, 2012) – simultaneously as I was performing my identities as Indian, South African, a teacher, a researcher, and so on. She then read my less-than-hegemonic performance of masculinity as an indicator of sexual orientation. My "hand movements and stuff" were read and understood to be markers for my sexual identity.

From the cornucopia of literature on gender and sexuality, especially those perspectives that gender is a social practice (Connell, 1995), it is easy to identify Interested's reading of my gender performance as existing within the bounds of heteronormativity. That is, gender performance (as explained by Butler, 2006) is falsely read as a representation of sexual identity. Gender and sexuality are conflated to form the fallacy that non-heterosexual sexual orientations can be identified by non-hegemonic gender performances. That is, because the way I move my hands falls

outside of the criteria for performing hegemonic masculinity, it might be safe to assume that I am gay.

However, while I agree with Butler (1993) that sexuality is ultimately an invisible difference that exists outside of gender performance, I cannot deny that I am still gay and that my "hand movements and stuff" (RJA-L4:24) might stem from that identity. That is, surely because of my understanding of gender performance and the social constructions of masculinities in relation to hegemonic order, I am able to feel less than most the need to try to perform the hegemonic masculinities of my context. Instead, I resist hegemonic gender order, to some extent, through indifference – that is, by not necessarily policing the way I do gender to conform to normative conflations of gender and sexuality for the purposes of representing myself as hegemonically masculine or as 'naturally' heterosexual.

Despite the course's attempt to disrupt gender-sexuality conflations in representation, Interested's need to try and identify my sexual orientation becomes an interesting point. It is interesting because it used my sexual orientation, which I did not deny, as a rationalisation for the gendered performance she was reading. However, it also brings into question an issue of investment: who can be invested, interested, or involved in issues of sexual diversity? My next encounter with a young White female student also beckons this question of investment.

I arrived at the lecture venue early one day to find a student, Conflicted' (pseudonym), already seated in the front row of the class. We greeted each other, but did not take too much notice, as I settled by bags and began to set up the laptop and projector for the presentation. Conflicted eventually walked up to the desk and podium in front of the class:

> Can I ask you something? [...] Are you gay? (extract from RJA-L5:04).

The question did not catch me by surprise, and I proceeded to interrogate her reason for asking me about my sexual orientation in the same way that I questioned Interested. However, while Conflicted also answered that my being gay would not make a difference to the classroom, the course or my role as the teacher, she did add an interesting ending statement:

> Oh, I was wondering why a straight man would want to teach a course like this (extract from RJA-L5:04).

Unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity to ask her more about this statement and why she said it. However, it does seem to surface the concern of who is allowed to be invested in certain topics. Should only Black scholars research and teach African studies? Should only women be interested in feminism? Would it be inappropriate to have a White male involved in post-colonial studies? That is, am I only invested in teaching and researching about sexual diversity because I am gay? And, what does this mean for the lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex identities that I include in the course?

While I do admit that my own sexual identity as gay and as male have undoubtedly influenced the time spent dealing with the representation of different identities in the course, creating an imbalance, I find it problematic to think that it is only because I am gay that I am interested in issues of sexual diversity. It is not a case of “the perverse” leading students into perversity (Dollimore, 1991, in Epstein and Johnson, 1998), but the teaching of an approach that uses education within a human rights framework to deconstruct the representations that emerge from normative and hegemonic ideologies. Surely, then, anyone working within a human rights agenda might be invested in such a topic.

In these first two instances, my lack of self-identification has initiated curiosity in students. However, in this third, and last, instance it has allowed a group of

students to open up to me during an in-class group activity on drag identities. This is the same group of students that I have labelled as somewhat more ‘conservative’ and who seem to conflate race, culture/tradition and religion in their resistant speak on issues of sexual diversity (see part 5.5 of this chapter).

During group work activities, I would walk around the lecture venue to assist with or contribute to the group discussions of students. In one case, during an activity on drag identities, a member of the group of more conservative students raised his hand to call me over. They were concerned with whether they would be able to teach on topics about homosexuality when they themselves did not believe that it was right. It was at this point that the conflated discourses of race, culture/tradition and religion-based morality made itself most apparent.

Firstly, these students essentialised sexual diversity into the category of ‘homosexuality’. It is as though they only saw heterosexuality and its binary opposite, homosexuality, within a simplified normal/natural versus deviant/unnatural framework or understanding. Secondly, their race, culture/tradition and Christian beliefs all restricted them from seeing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexed identities as viable identities to include in the classroom. Again, these students used words like ‘wrong’ or ‘not allowed’ to construct nonconforming sexual and gender identities, while phrases such as ‘we know’ and ‘in Black culture’ naturalised and legitimated (Thompson in Janks, 1998 and 2010a) their own positions. Altogether, their discourses suggested a tension between their own positions and the responsibilities of a teacher working under South Africa’s national curriculum (CAPS, 2011) and secular national constitution that we had spoken about during the course.

It is reasonable to expect that such tensions between identities, beliefs and professional expectations would arise, especially in a course that deals with what is

still widely regarded as a controversial topic with a student population that is constituted by diverse religious backgrounds, languages, cultures, races, regional upbringings, classes, sexes, genders and most probably even sexual orientations. What is most interesting to me, however, is that this group of 'conservative' students did not feel the need to bite their tongue when speaking to me about their conflictions in relation to what we were studying in class – they only really did so during whole class discussions. And this might be attributed to my own elusive sexual identity in the classroom. These students did not seem to read my gender performance or interrogate my investment in sexual diversity or my motivation for teaching a course like this. Instead, I assume, they saw me as somewhat neutral or as primarily a teacher that exists outside of the identities we were dealing with in class. Had any of these students been aware of my sexual orientation, I do not think that they would have so freely discussed the tension they were feeling in relation to the course, nor would they have used such explicitly heterosexist discourses.

My pedagogical decision to remain 'silent' about my identity, then, has afforded me the experience of these three moments. For it is within these moments that we might see and understand, on one level, the need so many people have for knowing another's identity when it seems ambiguous or in some way deviant from hegemonic order. Had I performed maleness 'correctly', I do not think anyone would have questioned my sexual orientation. And yet, on another level, these moments also help us to see and understand how knowing, or assuming, someone's sexual identity might influence the ways in which we interact with them. How we police ourselves – our words, our actions, our gestures and our resistances – can be determined by our context and social relations. Had I revealed myself as gay, it is

possible that the group of ‘conservative’ students would have kept their words for someone else to hear.

Chapter Six: **Assessment and Redesign**

In the final leg of the course, the pre-service teachers were required to use a critical literacy approach to design materials for teaching an aspect of sex, gender and sexuality, as well as the conflations between any two of these concepts. Topics could include everything from family structures or relationships to any one of the identities in the LGBTI acronym or heterosexuality. In this way, I hoped that these students would not only engage with issues of sex, gender and sexuality, but also explore the possibilities and affordances that come with adopting a critical literacy approach in their assignments. This includes a range of practices: from locating effective texts and relevant information, to deconstructing texts or social systems and envisioning ways to engage learners in socially transformative work (Janks, 2014). Students' materials, then, move into interesting conceptual spaces.

Furthermore, students' materials can also be understood as the discursive manifestations of their own transforming understandings of sex, gender, sexuality and critical practices. I, therefore, begin this chapter with an analysis and theoretical rationalisation of the assessment task using Janks' (2014) *Critical Literacy's Ongoing Importance for Education* and Biggs' (1996) concept of constructive alignment (Section 6.1) before analysing students' materials to uncover the interesting patterns that run across the data set (Section 6.2). These design trends illustrate both how students come to terms with using a critical literacy approach as well as how students grapple with new ways of thinking about sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them. Finally, in Section 6.3, I consider the extent to which the course and its contents has influenced the ways in which students think about issues related to sex, gender or sexuality through an analysis of students' course evaluations.

6.1 The Task

Understanding critical literacy as an approach to teaching and learning cannot merely be a cognitive endeavour. While it is certain that critical literacy does emerge from a history of academic research and changing philosophical positions and understandings of education, literacy, language, human rights and the foundations of knowledge, it is the lived practices of critical engagement that matters:

> We don't acquire knowledge only so that we can tell other people about it; more specifically, so that our students can tell us – in their own words of course – what we have been telling them. Our students need to put that knowledge to work, to make it function. To really understand something, you see the world differently, and behave differently towards that part of the world (Biggs, 2003, 2).

Therefore, if we understand that a critical approach to literacy education, in the context of any learning area, is founded on reading the word and the world (Freire and Macedo, 1987; Freire, 1972), then such an approach is also only realised and made relevant through (re)design (New London Group, 2000).

It became vital, then, to consider how the students of the critical literacy course might come to show their understanding of both the theory and practices of critical literacy in an assessment task. Such an assessment task would have to incorporate not only what a critical literacy approach to teaching and learning means and entails, but also how students' understanding of sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them that is evident in everyday representations has changed over the duration of the course. The nexus between these two fields became the area of concern for my assessment, and I thus proposed to phrase the assessment task as follows:

Course assignment

Design:

Choose a text, or a set of related texts, from your 'texts for analysis' pack. Use this text to design a short set of worksheets that use critical literacy to address an issue related to how gender and sexuality are conflated. Your worksheets should include the "five moves" for setting up critical literacy classroom practices found in *Critical literacy's ongoing importance for education* (Janks, 2014).

You are allowed to locate and use your own texts, but you need to check them with your course presenters first.

Explain:

Write a one-page rationale in which you discuss what important issue you have dealt with in your worksheet, and how you have dealt with it. Keep in mind that issues of sex, gender and sexuality are controversial topics:

1. How do you think your worksheet would enable a teacher to deal with difficult conversations in the classroom?
2. Who are you including and excluding from these conversations? Why?
3. What do you think teachers and learners need to know about gender and sexuality?

Figure 6.1: *Course Assignment*

There are two parts to this assignment. The first deals with the practical use of critical literacy in designing a set of materials that can be used to teach how sex, gender and sexuality are normatively conflated when represented. Here, students are required to consider the kinds of activities and texts, and the pedagogical links between them, that I have used to teach the course. Using this, they are expected to design their own materials that adopt a critical literacy approach to teach about a controversial issue that is related to the course-content. In some ways, these materials may come to represent students' own designs and positions regarding issues of diversity in sex, gender and sexuality. In other ways, it is possible that their designs might also constitute a redesign of what was done in the course. That is,

some students might take different approaches or use alternative techniques to teach some of the content that was actually covered in the lecture sessions.

The second part of the assessment task involves students critically reflecting on their designs. This is done in relation to teaching controversial issues in classrooms and the role of the teacher in deciding what is appropriate or inappropriate for learners to know and see. It involves decisions about what identities to include and exclude, and even what knowledge and subjective truths should be made accessible to learners. The students, then, are not only required to show that they are able to understand and use critical literacy to teach, but also that they are able to use critical literacy to critique their own designs. Above all other principles, taking on a critical position means recognising that we, even as teachers, are available for critique and that the decisions we make about our own educational practices have a real social impact. Being aware of ourselves, our decisions and the consequences they have on learners and learning could perhaps be one of the fundamental tenets for making critical literacy an authentic approach – and not one that is over-politicised, superficial and without social significance.

It therefore became an imperative that I constructively align (Biggs, 1996, 1999 and 2003) what I was teaching, as well as how I was teaching it, with the assessment task. In what ways could students not only engage in critical literacy practices but also gain the space within which to critique, redesign and reinterpret my own practices in class and the workbook I produced? And, furthermore, what could they produce that would possibly reveal their (un)changing understanding of the gendered representations of sexualities present in everyday texts?

As such, it is the alignment of the course and the workbook with the final assessment task which might allow me to answer these questions. According to

Biggs (1996), constructive alignment fundamentally involves making decisive and inextricable links between pedagogy, content knowledge or skills, and assessment. Each of these facets of the classroom needs to speak and be informed by the other in triangular formation to ensure that what is being taught and how it is being taught matches with the assessment allocated to that content.

Three main criteria are identifiable for aligning content, teaching practices and assessment:

> 1. The criteria, and hence the assessment, must be "authentic" to the discipline.
> 2. To *really* understand a topic, concept or principle, changes the way one behaves in the topic area
> 3. Teachers need to specify such "performances of understanding" (Gardner, 1993) for the material they are teaching (original emphasis and citation: Biggs, 2003, 3).

It is in the congruency between my own pedagogical practices in class, which are also evident in both the print-based and PowerPoint versions of the workbook, and the design requirements of the assessment task that I was able to maintain some authenticity (Biggs, 2003). Students were told to be aware of my teaching practices and the design features of the PowerPoint presentations as they, in their parts, embodied critical literacy practices. It is this awareness that would require students to measure the course and its content against what they learnt about critical literacy theory. It is also this measurement that would need to be applied to their own engagement with the theory when designing their materials and reflecting upon it.

Assessing the students' understanding of critical literacy, then, is only possible by measuring their 'behaviour' (Biggs, 2003) in the field. With an effective use of critical literacy practices, techniques and tools, the students would be displaying their "performances of understanding" (Biggs, 2003, 3) of the approach. In order to

perform the role of critical literacy material designer effectively, students would have to implicitly draw on their understanding of critical literacy. Assumedly, if the understanding of the theory is insufficient, the performance would also be insufficient, and thus the materials and its rationale that result would be graded as such.

If we turn back to how the actual assessment task is phrased, however, it becomes noticeable that Biggs' (1996, 1999 and 2003) framework for aligning content, practice and assessment is implicit in the design of the task itself. Students have to engage with an issue of sex, gender or sexuality in representation (content) using a critical literacy approach (pedagogy) in order to fulfil assessment requirements. However, what occurs explicitly is that of Janks' (2014) work on critical literacy in practice. This article outlines five main steps that teachers, and perhaps even learners, could follow in order to develop a critical literacy project in the school classroom. As all of the students in the critical literacy course are Bachelor of Education students in their second or third year of study, this article becomes highly useful for simplifying what constitutes critical literacy practices and how they emerge in classroom settings.

The course assignment therefore asks students to use Janks' (2014, 2) "five moves" of critical literacy to think about and structure their materials. This is based on the understanding that any critical literacy project is comprised of, at minimum, five steps: Firstly, teachers and/or learners need to identify an issue in their lives. This could range from the local, little-p (Janks, 2010a) events and concerns like excluding kindergarten students from a school event (Vasquez, 2001 and 2008) to more global concerns about the marginalisation of minority groups or the misuse of the environment's resources. In "finding and naming the issue" (Janks, 2014, 2), teachers

and learners are clear about what needs to be unpacked and so can begin their critical literacy journey of deconstruction and reconstruction.

Secondly, teachers and learners will need reliable information (Janks, 2014) from a variety of sources: However, what information is available and what isn't? Where is this information found? Who produced it and who controls it? Whose interests does this information serve? Researching an issue should never be a simple task. In locating information, it is still vital that teachers and learners ask of their sources the critical questions that will help them to highlight and understand why the issue they have identified exists in the first place.

In moves three and four, teachers need to help learners understand how the issue becomes manifested through texts and how these texts function in various socio-cultural context s (Janks, 2014). That is, learners need to begin identifying texts such as articles, advertisements, policy documents and so on that represent the issue in a variety of contexts, followed by deconstructing these texts in order to explore how they function within those contexts. This requires asking critical questions (Janks, 1993): Who does the text serve? Who is included and excluded, and why? And, what are the social effects of these texts? It is at this point in a critical literacy project that teachers and learners investigate what it means to be critical and how the world itself is available for interrogation. Therefore, the 'critical' in critical literacy often means moving beyond the confines of what is in the text being analysed. It means stretching one's sight into the realm of authorship, social impact and the ideologies under which texts function (Cervetti et al., 2001; Janks, 2010a; Fairclough, 1989 and 2010).

However, as it has been mentioned before in this research paper, the deconstruction of texts is not enough for a project to be considered fully critical.

Janks (2014) identifies that (re)design (New London Group, 2000), or reconstruction (Janks, 2005b and 2010), forms an integral move for creating a critical literacy project. It is in this final move that teachers and learners can use their understanding of the social impact of texts, language and representation to engage in some form of socially transformative work.

As a whole, Janks' (2014) fives moves provides a practical framework for the students in the critical literacy course. It allows for the production of materials that entice a critical and focussed engagement with a particular social issue: from identification, to analysis, to (re)design. Students, then, needed to incorporate each of these five moves as well as their understanding of critical literacy theory in the design of their materials in order to successfully respond to the assessment task. Any misunderstanding of how these moves work or become manifest in educational materials would result in materials that do not fully engage in a topic or with a critical literacy approach.

As a result, the theoretical underpinnings of the assessment task for the critical literacy course work in particular ways to assess higher order skills (Biggs, 1996 and 2003). By constructively aligning the course content and pedagogical approaches with the assessment, and scaffolding the task by using Janks' (2014) five moves, the critical literacy course culminates into an expression of the potentials for critical literacy itself. How comfortable are student teachers with addressing certain sensitive topics in the classroom? How well do students engage with the content on sex, gender and sexuality in representation through their materials? And, is it evident in students' materials how they envision critical literacy practices, tools and techniques as part of their own pedagogical repertoire?

Subsequently, the assessment task that I have designed for the course has allowed for the emergence of some interesting materials. In the section to follow, I will explore how students' understandings of both critical literacy as well as the conflations of sex, gender and sexuality in representation are navigated. Evidently, the students contend with the sometimes slippery terrain of both these fields of study, giving rise to a number of trends. Section 6.2 of this data chapter (Chapter 6) therefore looks across all the materials that were submitted to the research project by identifying and discussing a number of prominent patterns that emerge throughout the data set, while section 6.3 takes a closer look at a select number of assignments for a more in depth analysis.

6.2 Design Trends in Students' Educational Materials

In 2013, the critical literacy course was attended by 106 undergraduate, bachelor of education students. However, the students who attended the course were split into two streams: The first stream constituted 66 students, while the second held 40 students. From the total of 106 students, 66 students provided consent to have their assignments (materials) analysed as part of this research project. Using these assignments as my data source allows me to consider how students' materials have been constructed, as well as determine what the visible and generalisable trends across this particular data set are.

An analysis of the materials reveals six main trends in the designs used by students: 1) The use of gender and gender-related topics and how activities on gender as a social category, as an identity or a mark of identification are used in a variety of ways as well as for a range of purposes; 2) The emergence of discourses of hyperinclusivity, which involves whether or not and how activities might make use

of the discourses of human rights, redress, social transformation, humanitarianism, social equality and sameness; 3) Issues related to signification whereby students' uses of various terms attained from the course and how they are used in educational materials is considered; 4) A focus on the Other uses Kumashiro's (2002) understanding that critical pedagogy can be approached in a number of ways, one of which involves focussing on the Other rather than the dominant and privileged form; 5) The functions of hypothetical scenarios, questions that elicit opinionated answers and the role that these strategies have in teaching from a critical perspective; and 6) Evidence of a rather resilient heteronormativity. Each trend is defined by a set of practices related to text usage, language usage, representations, questioning and scaffolding evident in the materials themselves.

It also becomes useful, then, to consider a quantitative account of this particular data set in order to gain an overview of the design trends, before exploring each trend in more detail. The following figure (Figure 6.2: Design Trends) illustrates the number of instances each category or pattern was identified within the data set. Each figure that follows after a category signifies the number of assignments that fall within that category:

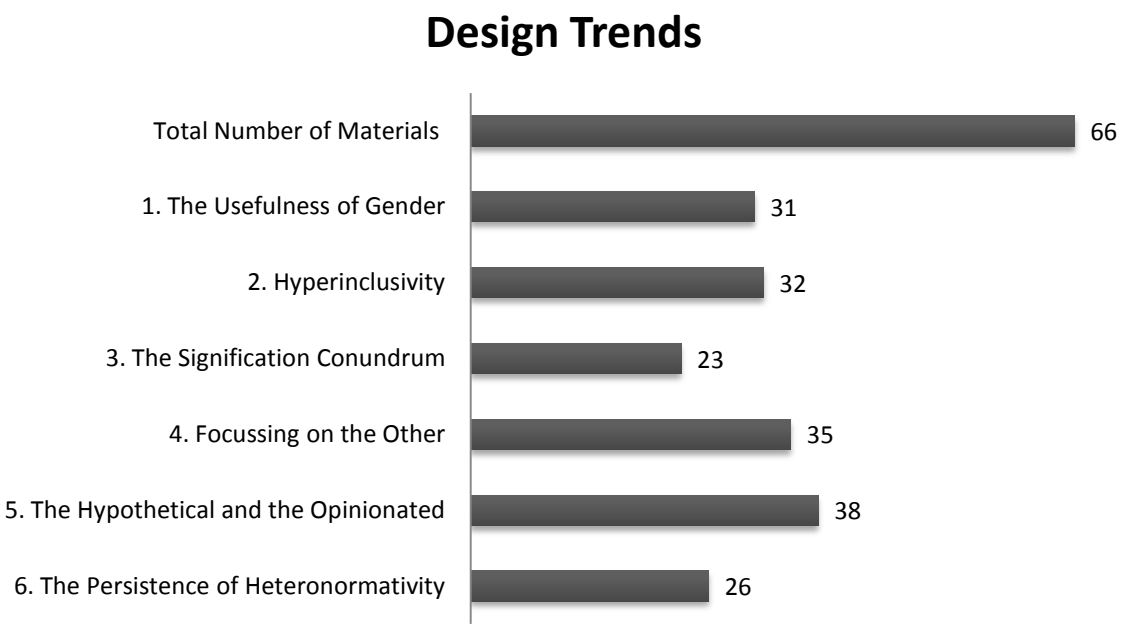


Figure 6.2: *Design Trends – A Quantitative Summary of Students' Materials*

From Figure 6.2, it becomes noticeable that each of these patterns features prominently throughout the data set. That is, at some point almost all of the assignments that were submitted for analysis in this research project show evidence of at least one instance that contributes to the establishment of a pattern across the whole data set. In this section, then, I will attempt to explore both how these patterns work as well as what they might reveal about the potential that critical literacy has for helping teachers and learners deal with difficult but pertinent conversations.

6.2.1 The Usefulness of Gender

> In our everyday speech and in our writing we slide constantly between uses and understandings of words such as masculinity, femininity, masculine, feminine. Some of this is conscious; we know that these are slippery terms and to some extent have to live with that. At other times I think we just become seduced by the 'obviousness' of a particular term or its use in a specific context, so that we fail to perceive the problems it brings in its wake (Paechter, 2006, 254).

When Paechter (2006) writes about gender identities in her work, *Masculine Femininities/Feminine Masculinities*, she discusses the often unproblematised grammar of gender in language and social context. From her article, it becomes apparent that gender itself might be considered an ideological position, especially in relation to its seductive "obviousness" (Paechter, 2006, 254). That is, traditionally conceptualised as a binary, gender seems to represent more than the expected social performance of sex roles or cultural imperatives to be enacted. It is also a much larger signifier of many societies' binarised and boxed-in understanding of the world, its people and the identities possible in time and place. Gender itself is a dominant social structure that informs so many aspects of life: from behaviour to governmental policy. For this reason, conventional issues of gender, of masculine versus feminine, and conflations of gender, of male masculinity versus female femininity, could be commonplace in classrooms (Paechter, 1998 and 2006; Wallowitz, 2004; Tannen, 1996; Govender, 2011; Vasquez, 2008) without necessarily involving any critical practice. Many classrooms deal with issues of normative gender construction without necessarily deconstructing and problematising 'gender' itself.

What, then, is the usefulness of gender as a concept in education? And, what could this mean for pedagogy, and particularly for a critical pedagogy? In the discussion to follow, I consider how many (almost fifty percent) of the materials submitted by pre-service teachers use gender in a variety of ways and what this might mean for critical literacy practice as well as what this reveals about students' understandings or positions in relation to issues of sex, gender and sexuality in representation. From the 31 assignments that include gender as a topic or as part of an activity, four main uses can be identified: 1. The use of gender as an introductory topic; 2. Using gender in the process of deconstructing normativity; 3. Gender as a

means to avoid queer discourses, and; 4. That gender is useful for engaging with *subversive* gender identities.

The first use that is noticeable amongst many of the materials involves using gender as a topic or within an activity to help learners identify what they might already know about gender identity in their own contexts. That is, these questions seem to focus on engaging learners with their own prior knowledge of biological sex and gender before moving on to other activities. Mimicking my own first activity in the workbook, this kind of activity might be a way that students use to try to determine what understandings of gender the learners walk into the classroom with. This is, like my own activity, based on the assumption that learners' representations will conflate sex and gender:

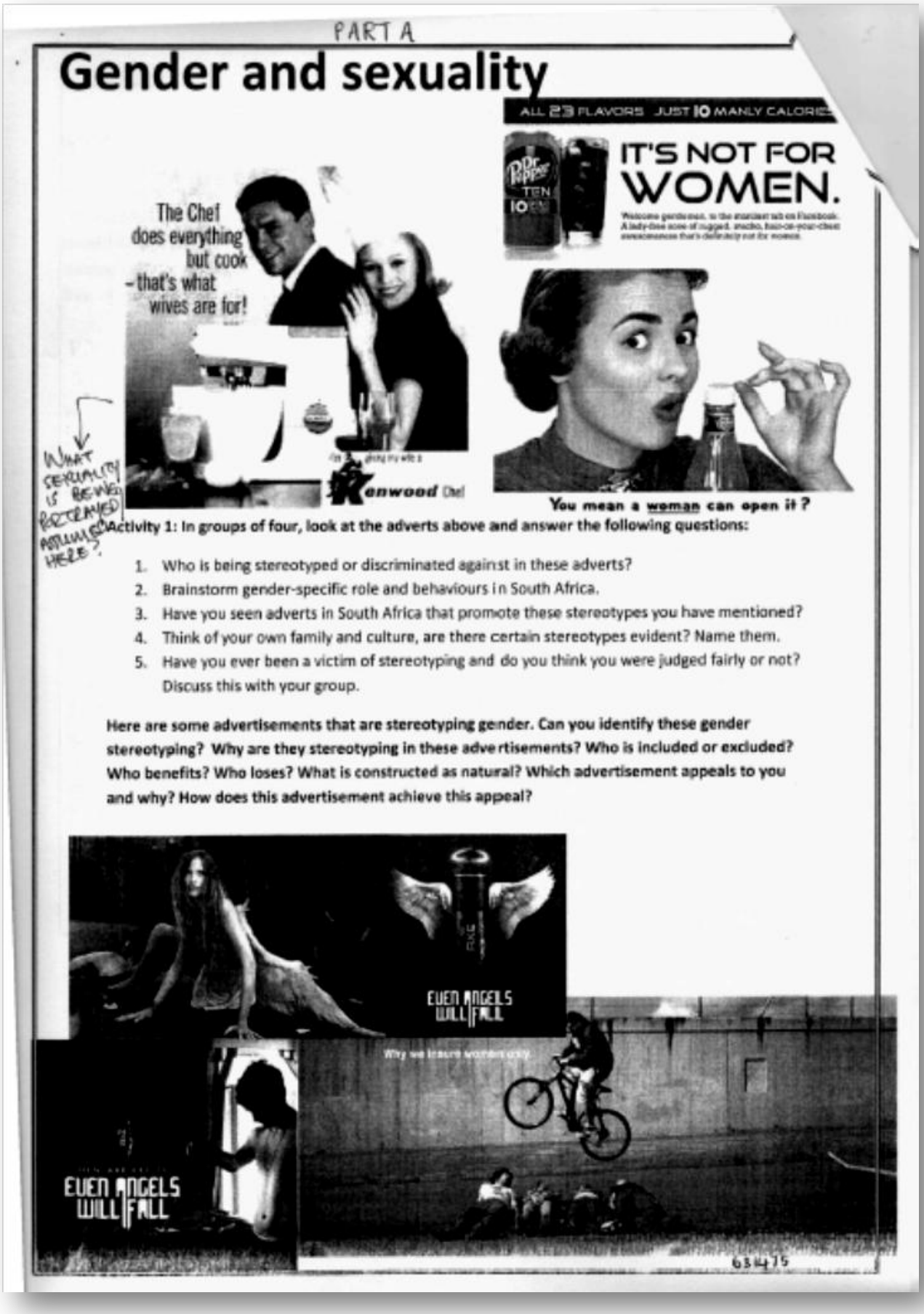
- In the box below draw a picture of a boy and a girl.
  Is this what all boys and girls look like?
  Can there be boys that look different?
  Can there be girls that look different? (extract from 2.22W1A1);
- Draw a picture of a girl and a boy in the blocks provided.
  Get into pairs and discuss the following with your partner:
  1. What are the similarities and differences between the boy and girl in the pictures?
  2. Does every boy or girl look like this? Give reasons for your answer (extract from 1.8W1A1);
- Activity 1: What do you think?
  What are characteristics typical of:
    - Men
    - Women

  Are there overlapping characteristics? (extract from 2.20W1A1); and
- Draw a picture of your family and label who is a boy and who is a girl (extract from 2.14W1A1).

In each of the extracts above, students' materials seem to require learners to construct sexed identities in drawing and then to discuss how each identity has been represented using gender markers. Whether explicitly noted or not, any reflection on these drawings would almost inevitably lead to a discussion on how gender is used to represent different sexes. In the case of these materials, sex is limited to the male-female binary which also seems to follow from my own introductory activity in the workbook designed for use in schools and used to develop the critical literacy course for these pre-service teachers.

However, what is particularly significant about these activities is what follows them. Each of these activities is the first activity in their respective sets of materials. From the coding, it is evident that they all fall into the first worksheet (W1) and the first activity (A1) of the materials they come from. And, in each case, the activities that follow this initial one include some evaluative or opinion-inducing questions about whether or not gender, as learners identify it, is actually as they say it is. Consider the first extract presented above (extract 2.22W1A1). Almost immediately after learners are required to 'draw a picture of a boy and a girl', they tackle questions about the universality and legitimacy of their drawings. Do these representations represent everyone? What could be the problems with how you represent male and female, masculine and feminine? How are things actually different? Questions like these emerge from the initial activity of identifying sex and gender as learners understand it, in the materials, and seemingly begin the process of deconstructing normative representations or understandings. It is a matter of identifying what is already known, and then problematising the truth and accuracy of that.

Similarly, the following extracts also show how some students use issues of gender, gender roles, biological sex and the conflations between these to introduce their materials. These introductory gender-related activities, then, function as instigators of discussion. However, their function and contribution toward a set of critical materials is only defined by what follows after these activities. On their own, they are often limited to the identification of biological sex and/or gender markers and do not necessarily consider ways of making the constructedness of these categories more apparent. Furthermore, on their own, these activities do not allow learners to analyse their drawings in ways that might help them discover that some markers that are conventionally used to represent ‘truth’ can be considered ‘untrue’ or ‘insufficient’ for representing diversity.


PART A

Gender and sexuality

Figure 6.3: *Using Gender as an Introduction to Learning 1 (extract 1.14W1A1)*

Gender and sexuality Sheet 1

Activity1. Write the meaning of the words in the shapes

Gender

Accessory

Sexuality

The usage of accessories (gender and sexuality)

Society seems to be concerned about the use of accessories. These (accessories) range from shoes, jewellery, bags, make-up, tattoos to hair styles and they enhance the beauty of people but they are non-essential (see Appendix)



htt://www.shutterstock.com/pictures: http://www.bigstockphoto.com/search/cowboy-boots/http://www.claks.co.uk

Activity 2: a) Name the type of shoe and place it on the appropriate section on the table.

Female	Male	Unisex	Other (state)

NICE.

Activity 3: What was your criterion for placing the shoes and other accessories? Gender or sexuality? Give reason.

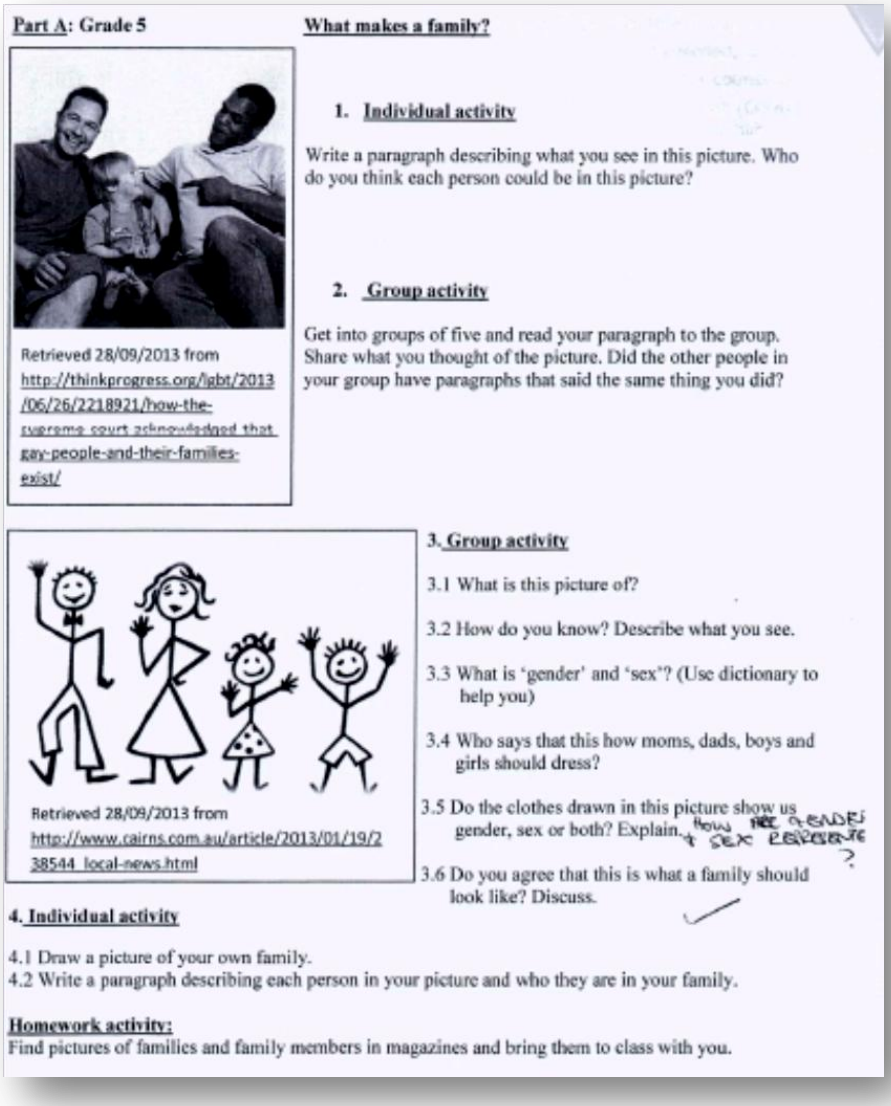
(Appendix)

N/B Write the meanings of the following words, Straight, bisexual, gay, lesbian, androgynous, asexual and any other type of sexuality not mentioned.

1

Figure 6.4: *Using Gender as an Introduction to Learning 2 (extract 1.22W1A1)*

The markers that learners habitually use to construct these representations needs, then, to be followed by a critical and somewhat deconstructive reflection. Some students have done this. The initial gender-related activity helps learners work toward making the critical shift toward deconstruction. However, in the same data set, there are also materials that make a shift toward *avoiding* queer discourses or representations, and thus engaging in mere gender categorisation. For example, Figure 6.5 illustrates how questions about sex and gender can contribute toward *deconstructing* assumptions about what makes a family and how gender is often used to identify who plays what role in families:



Part A: Grade 5

What makes a family?

Retrieved 28/09/2013 from http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/2013/06/26/2218921/how-the-supreme-court-acknowledged-that-gay-people-and-their-families-exist/

1. Individual activity

Write a paragraph describing what you see in this picture. Who do you think each person could be in this picture?

2. Group activity

Get into groups of five and read your paragraph to the group. Share what you thought of the picture. Did the other people in your group have paragraphs that said the same thing you did?

Retrieved 28/09/2013 from http://www.cairns.com.au/article/2013/01/19/238544_local-news.html

3. Group activity

3.1 What is this picture of?

3.2 How do you know? Describe what you see.

3.3 What is 'gender' and 'sex'? (Use dictionary to help you)

3.4 Who says that this how moms, dads, boys and girls should dress?

3.5 Do the clothes drawn in this picture show us gender, sex or both? Explain.

3.6 Do you agree that this is what a family should look like? Discuss.

4. Individual activity

4.1 Draw a picture of your own family.
4.2 Write a paragraph describing each person in your picture and who they are in your family.

Homework activity:
Find pictures of families and family members in magazines and bring them to class with you.

Figure 6.5: *Moving into Deconstruction (extract 2.23W1A1-4)*

In activity three of this extract of materials aimed at teaching grade 5s, learners are required to analyse a comic representation of a normative family structure: mom, dad and two kids are shown as stick-figures. All of them are happy. But, more importantly, all of them are identifiable as a result of their gender performance (Butler, 2006). The father wears a bow-tie, long trousers and has short, cropped hair; the mother dons a skirt, long hair and a hand on the hip; a young girl also wears a skirt and has visibly longer hair than her brother next to her who has short hair like the father and wears a pair of short trousers. The people here seem to represent conventional, middle-class, age-appropriate and heteronormative constructions of family. And, given their smiles and exuberant stances, they are seemingly happy to do so.

However, this student has then used some simple questions in activity three to help learners notice what this text is doing:

> What is this picture of?
> How do you know? Describe what you see (extract from 2.23W1A3).

The first two questions seem to function within Fairclough's (1989) inner-most box of his model for critical discourse analysis. That is, they require learners to describe the text and to become aware of the construction that it is. Thereafter, issues about gender performance are introduced:

> What is 'gender' and [what is] 'sex'? (Use [a] dictionary to help you)
> (parentheses added: extract from 2.23W1A3)

On its own, this question is not necessarily critical, but it does provide space for learners to engage with the conceptual underpinnings that may have informed their answers to questions 3.1 and 3.2. That is, once they identify who is in the picture and what their own criteria was for making those deductions, learners then seem to have the opportunity to measure their own understanding against a more authoritative source of information. Furthermore, in question 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 learners might

discuss where these ideas about gender and sex come from and whether or not they have any legitimacy. Specifically, by asking “Who says that this [is] how moms, dads, boys and girls should dress?” (parenthesis added: extract from 2.23W1A3), teachers and learners might be pushed to consider whether the ways in which we do gender are natural, given criteria or if they are performative, constructed and even up for interpretation. Furthermore, by then applying newly learnt concepts to the evaluation of learners’ own families, these materials use gender to help learners deconstruct normativity in meaningful and relevant ways. It is through engagement with these last few questions that teachers and learners might begin dipping into Fairclough’s (1989) two outer boxes: interpretation and explanation. But, while these questions seemingly open the space for the discussion and evaluation of gender and family as categories, institutions or even ideological constructions, such work is also only dependent on how the teacher uses this set of materials to navigate through, or past, these topics.

Sample 2.23 (Figure 6.5) works in interesting ways, using common assumptions about gender. While issues of gender and sex are introduced from activity three, activities one and two presumably attempt to draw out learners’ assumptions about what families look like. The same image of two adult males and a young child referred to in these activities is used again in the final activity (activity nine). Learners move from assumption, to description and evaluation, to deconstruction and re-evaluation throughout the materials. And while the questions and activities themselves contribute to the critical positions and intents of this set of materials, it is also noticeable how the sequence of activities enables learners to make critical moves in practice and possibly even understanding. The use of gender, then, is also made useful as a result of its position within the materials as a whole.

However, gender has also been used to avoid the queer discourses used to speak about nonconformity and subversive identity. That is, if the usefulness of gender is, in part, defined by its juxtaposition with other more textually deconstructive practices, then the following examples from students' materials illustrate a more conservative approach. Both the types of activities and the sequence of activities in these students' materials are restricted to identifying and then categorising normative gender characteristics of male and female or masculine and feminine. While this might be useful in some cases, it can also be problematic when these activities do not move into practices that deal with issues of power, marginalisation, nonconformity or subversive gender performance.

Figures 6.6 and 6.7 are a clear illustration of this. Both of these extracts come from the same set of materials and show the sequence of activities and activity types that are repeated throughout the materials. In Figure 6.5, the first activity involves getting learners to consider what it is that defines them. This, I think, alludes to issues of the constructedness of some identity performances: in the way people look, the way people dress and sound, and by the ways people develop certain affinities for things. However, the questions in this set of materials that attempt to tackle issues of identity and subject formation as a social practice – that is, identity and subjectivity as defined by the things people do, say and engage in – are quite broad.

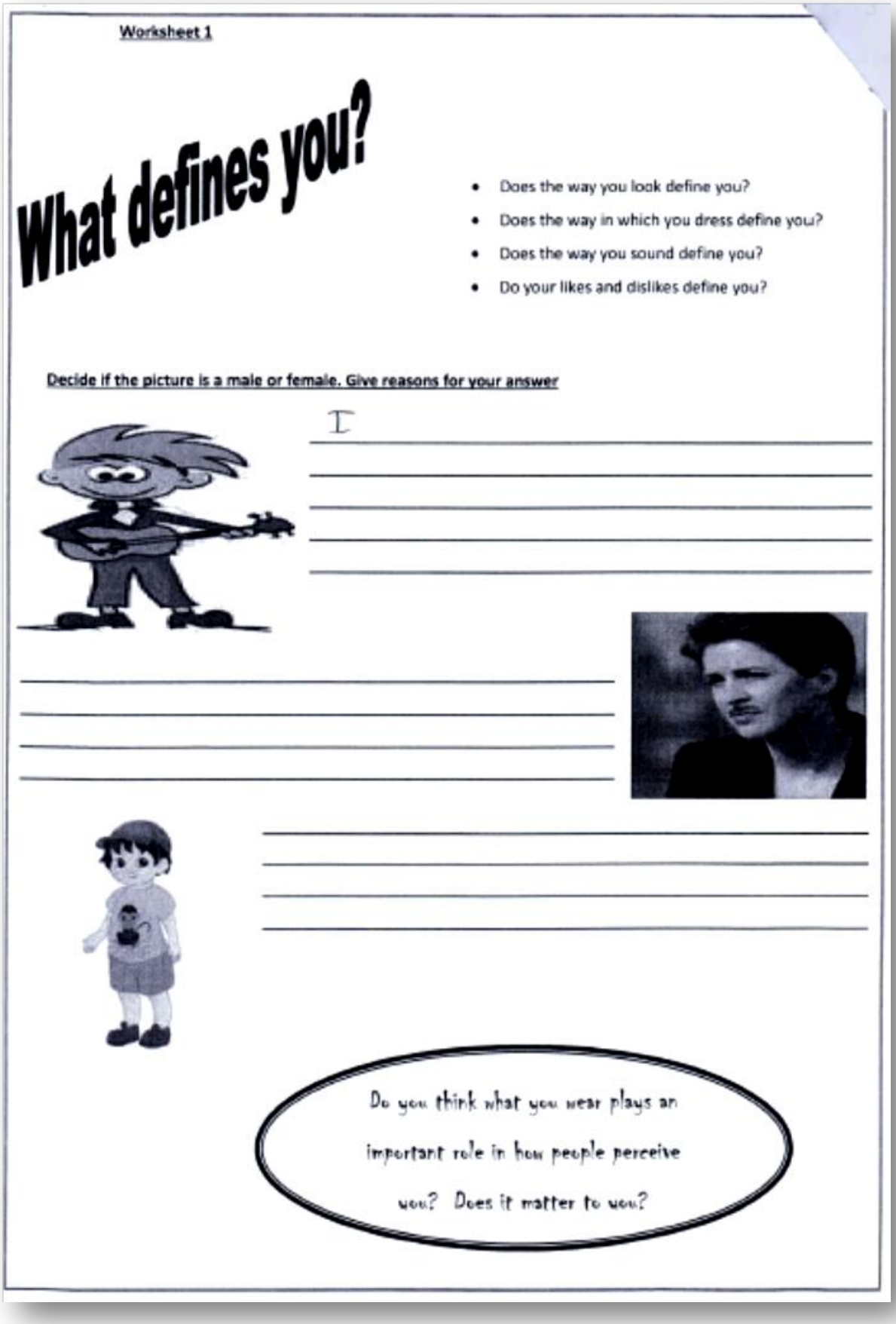


Figure 6.6: *Avoiding Queer Discourses – Example 1 (extract 1.23W1A1)*

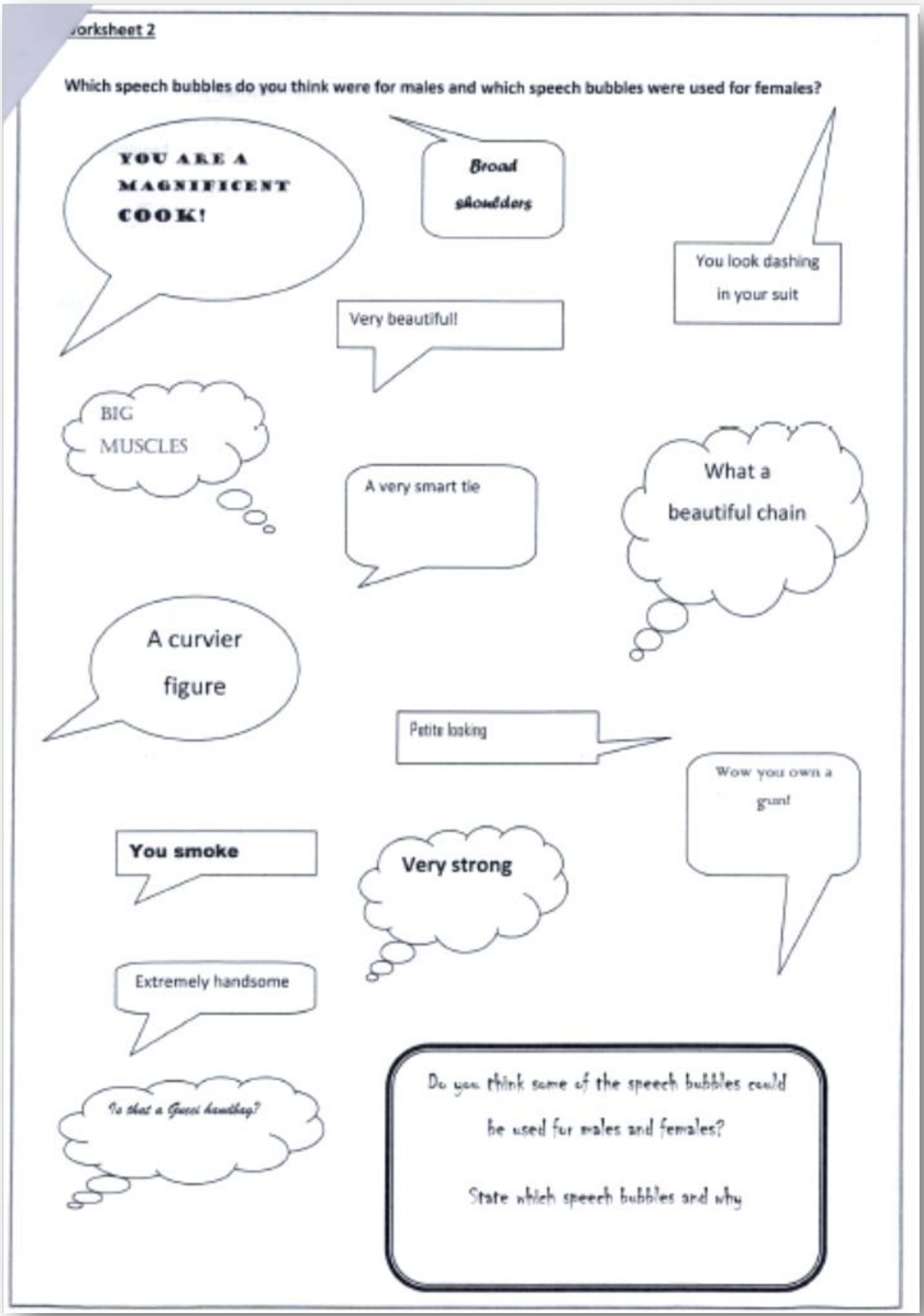


Figure 6.7: *Avoiding Queer Discourses – Example 2 (extract 1.23W2A2)*

Furthermore, the questions of identity and subjectivity are short-lived. With the utterance of the first instruction comes a series of activities that focuses on identifying whether things (images, phrases, sports, colours, aesthetics and accessories) are either ‘male’ or ‘female’ or ‘for males’ or ‘for females’. That is, for each activity, learners are only instructed as follows:

> Decide if the picture is a male or female. Give reasons for your answer (extract 1.23W1A1)

Here, three images of people are presented for learners to consider (refer to Figure 6.6). This activity firstly asks learners to identify sexed identities (either male or female). Learners would have to use the markers of gender performance, like clothes and hair, to help them identify the sex of each figure. The focus on these gender markers is highlighted by way of the final question in the activity which appears in an oval at the bottom of the page: “Do you think what you wear plays an important role in how people perceive you? Does it matter to you?” (extract 1.23W1A1). However, these questions elicit opinions and ignore the social impact that being perceived in different ways can have. This is especially troublesome if one’s gender performance does not conform to hegemonic perceptions.

In a similar fashion, the second instruction of the materials is also restricted to labelling social activities as either male or female.

> Which speech bubbles do you think were for males and which speech bubbles were used for females? (extract 1.23W2A2)

And, without any interrogation as to whether these social activities, in this case speaking, are in fact social or biological also means that this activity conflates representations of sex and gender without asking learners to critically discuss such representations. That is, presenting activities in this way might actually maintain normative and problematic conflations of sex and gender rather than disrupting them.

Throughout these materials, identification and categorisation according to a conventional male-female binary is repeated in various forms:

- Look at the different sport activities. Choose which sport do males play and which sport females play (extract from 1.23W3A3);
- Choose which colours are mainly used for females and which colours are mainly used for [males] (extract from 1.23W3A4);
- You bought presents for your two best friends one is a boy and one is a girl. Decorate the box according to which colours your friends would like (extract from 1.23W4A5); and
- Choose whether these activities are suitable for a male or a female (extract from 1.23W4A6).

It is important to recall, at this point, that queer theory and the discourses it embodies function

> as a method of imagining difference on its own terms, a way to anticipate the precariousness of the signified and an attempt to move away from individualizing analysis to provide a perspective capable of demarking the repetitions of normalcy as a cultural structure (Britzman, 1995 cited in Ford, 2004, 6-7).

And while this definition is broad and seems to draw on wider conceptions of post-structuralist thinking, it is also somewhat misleading. Often the literature on queer theory applies this definition, which is one more related to critical thinking and deconstruction, to issues of sexuality (Jagose, 1996; Milani, 2013; Namaste, 1994; Richie, 2010; Rothblum, 1994) rather than for instance issues of race, class, age, or even language. That is, the definition that Ford (2004) discusses, as given by Britzman (1995), excludes queer theory's common and somewhat restrictive application to work on destabilising *heteronormative* social and cultural structures, even when intersecting with issues of race, age, class or language. However, this definition also allows queer theory to be seen as a broader, critical position to be had.

It constructs queer theory as applicable to all attempts to disrupt all kinds of social and cultural categories. And while it is impossible to divorce ‘queer’ from its historical use in LGBTI antioppressive conversations or even pedagogies, I think it is also important to note the usefulness of queer theory’s notion that ‘truth’, ‘nature’ and ‘knowledge’ are to be uprooted and interrogated. Any avoidance of this practice might limit a critical literacy practice to a mere playing with the marginalising categories that desperately need to be displaced.

Therefore, when it comes to considering how the students in the critical literacy course have engaged with issues of sex, gender and sexuality through their materials, I cannot overlook how these students have either confronted or avoided the queer identities that help in the interrogation and displacement of commonsense. And while gender is useful for avoiding the subversive and for maintaining gender role theory (Bilodeau and Renn, 2005), it is also useful for disrupting convention and tackling difficult conversations in classrooms.

In some cases, using gender as a starting point has allowed students to locate and include texts that disrupt gendered norms. Their use of subversive texts was either sourced from the critical literacy course pack under the section of ‘texts for analysis’ or other media. Figures 6.8, 6.9 and 6.10 below indicate how texts from the course pack were used:

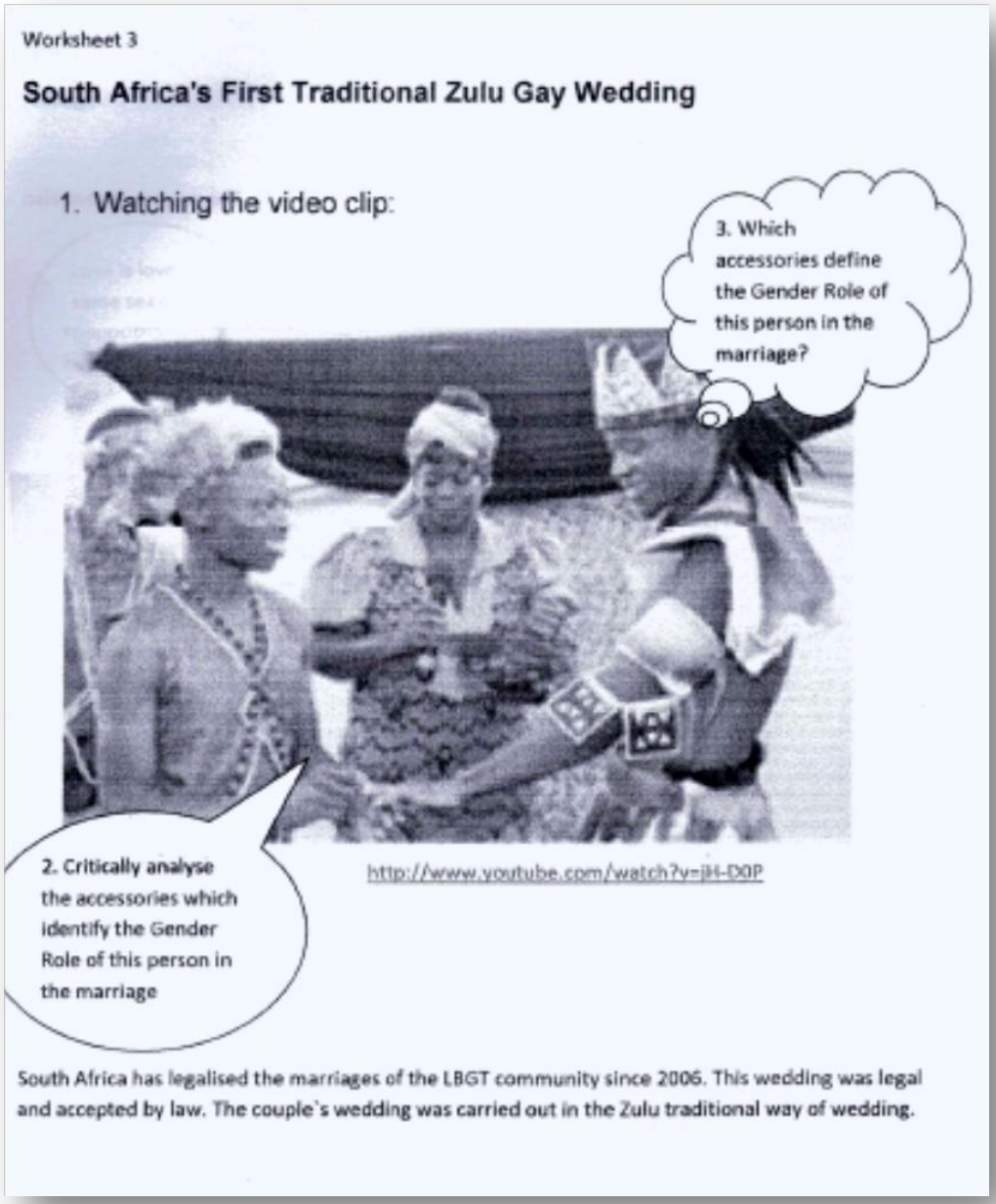


Figure 6.8: *Using Subversive Texts – Example 1 (extract 1.22 W3A7)*

Here (Figure 6.8) we have a student who uses images from an article by Lenox Magee (2013) who wrote *South Africa's First Traditional Zulu Gay Wedding* for chicagonow.com. Firstly, by using an introductory activity in this set of materials that focuses on how accessories are used to express gender identity as male, female, unisex or other, this student then presents learners with the article by Magee (2013). Using what they have identified and then disrupted about gender performance,

learners now analyse the more subversive text of an African gay wedding in relation to gender performance through the use of accessories.

In another example, an image from Bobbé's *Half Drag* series is used after an introductory activity on gender and sex roles in order to disrupt what learners might have already discussed as 'normal':

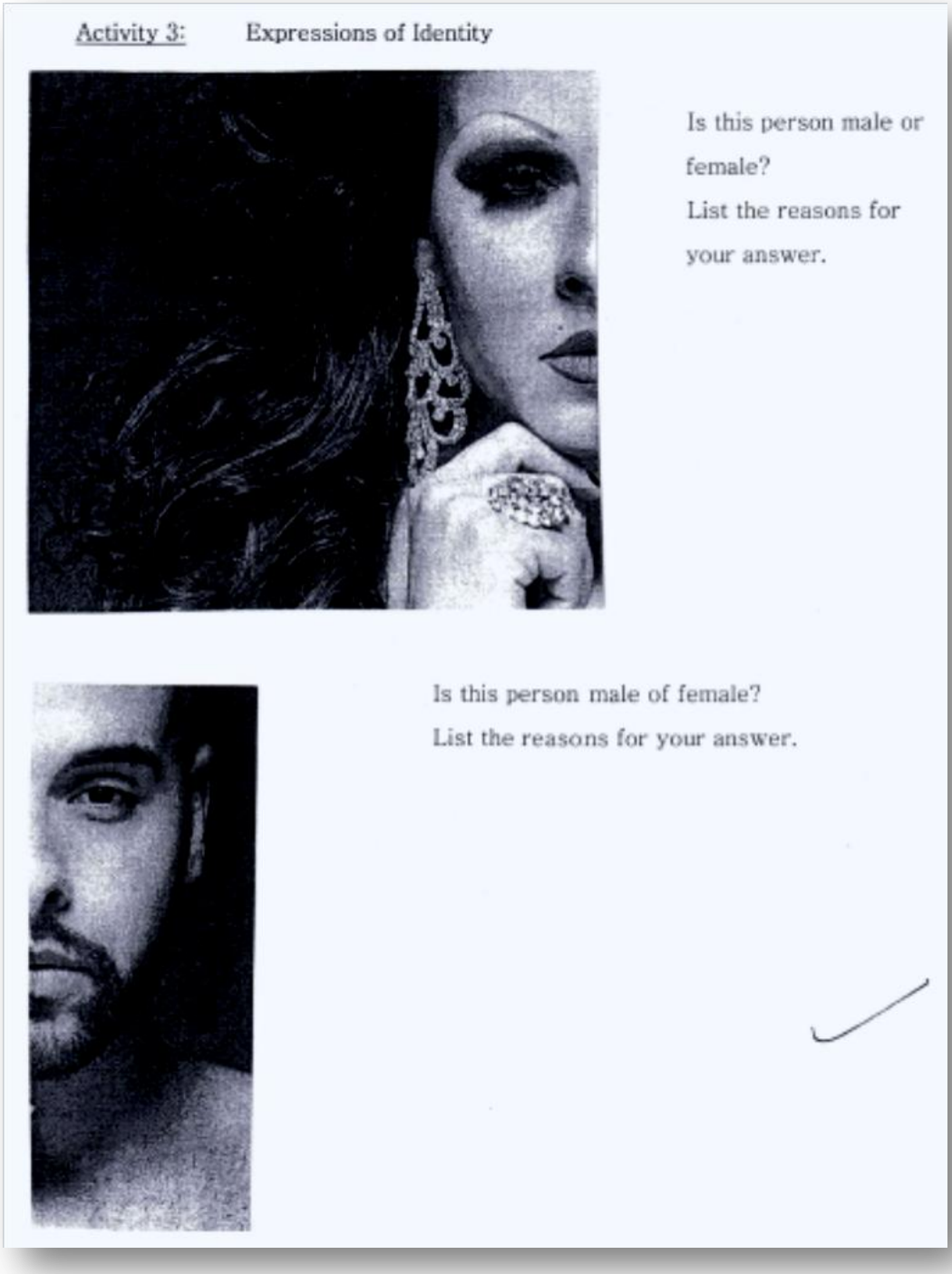
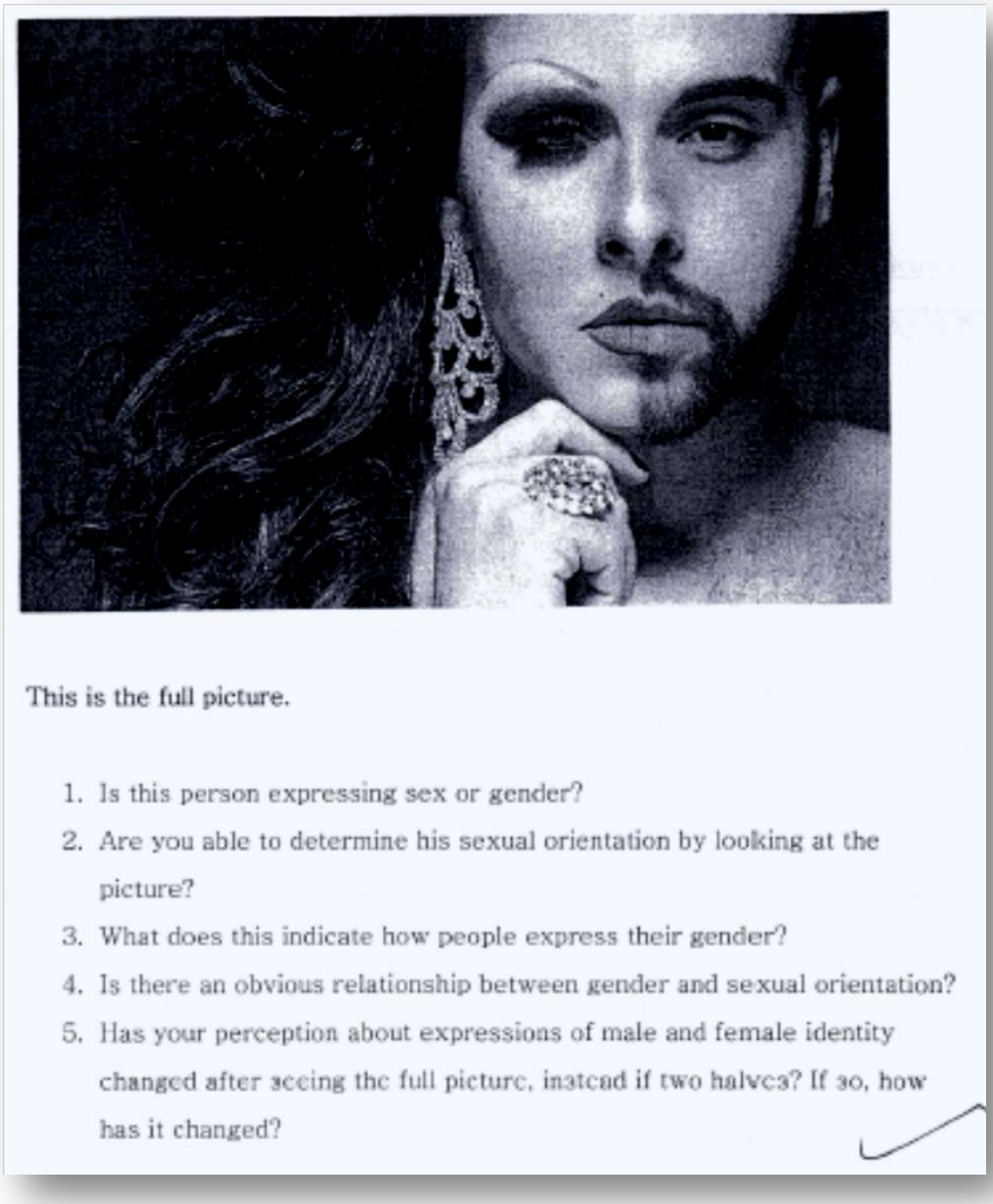


Figure 6.9: *Using Subversive Texts – Example 2.1 (extract 2.20W3A3)*



This is the full picture.

1. Is this person expressing sex or gender?
2. Are you able to determine his sexual orientation by looking at the picture?
3. What does this indicate how people express their gender?
4. Is there an obvious relationship between gender and sexual orientation?
5. Has your perception about expressions of male and female identity changed after seeing the full picture, instead if two halves? If so, how has it changed?

Figure 6.10: *Using Subversive Texts – Example 2.2 (extract 2.20W3A3)*

In this particular example, the materials make a critical turn by not only presenting a subversive text that disrupts normativity but also by asking learners to engage with the text. That is, learners are required to question their assumptions about how gender can be done and whether a sexual identity is necessitated by any particular gender performance. What I find interesting as well is how this student has manipulated the image from the course pack and Leland Bobbé's series to play with learners' assumptions about how gender can be expressed (consider Figure 6.9). By

separating the image and presenting to learners only a half at a time, before revealing the whole image might work to pique interest and add to the impact of the text when it is viewed in its entirety.

In other materials, students took the initiative to find texts that were not printed in the course pack. These texts bring interesting dimensions to the materials and work more cohesively with the ideas that these students tried to teach through their materials. In Figures 6.11 and 6.12, which come from the same worksheet in an assignment, images of gender nonconformity are used to supplement a set of questions on what it means to be androgynous:

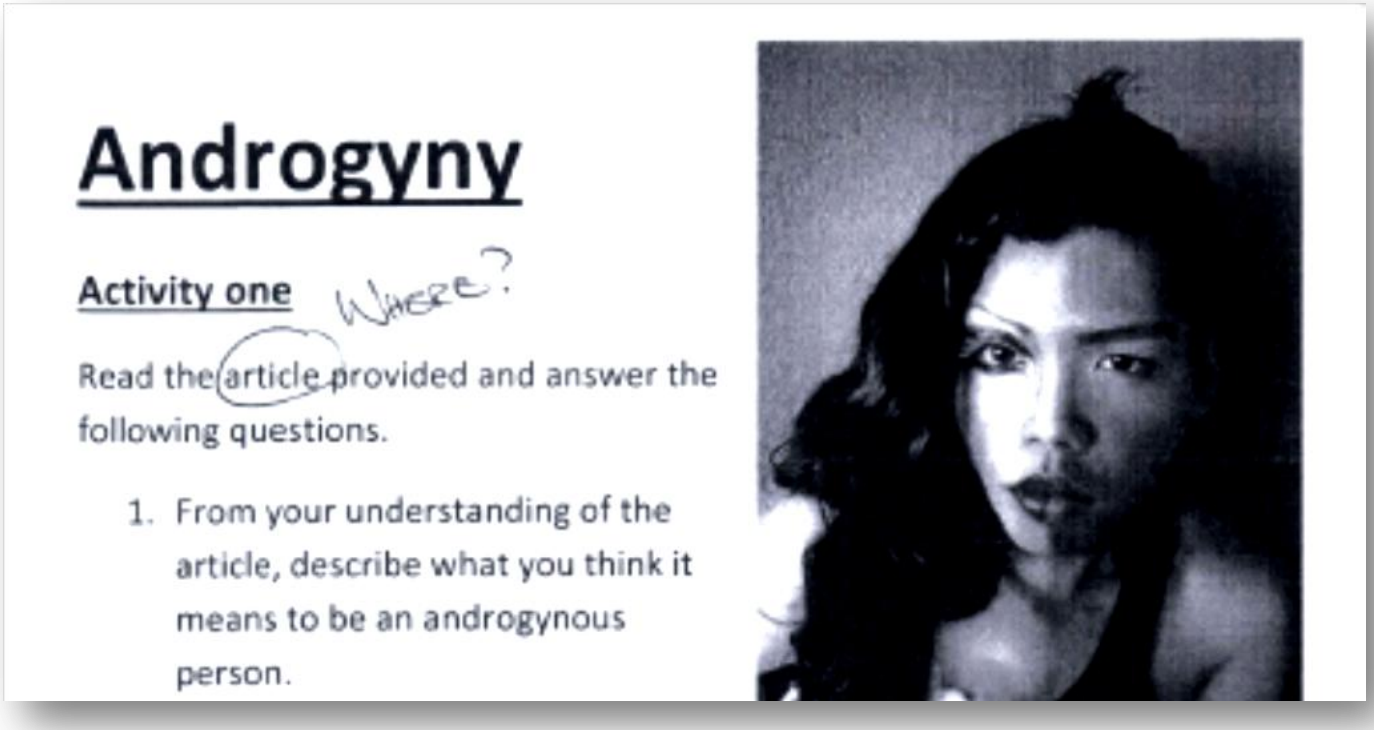


Figure 6.11: *Using Subversive Texts example 3.1 (extract 2.1W1A1)*



Figure 6.12: *Using Subversive Texts – Example 3.2 (extract 2.1W1A1)*

Similarly, in Figure 6.13, a subversive text is used to illustrate the constructedness of gender performance through a short cartoon:

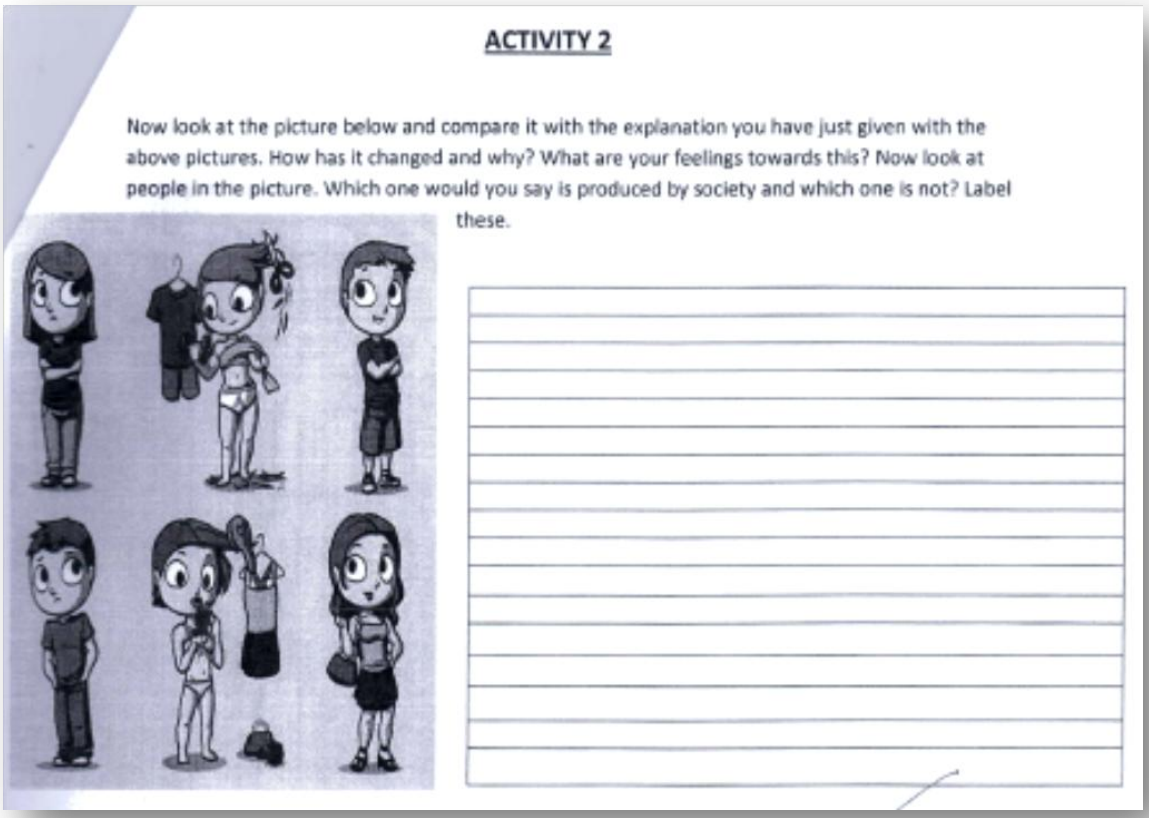


Figure 6.13: *Using Subversive Texts example 4 (extract 1.20W2A2)*

In this text two characters are seen changing their performance of gender by changing their clothes and the length of their hair. Later on in this set of materials (activity three) learners are to engage with transgenderism. This cartoon (Figure 6.13), then, might help learners to visualise and come to terms with one of the practices of transgendered people (Spurlin, 2000; Monson and Rhodes, 2004).

Analysing these texts in relation to normative representations where sex and gender have been conflated might enable learners to imagine gender performance and expression beyond normative binaries. It also allows questions about the relationship between gender as a social practice and sexual identity in order to disrupt normative conflations. The topic of gender, then, also becomes useful for representing and understanding subversive gender identities when considered in relation to normativity and the dominant ideologies that govern that normativity.

6.2.2 Hyperinclusivity: Negotiating the Discourses of Sameness and Difference

> ‘Is it a problem that Dumisane is different?’ I asked Hopey, choosing my words carefully. She knew of course, about me: Betty and C were fast friends.
>
> ‘The mother accepts,’ she responded. ‘With the brothers, some problems at first, but now it’s okay.’ She did not wish to elaborate: it was other people’s business. Once, Hopey told me, there were some boys in the yard who were harassing Dumisane, and a rage rose in her as never before. She stormed downstairs and bawled them out: ‘Leave him alone! Why are you bothering him? He’s not your child. If his own family has a problem with him, leave it to them. It’s none of your business!’ Her neighbours had never previously heard her voice raised in anything but laughter; when I suggested that her anger might have come from her own childhood experience of being harassed, her response made it clear that something more immediate was at stake:

> ‘No, Mark, people must *accept*. We are all human beings’ (original emphasis: Gevisser, 2014, 324).

This extract comes from Mark Gevisser’s (2014) latest book, *Lost and Found in Johannesburg*, and explores the multidimensional and complex ways of being and surviving South Africa’s city of gold. To some extent, it is a book that tells the story of South Africa’s diversity, and the ways in which it was dealt with: from colonialism, to apartheid, to post-apartheid. This story reveals how human rights discourses and discourses of social transformation have come to take centre stage. However, like in the scene between Hopey and Dumisane, it also reveals how the discourses of human rights and social transformation can be used in different ways, and for different purposes.

In this section of my thesis, I am interested in how the words and expressions that come from discourses of human rights and social transformation have been used by students in the critical literacy course to construct representations of sameness. Throughout so many materials, discourses of sameness have emerged again and again: From issuing and reiterating critical literacy’s human rights agenda, to making reference to South Africa’s constitution which states the protection of all against discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation, to coming to terms with the discourses of sameness and difference that emerge during conversations about diversity. However, it is the particular ways in which these students use human rights discourses that an almost new discourse emerges.

This is the discourse of hyperinclusivity: an exaggerated and repetitive use of human rights and socially transformative discourses in order to create a representation of sameness that is almost utopian. This is done with particular use of the language of human rights, equality, equity and social justice. However, the use of

this kind of language, as desirable as it sounds, appears somewhat superficial because of its overuse:

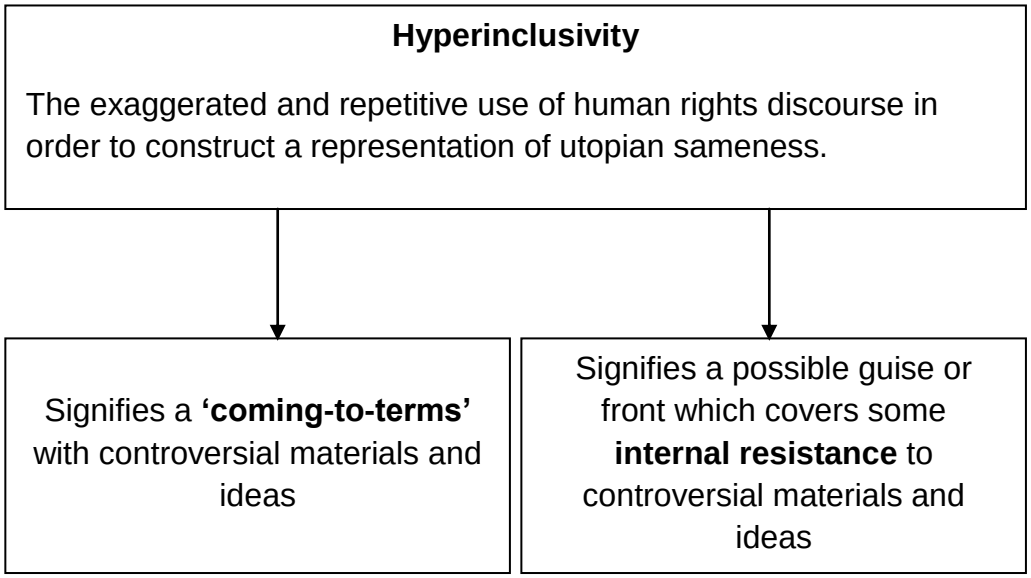


Figure 6.14: *Model for Discourses of Hyperinclusivity*

Throughout the conversations about diversity that took place during the lecture sessions the negotiation of the discourses of sameness and difference has been an interesting element. This negotiation, it would seem, was continued in students' materials and which also, in some cases, gave rise to discourses of hyperinclusivity. It would seem, however, that it is also related to how students engaged with the kinds of diversity that are often considered sensitive, controversial and sometimes even condemned. Issues of sex, gender and sexuality fit such a description and throughout the materials that students have designed, there are traces of their own negotiations, their own 'coming to terms with', the meanings and languages of a queer perspective. Sometimes this is positive, maybe too positive; while sometimes fragments of scepticism and resistance peep through. Like Hopey's (in Gevisser, 2014) response to Dumisane's 'difference', it is this issue of acceptance that 'comes too easily' that I am sceptical about here.

What is interesting to note about my data set is the common juxtaposition of a hyperinclusive language use with a language that seems to imply a more masked resistance. The reasons for this 'resistance', however, is not always clear but could emerge from either a disagreement with some of the issues at hand or merely an illustration of adjusting schemata as students come to terms with how to use language and education to confront issues of sex, gender and sexuality in representation.

In some students' work, hyperinclusivity is evident in the (re)design activities:

- Create a sexual orientation awareness day and design a t-shirt that is not biased or does not discriminate against anyone (extract from 1.24W4A4);
- Take any of the advertisements above and redesign it so that nobody is excluded or loses out or is hidden (extract from 1.14W4A4);
- Create or find two new adverts that cater for all types of families be it a two mom family or a two dad family or even a single parent family etc. (extract from 1.39W4A4); and
- Now redesign this text in such a way that it accommodates all people according to gender, sex, race and culture (extract from 2.11W4A2).

While the attempt that these activities make to be inclusive is notable, it also negates a critical understanding that all text is positioned and positioning (Janks, 2010). Because all texts are positioned in some way, due to their subjective construction, it becomes impossible to design anything that is 'not biased' (extract from 1.24W4A4) or that 'accommodates all people' (extract from 2.11W4A2). This then, surely, creates a paradox between what students might envision a critical literacy (re)design project to be and what one is actually able to represent through discursive design when decisions about identity, inclusion/exclusion, visibility/silence, power and social context have to be made. As such, the (re)design activities that are seen above seem to display how critical literacy's human rights agenda and advocacy for socially

transformative work can be over-simplified by urging learners to be hyperinclusive. That is, to be inclusive of diversity in ways that are idealistic and improbable.

In such activities as these, there exists the risk of simplifying diversity by unifying all differences and representing only sameness. And, while sameness might seem to make all things equal, it also negates, silences and makes invisible the very differences that make humanity. A focus on sameness without difference might maintain the hegemonic status of some and the marginalised positions of others because the value of difference itself is ignored (Janks, 2005b and 2010a), leaving the question of *whose* understanding of sameness gets to be represented?

The sameness that is often stated and restated in students' materials seems to also rely on the idea of being human:

> Design a billboard which can show that homosexuals are human beings and have same rights as straight people. Your billboard must be attractive and add texts to it (extract from 1.34W4A4)

In this particular example, the homosexual-heterosexual binary has been established and weighed against each other. The dominant form, heterosexuality, naturally constitutes being human which also means having human rights. This student, then, envisions that a socially transformative design task would be to find ways to represent homosexuality, or rather homosexuals, as also being 'human beings' too. The question this raises, however, is whether this maintains heterosexuality as the natural norm? That is, if heterosexuality is normal, is human, then how do we change homosexuality to fit into that category as well? And, does this mean that ways of being gay or lesbian are not human enough?

In this instance, discourses of hyperinclusivity have possibly been used to mask some form of internal resistance that the student might be feeling to the topic, identity or representation. In such a case, a hyperinclusive language might be used

to compensate for any resistances that the student might actually be feeling. It is the attempt to present one's self as inclusive, or as accepting controversial nonconforming identities by emphasising ideas of sameness, despite one's personal feelings that these identities are wrong, unacceptable or condemned.

In other materials, the emphasis on being human is repeated in a number of ways and in relation to a number of identities. Usually this is also followed by a measure against heterosexuality or traditional gender conceptions as the established and accepted form of being human:

> A transgender man is a PERSON with a gender identity that is not consistent with their assigned biological gender (original emphasis: extract from 1.36W1A1).

And more apparent in the same set of materials:

> The main thing that his [he is?] highlighting is that he is human, and an individual who does the same things that we do (parenthesis added: extract from 1.36MEMO)

The second example is taken from a memorandum for materials number 1.36. In many cases, students provided a basic memorandum with answers for the activities in their materials. These answers often provide insight into what these students expect from their learners when engaging with their materials. In this case, the expected answer above correlates to the question "What is the main message of the text?" (extract from 1.36W1A1). This particular student thus urges learners to see the sameness between a transgender man (in this case Robert Hamblin from Morgan et al., 2009) and the elusive, unmarked 'we'. A man who is a person because he 'does the same things that *we* do'. Who 'we' is remains unsaid, but it might be safe to assume that such a vague pronoun actually signifies the dominant male-female precept that humanity is so often defined by, and therefore 'we' are those who conform to sex and gender norms. Hamblin is not that bad because he is just like the

unmarked norm, and not like the uncomfortable, subversive Other. Again, inclusivity is paired with exaggerated forms of sameness rather than an appreciation for difference as a thing of worth. In subtle ways, a hyperinclusive text still maintains normativity despite its possibly good intentions.

Hyperinclusive discourses, then, include using linguistic tools such as pronouns as well as visual markers such as uppercase lettering to repeatedly emphasise sameness. In one sense this is achieved by urging the production of neutral or unbiased texts, while in another sense it is achieved through the construction of sameness along lines of being human. Often, however, each of these negates difference and maintains heterosexuality or normative gender performances as the accepted and dominant ways of being.

The intentions behind the use of hyperinclusivity, however, might emerge from the desire to transform thinking and to align it more closely with human rights discourses of sameness. But, it might also emerge from the desire to attend to the values and positions of the teacher for whom the materials have been constructed. That is, an overemphasis on sameness might very well be used as a technique for completing the assessment task that I gave students in a way that they thought I would be happy with. From my own ways of speaking about representations of sex, gender and sexuality using critical literacy's human rights agenda, it would be safe to assume that some students would purposefully emphasise sameness as a way to speak to my own position in relation to these controversial issues. In a way, this resonates with a conversation I had with one of the students, as discussed in chapter 5, section 5.6 of this paper. In that scenario, the student, dubbed 'Conflicted', rationalised my investment in the course and in issues of sex, gender and sexuality by using my own sexual identity. Similarly, other students might have also considered

any investment that I might have in the teaching of controversial issues as a way to inform their use of hyperinclusivity – magnifying their use of inclusive, human rights discourses in an attempt to win me over.

Despite this, when I consider how I came to conceptualise hyperinclusivity as a way to describe what I saw in students' materials, I am reminded of another scene from Mark Gevisser's (2014) *Lost and Found in Johannesburg*. Sitting in a church service in Alexandra, Johannesburg, Gevisser takes note of the choir singing before an audience:

> I did a double-take when I realised that one of the more ardent participants in this ritual was transgendered, a biological man dressed almost identically to her companion in township streetwear: tight jeans, strappy sandals, frilly tops, hoops in the ears. What differentiated her was a big wig, a little too much make-up, and oversized sunglasses that were not entirely necessary indoors. But I noticed that despite the occasional titter, the others in the hall seemed entirely unfazed by her presence: I seemed to be the only one looking at her (Gevisser, 2014, 324-325).

Gevisser's work with queer identities in South Africa makes him more aware of issues relating to human rights and queer subjectivity. However, at what point does it become hyper-vigilance? When I consider my own position in relation to the data set, it occurs to me that because of my initial concern with (mis)representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and intersexed people in relation to heteronormativity I might be hyper-vigilant myself. To what extent, then, is my understanding of hyperinclusivity fair? That is, is what I consider to be hyperinclusive discourse actually authentic and real attempts made by students to grapple with representations of sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them – especially considering it is still a sensitive and controversial topic for so many? Like Gevisser (2014), to what extent am I the only one staring at something

‘misrepresented’ which might actually be acceptable, functional and productive in its context? Or, is hyperinclusivity a stepping-stone to a more differentiated but genuine acceptance?

Therefore, while hyperinclusive discourses can be seen to work in both positive and problematic ways, it is the critique it offers that might also be considered vital for understanding critical literacy itself. That is, critical literacy should entail a critical self-reflexivity during practice in order to avoid being over-sceptical of the texts we read. Such reflections also highlight how the position of the reader makes them more vigilant of some discursive techniques over others, thus producing different meanings.

6.2.3 The Signification Conundrum: Confusing and Conflating Identities

> Draw two different pictures, one of a person who is heterosexual and another picture of a person of another sexuality and name that sexuality. Explain how you have made the two pictures to be different (extract from 1.10W4A4).

Throughout my research project I have been interested in the issues surrounding normatively gendered representations of various sexual identities. From my identity gem model, I have explored how gender, as a performance (Butler, 2006), is sometimes used to make sexual identities apparent in social settings. However, sexuality itself is not accurately represented by gender, and the conflations of gender and sexuality lead to the establishment of stereotypes, misrepresentation and the maintenance of heteronormative and patriarchal hegemonies.

However, while my identity gem model might serve to destabilise such relations of power and help with the reimagining of sex, gender and sexuality in broader terms, a three-week course using this outlook is not necessarily enough for

such imagination to become a lived experience. From the extract above it is possible to see that even after the critical literacy course, some students still produced materials that reinforced conflations of sex and gender with sexuality. Furthermore, it is interesting how the conflations between sex and gender and then between gender and sexuality seem to emerge as a result of a kind of semiotic confusion that creates myths (Barthes, 1957/1972) – where there is a mismatch between the signifier, the signified and the sign (de Saussure, 1996; Barthes, 1957/1972), and the kinds of meanings to be gained from the vocabulary and terminology associated with queer identities.

From the total number of materials that were submitted for analysis in this research project, 23 show evidence of the conflation of sex and/or gender with sexuality. These conflations seem to come as a result of the confusion between different identities. That is, any confusion about which words signify which identities results in representations that conflate different identities.

In a first example of conflations of sex/gender and sexuality, students provide problematic terms and instructions or questions that use language to move almost seamlessly from sex or gender into sexuality. For example: “People have different ways of expressing their gender in terms of roles, behaviour, and attitude. There are people who are gays, lesbians and bisexuals” (extract from 1.10W2A2). In this extract the student begins by providing an explanation that seems to resonate with Butler’s (2006) notion of gender performance. That is, the expression of gender through roles, behaviours and attitudes constitutes gender as a social practice. However, this explanation is followed by an elaboration that people can be gay, lesbian or bisexual. There is no hesitation between issues of gender performance and the shift toward linking gender to sexual identity. This is problematic insofar as it

implies that the former necessitates the latter, whereas throughout my discussions I have explored how such a notion is a fallacy. There are different methods for making one's sexual identity visible in social spaces, but there is no necessary sexual identity that comes as a result of any particular gender performance, or even the other way around.

The confusion between definitions of gender and sexuality have thus resulted in the conflation of the two concepts. Gender has been used to signify sexual identities, thus creating a semiotic mismatch: signifiers have been matched to the wrong signifieds, establishing problematic signs that cannot distinguish between different identities. This, in turn, has led to the establishment of certain mythologies, uttering Roland Barthes' (1957/1972) notion that

> Myth sees in them [the elements of semiotics] only the same raw material; their unity is that they all come down to the status of a mere language. Whether it deals with alphabetical or pictorial writing, myth wants to see in them only a sum of signs, a global sign, the final term of a first semiological chain. And it is precisely this final term which will become the first term of the greater system which it builds and of which it is only a part (parenthesis added: Barthes, 1957/1972, 113).

That is, the language used by these particular students comes from the normative, already existing discourses that present conflations of sex, gender and sexuality in representation as natural and given. And, while I do not believe that these students have intentionally used this language to maintain heteronormative and/or patriarchal ideologies, their confusion of the terms has resulted in the conflations of identities that constitutes the mythology of heteronormativity and patriarchy. These mismatches and conflations are fallacies that hold heterosexuality and normative gender roles as real, true and original, thus constructing non-heterosexual identities as copy-cat performances and imitations (Butler, 1993).

Similarly, data sample 1.27 includes the following teacher input and question: “the image below is one that we are familiar with from restroom doors. But do these signs cater for homosexuals? Just yes/no” (extract from 1.27W2A2). Attached to this part of the activity is a picture of a normative restroom sign: one male symbol in the likes of the universal man, and one symbol representing female biological identity – in the likes of the universal man in a dress. While an analysis of these representations of the conventionally conflated understandings of biological sex and gender is warranted and in many circumstances desired, it is used problematically here in its assumption that these symbols also represent sexual identity. Without any further interrogation into whether or not these symbols actually do have any connotative links to representing sexual identity, this activity becomes troublesome. There is potential for this activity to subtly imply to learners that sexuality *is* visible through gendered representation, and that people of different sexual identities might rightly want to keep their restrooms separate as well.

In another example, a set of materials includes the use of an image of a person unzipping their skin to reveal another person inside (see Figure 6.15):



Figure 6.15: *Conflations of Gender and Sexuality*

What separates these two, the inner person from the outer, is a sexed identity which is identifiable from a number of normative gender markers: the outer person who seems to constitute a costume with the presence of a zip has longer, more 'feminine' hair and nails; while the inner person might be male which is marked by shorter hair. In the context of these materials' focus on transgenderism it would be safe to assume that this text has already been read to represent a transgendered person. However, it is what follows in the list of questions that come after this image that poses some conflation, or even misunderstandings, between gender and sexuality:

1. What can you notice in the image?
2. What sexuality do you think the person is and what sexuality do you think the person wants to be?
3. Who do you think the image is directed to?
4. What does the zip symbolise?
5. What do you think is the cause of this person being ashamed to be open about his/her sexuality in public?
6. According to your belief and values what do you think about this individual?
7. What emotion is emitted through his facial expressions? Why?
8. How can we make a positive change to society's views on people like this? (extract from 1.40W4A6).

Specifically, question two in the above activity identifies the image as a representation of sexualities rather than that of transgenderism. A transgender identity might be considered a most effective identity to displace the myth (Barthes, 1957/1972) that gender necessitates a particular sexual identity for it highlights the very flexibility of gender as a social performance and the frailty of the words we use to name sexual identities.

An understanding of sex, gender and sexuality that conflates these three aspects of identity poses a troublesome education. These conflations reproduce

heteronormative and patriarchal hegemonies through the very (mis)representations of sex, gender and sexuality that are conventionally used by such systems of power. The role of the teacher and educational text designer, then, involves a critical reflexivity on any text designs used in classrooms, especially for demythologising our conventional uses and understandings of language in text and representation. As educators and text designers, the space for interrogation of our own designs needs to be included and engaged with in the classroom in order to identify, problematise and transform the gaps within our own understandings and practices. This is the kind of trouble I want to see in pedagogy, and the kind of trouble that critical literacy makes space for. In the next section, then, I explore a model for critical pedagogy which provides a perspective for understanding critical literacy practice from Kumashiro's (2002) *Troubling Education* in view of students' educational materials. Here, I consider how dominance and the role of the Other have been attended to through students' designs and the implications this has for a critical literacy approach that deals with conventionally sensitive topics.

6.2.4 Focussing on the Other

Kumashiro's (2002) work on queer activism and antioppressive pedagogies has helped me to consider the various ways in which diversity can be dealt with in the classroom. These orientations include education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2002). Each orientation comes with its own set of weaknesses and strengths, but each also looks at the roles of the teacher and pedagogy in developing a critical education that tries to deal with diversity in socially just ways.

And, while I have tried to locate the critical literacy course and my own workbook within the framework of the last two orientations, it would seem that students' materials differ in some significant ways. That is, quite often students' materials seem to focus wholly on a single or set of non-heterosexual identities as well as the issues that relate to them. Having this focus on a marginalised Other echoes Kumashiro's (2002) education *about* the Other.

From the total data set of 66 assignments, 35 focus on a non-heterosexual or nonconforming gender identity or set of identities. This means that just more than half of the total data set does not include questions that deconstruct dominant socio-cultural and ideological structures: heterosexuality as the compulsory norm, or conventional male-female and masculine-feminine binaries. Without such questions, teachers and learners are not necessarily encouraged to "examine not only how some groups and identities are Othered in society, but also how some groups are privileged, as well as how this dual process is legitimized and maintained by social structures and competing ideologies" (Kumashiro, 2002, 44). There is little to no question about the constructed and dominating nature of heterosexuality and patriarchal notions of sex and gender. Again, they remain as normal, while the marginalised Other becomes a topic of discussion.

Sometimes, the focus on the Other is established from the beginning of the materials themselves. In many assignments, students emulate my own workbook activity that deals with defining important terms. However, where the workbook and the critical literacy course require students to define dominant identities such as heterosexuality, some students exclude this:

> Activity 1: What do you think the following words mean?
> 1) Lesbian:
> 2) Gay:

3) Bisexual:

4) Transgender

5) Intersex (extract from 1.7W1A1)

Excluding heterosexuality from this list also aids in making it invisible. It is the unmarked and unquestioned norm, and so is not up for critique. Similar activities have been used in a number of other assignments with only a few including heterosexuality, masculine, feminine, male and female as terms to be defined.

In other examples, students have developed text-based activities that deal only with the Othered identity. For example, data set 1.25 deals with gay marriages. In this particular example, learners are required to read an article on South Africa's first Zulu gay wedding (Magee, 2013) and then answer the following questions:

1. What does it mean to be homosexual?
2. How are gay marriages viewed in your community?
3. How many homosexual people do you know of in your community?
4. Are homosexual marriages any different from different sex marriages? Explain.
5. Why do you think this couple chose a double[-barrel surname?] instead of one surname? (extract from 1.25W1A1).

By excluding questions on heterosexuality, activities like this try to engage with the non-normative identities without necessarily engaging with issues of power and power relations. Such relations of power need to be understood as just that: relationships between things that create and maintain hierarchies of dominance and visibility. On one hand, these activities do bring traditionally marginalised groups to the forefront, in that learners will get a chance to learn about these groups. However, a truly critical education, as I have argued before, also deconstructs preconceived ideas about both the Other and the dominating form. This can be understood as "disruptive knowledge" (Kumashiro, 2002, 42), where "[l]earning is about disruption and opening up to further learning, not closure and satisfaction" (parenthesis added:

Kumashiro, 2002, 43). Answering the questions posed in the above extract could lead to a sense of 'satisfaction' where learners and teachers might feel that they now have a better understanding of same-sex marriages. But, this satisfaction in knowing is ignorant of the ideological debates on marriage as an institution of hegemonic masculinity, compulsory heterosexuality or even capitalism (Connell, 1995; Rich, 1993; McCormick, 2012; Adam, 2003; Cock, 2003).

In students' materials, however, the focus on the Other stretches across the entire assignment. And while there are examples of materials that only include a handful of activities that focus on the Other, the 35 sets that fit into this particular category maintain this focus throughout. As such, it then becomes important to see how this fixed attention on the Other is maintained all the way through a single assignment. See Appendix 3 for the extracts from assignment 2.17 which includes the texts and activities designed to get learners to learn *about* homosexuality. Altogether, this set of materials illustrates how one can move from one activity to the next and maintain a singular focus.

What this assignment helps to illustrate is how a focus on the Other can be maintained throughout a set of materials. What is also important to note is that, overall, these materials do still work relatively well. This student has constructed activities that seem to incorporate all five moves for constructing a critical literacy project (Janks, 2014) whilst also incorporating McCarl Nielson et al's (2000) notion of gender norm violations. And while some activities also seem to focus on feelings and opinions, this assignment can be deemed a valuable attempt at constructing critical literacy materials that confront sensitive topics in the classroom. It is a design that works within Kumashiro's (2002) second orientation for an antioppressive pedagogy: "By increasing [learners'] knowledge of the Other, and perhaps helping [learners] see

similarities between groups, this approach challenges oppression by aiming to develop in students an empathy for the Other" (parentheses added: Britzman, 1998 as cited in Kumashiro, 2002, 42).

Conversely, however, this set of materials also contains some weaknesses. Again, a focus on the Other seems to ignore the role of the privileged in the establishment and maintenance of power relations. Understating privilege, then, implicates these materials into being complicit with that very privileged group (Connell, 1995). And in so doing, the materials maintain that the hegemonic form is different and separate from the marginalised, where

> teaching about the Other could present a dominant narrative of the Other's experience that might be read by students [learners and teachers] as, for instance, *the* queer experience, or *the* Latino/a experience. Otherness might become essentialized and remain different from the norm (parenthesis added; original emphasis: Kumashiro, 2002, 42).

Difference in this case is not necessarily understood as a resource for developing the critical in critical literacy. Instead, this sense of separation between the marginalised Other and the hegemonically privileged is constructed as natural, given and normal. In such circumstances, learners and teachers are not provided an opportunity to explore, critique, *disrupt* or even transform normativity. The hegemonic, and often conflated, discourses of sex, gender and sexuality in representation keep their positions even under the guise of a progressive and critical education.

6.2.5 The Hypothetical and the Opinionated

As a pedagogical technique, the use of hypothetical scenarios can be useful. As case studies, such scenarios might allow students and learners to think about contextualised situations relevant to any particular topic at hand. In such cases,

hypothetical scenarios might involve “simulations of real life events [which] help students learn by engaging them in hands-on assignments, using a methodological lesson in context, and improving critical evaluation skills” (parenthesis added: Bordt, 1999, as cited in Kunselman and Johnson, 2004, 88). That is, by imagining socio-culturally relevant scenarios, students and learners might be able to relate and apply more theoretical and content-based knowledge from a course or learning area to more realistic situations in order to develop their understanding and thinking skills. Such application of theory to imagined experiences thus has a role to play in educations’ processes of developing student and learner understanding of a given topic.

However, a critical literacy approach to teaching and learning can be thought of as most effective when applied to real, lived experiences rather than imaginary ones. This follows from critical literacy’s interest in social justice and social transformation (Janks, 2010). And while the realistic but imagined events that hypothetical scenarios offer might be useful for exploring certain social and cultural issues in the classroom, it is the authenticity of real experience that allows content, pedagogy and assessment (Biggs, 1996 and 2003) to be conceptualised and explored beyond classroom walls. How content is related to learners’ lives (Janks, 2014), then, becomes an important move when developing a critical education that deals with sensitive, real and meaningful social issues.

In the classroom, real scenarios can be presented to learners through the use of authentic texts. That is, texts that have been produced outside of the classroom and that are written or designed from and for a variety of contexts, audiences, genres, modes and agendas. The use of up-to-date authentic texts might help teaching and learning become more relevant to learners’ lives, as well as aid in

developing an understanding that classroom content is directly related to local, regional, national and global events and contexts in time. And, through interactions with these texts, learners can develop skills for reading the word and the world (Freire and Macedo, 1987) in more critical and relevant ways.

Furthermore, the kinds of questions that teachers ask of those hypothetical and/or real scenarios either constructs education as a purely cognitive process or as a means for teachers and learners to become more proactive members of their schools, communities and even as national and global citizens. Moving beyond the hypothetical scenario and questions that only elicit opinions without any evidence thus means moving into a more relevant and meaningful education that is interested in society and the lived experiences of a diverse community. It is an education that allows learners to bring their own experiences into the classroom as a legitimate form of knowledge.

It therefore becomes interesting to note how the pre-service teachers who attended the critical literacy course used both hypothetical scenarios and questions that promoted opinion-based answers to develop critical literacy materials for teaching about representations of sex, gender and sexuality. In many cases, students have opted to use hypothetical scenarios to engage in a topic, while in other cases students have included a number of questions that seem to require opinion-based answers following a hypothetical scenario. In this section of chapter 6 I am interested in exploring how students have constructed these parts of their materials and what the role of such activities might play in a critical literacy approach to teaching and learning.

In some instances, the use of the hypothetical has been constructed as simulations of reality (Kunselman and Johnson, 2004) which pose as situations

whose possibilities of occurrence in learners' future experiences might even be plausible or within reach. They are also constructed in ways that attempt to get learners to think about issues of sex, gender and sexuality in relation to their own lives and worldviews. One example, taken from data set 1.27, appears as part of a section (worksheet two) that deals with homosexuality as a topic:

> A friend of yours from the Eastern Cape sends you an email asking for advice about telling his family about his sexuality. He is really scared because he thinks they will judge him for being a homosexual man. What would your response to the email be? (extract from 1.27W2A2).

This example helps to illustrate how the hypothetical situation has sometimes been used to construct an imaginary reality for learners to engage with. In doing so, learners have to think about how to apply their own understandings, worldviews, beliefs and positions related to issues of, in this case, homosexuality to a particular event. As such, the scenario speaks directly to the learner. With the use of second-person pronouns, 'you', and possessives, 'your' or 'yours', the task attempts to engage learners with events and people in their own lives. This is not an obscure, unknown person anymore, rather, this is someone the learner knows and for whom the learner can feel empathy. This could help learners to understand the task as a personal reflection of self and morality: What would I do? How would I react? What do I think is right, fair or just?

As a tactic for relating issues commonly thought of as controversial to learners' lives, the use of a hypothetical seems to have some advantages. It creates for the learner a discursive version of reality that might be personal enough to help them reflect on their own positions, whilst also being distant enough to remain a classroom activity and not an actual event. It seems to encourage empathy for the imaginary

other, as well as relevance to learners' lives. It poses a situation to be solved; one that is readily available for learners to apply their content knowledge to.

However, the task which follows the description of the scenario is open-ended: "What would your response to the email be?" (extract from 1.27W2A2) which begs the question of what kind of answer would be acceptable? Would a homophobic, sexist, heterosexist, heteronormative response be acceptable in the classroom that uses these materials? Kunselman and Johnson (2004, 88) elaborate that while the use of hypothetical case studies is effective for engaging learners and students with content, teachers must remember that "it is essential that students have the underlying knowledge of theory, processes, and methods that is needed to formulate discussion and solutions". If a hypothetical is to be used as a pedagogical tool for engaging learners in controversial conversations in the classroom and for developing critical literacy practices, then perhaps learners need also to understand the social impact that their proposed responses could yield. A critical reflection is warranted, where learners critique their own and their peers' responses in relation to their socio-cultural context, human rights, and the social impact of language in the circumstances posed by the hypothetical scenario. Such an activity should thus be scaffolded in the materials.

Similarly, other examples of hypothetical scenarios from students' materials also contain the conjunction 'if' and modals such as 'would', 'could' or 'can' to create conditionals: if something happens, then what would/could/can be done? In such situations, learners are encouraged to imagine and evaluate the possibilities that follow from the case that has been presented:

> Write a diary entry of how you would feel if you were the victim of homophobia and are not allowed marrying because of your sexual

> orientation. The entry should not be more than a page long (extract from 2.5W4A4).

In the same ways that the first example above (from data set 1.27) was constructed to attend to the personal lives of learners, this second example also tries to get learners to think about the possibilities of being in the shoes of the Othered. Both the use of second-person pronouns as well as the genre of the diary entry indicates how this task has been constructed to engage learners' personal, albeit imagined, experiences and thoughts. In this way, learners might use their imaginations to explore the experiences of and sympathise with the marginalised Other.

Again, however, the question of how the authenticity of learners' responses could be measured is brought up. That is, how well might an imagined sense of marginalisation be represented in a diary entry, or even in an email? Have learners explored enough to adequately or justly represent the experiences of those who experience homophobic violence, heterosexist degradation or labelling due to nonconformity? Yet again, an emphasis on critical self-reflection might be useful for getting learners to pose and explore these questions. That is, in asking critical questions about their own constructions, against authentic texts by those whom have experienced (symbolic) violence, learners might be able to critique their own representations and understandings of the world.

Over and above the use of hypothetical situations as a way to engage learners in contextualised examples of how issues of sex, gender and sexuality play out in different, or sometimes even generic, social settings; the hypothetical has also sometimes been used as a text for analysis. In these circumstances, the hypothetical is followed by a number of questions that might help the learner reflect on the imaginary situation and/or reflect on their own opinions about the given situation:

> A young boy called Ryan decides he doesn't want to play Soccer because he doesn't enjoy it, he wants to play Netball instead because it makes him happy. Should Ryan be allowed to play Netball? How would you feel if you were Ryan and the school told you [that] you couldn't play Netball because you were a boy? (parenthesis added: extract from 1.18W2A3).

In this example the student has presented an imaginary case of gender nonconformity. 'Ryan' does not want to play a school sport that is commonly associated with maleness and masculinity in many South African schools. Instead, he is eager to participate in a sport that has been traditionally allocated for female learners. Thereafter, the student has posed, questions about whether such a case should be allowed. That is, learners are required to provide a discussion on whether this example of gender nonconformity is right or wrong, permissible or not. The question, however, does not make reference to any other text that might be used as a yardstick for determining what is just or perhaps permissible within such a context: a code of conduct to be critiqued, cultural norms and values, the experiences of others in similar situations, or a human rights manifesto. Without a defined yardstick, learners might only draw on their personal opinions to judge Ryan's situation. And, while learners' opinions should be valued in the classroom, teachers should also encourage the use of *informed* opinion. That is, an opinion that recognises a history and range of knowledge, experiences and perspectives, as well as an opinion that is rationalised, justified and argued in context.

Following this initial question on the acceptability of Ryan's wont to play netball is a question that asks learners to step into Ryan's shoes in order to try and empathise with him. The 'how would you feel' question thus poses a conditional that attempts to get learners to explore the scenario from Ryan's perspective. This is interesting when considered in juxtaposition to the first question wherein learners are

more likely to draw on their own perspectives by stating their opinions. Perhaps, then, during implementation there might be space for teachers and learners to consider the differences between their own positions and presumed understandings and the possible positions and experiences felt by the marginalised Other.

In other examples, the questions that seem to elicit opinion-based answers also seem to require learners to make judgements about given situations – both real and hypothetical:

- Should the law be amended in order to accommodate every sexual orientation?
  Should people be judged according to their sexual orientation? (extract from 1.24W3A3);
- From your individual point of view, do you agree or disagree with transgender[ism] and sex change? (parenthesis added: extract from 1.40W2A4).

In each example, students have constructed questions that require opinions-based answers rather than researched information.

The use of a hypothetical in the development of critical literacy materials, then, needs to be done with caution. While pedagogical tactics for teaching controversial issues in the classroom might include engagement with simulated reality and questions that promote opinion-based answers (Kunselman and Johnson, 2004; Oxfam, 2006; Leighton, 2010), it is important for teachers to also promote critical literacy practices alongside such tactics in the classroom. That is, a critical reflection on case studies as well as the opinions that are used to evaluate them is needed to help learners develop an understanding that their responses are also positioned and that they produce their own social effects.

In this way, I am advocating a kind of critical "community of enquiry" (Oxfam, 2006, 8) which resonates with Janks' (2014) notion that the 5 moves of critical literacy include research and reading. In a booklet created by Oxfam International (2006, 8), a community of enquiry is said to "[enable] pupils to develop listening skills and respect for others' viewpoints: pupils are encouraged to listen to the ideas of others, reflect on their own views, present these publicly and to alter their views in response to what they hear". In this way, learners could be involved in considering hypothetical and/or real case studies, developing opinions about them and then reflecting, through discussion and exploration of multiple perspectives, on how their own viewpoints are positioned. All of this should be done in relation to a human rights agenda (Oxfam, 2006; Leighton, 2010) as well as a consideration of the social impacts that language and representation have in different contexts.

A community of enquiry, then, requires that learners explore an issue through research that will inform their opinions, rather than being restricted to feelings or purely emotional responses. Research, then, would include finding and interrogating more authentic texts and sources of information (Janks, 2014) which could then be used to measure the hypothetical and the opinions that learners develop toward them. That is, reflecting on learners' responses and opinions in relation to such research. By moving from the hypothetical into the real, learners can begin to understand the relationship between language, representation and power in ways that are more sensitive to the experiences of those who live in positions of subordination.

This might further be enhanced if learners and teachers interrogate the hypothetical, the real and the opinions and positions presented in a process of critical reflection. That is, through reflection learners and teachers might be able to develop

a plan of action that would allow the hypothetical as well as the lived experiences of others to become a force for social change in the lives of the learners themselves. This would mean that:

> [t]he insistence that the oppressed engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection – true reflection – leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection (parenthesis added: Freire, 1972, 66).

The positions developed upon reflection on the hypothetical and the opinions the hypothetical elicit need to be recognised as both the force that must drive social action as well as something new that becomes available for interrogation. It is at this point, upon recognition and interrogation of the praxis that emerges from a critical reflection, that a community of enquiry (Oxfam, 2006) becomes a critical community of enquiry: a community that does not see learning as an end in itself, but as a continuous process of finding, asking, and acting (Freire in Freire and Macedo, 1987).

6.2.6 The Persistence of (Hetero)normativity

Across most of the students' materials there is a sense that students are working to develop their understandings of sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them through their engagement with critical literacy practices. However, the course did only last for three weeks for each stream of students. This, I think, makes it understandable that there has still been evidence of various and persisting forms of heteronormativity in students' material designs. In some materials it might manifest as a single set of questions, an activity or in the phrasing of an expected learner answer in the memorandum provided. In other materials, the persistence is more

widespread. It stretches across larger sections and activities in a single assignment. In this final section of section 6.2, I consider how the manifestations of a persistent heteronormativity work in their negotiations of the gendered representations of sexualities, using a critical literacy approach to teaching and learning.

The first form of heteronormativity that sometimes emerges in students' materials involves the assumption that the reader, in this case learners and teachers, are heterosexuals themselves. That is, it is through the use of us-them constructions between a heterosexual or normal 'us' and a non-heterosexual or Othered 'them' that activities and their lists of questions seem to position readers of the materials as part of the dominant sexual identity:

> Now that we are more aware of the attitude towards people who are different from us, how gender is constructed, how sex is biological and how people have different sexual orientations, write a paragraph explaining how you would act or respond to people in the school and community who have a different sexual orientation to yours? (extract from 2.17W4A7).

In the above extract, it is easy to see how an 'us-them' differentiation has been established through mere pronoun use (Janks, 2005b). This first sentence states quite explicitly and definitively that 'we' as learners and teachers participating in the activities from this set of materials are becoming more conscious of people who are 'different from us'. Gender, sex and sexual orientations are then listed as markers of difference between 'us' and 'them'. However, such plainly stated difference seems to establish that those that are different from 'us', the readers and participants of these materials, constitute the marginalised Other. 'We', then, are defined by our sameness, our heterosexuality.

To reinforce this notion that those 'who are different from us' are indeed different, and in all probability nonconforming to hegemonic order, this activity also

includes a separation between ‘us’ and those that have a ‘different sexuality’. This is made more direct by further elaboration in the same activity that explains that the available responses that learners may include in their paragraphs involve a question of whether ‘you’, the learner, will “act homophobic, violent, pass bad insults or will be more accepting, understanding and tolerant” (extract from 2.17W4A7) toward those who are different. This implies that what has been elusively stated as ‘different from us’ earlier on in the activity is actually a non-heterosexual identity that might conjure homophobic responses.

The mode of fragmentation that allows hegemonic ideologies such as heterosexuality to operate is not restricted to the use of pronouns, although pronoun use is a linguistic form that is easily identifiable. Differentiating between the hegemonic and the subversive is also achieved through the creation of ‘normal’ and ‘other’:

> People in the gay community are victimised and bullied if they are openly gay. This is because society is not very accepting and does not tolerate those that are not the same as normal people (extract from 2.1MEMO).

Here, it is easy to see that a dichotomous relationship has been established between, again, an ‘us’ and ‘them’: The ‘us’ is not gay, is socially accepted, and does not experience bullying or victimisation. What is interesting to note, however, is that the hegemonic, heterosexual in-group is defined by what it is not. That is, being normatively heterosexual involves following a list of restrictions. On the other hand, those that are different from the norm, the out-group, are those that are victimised due to the nonconformity they represent:

> Write down some social effects that you think people of a different orientation experience? (extract from 2.17W4A6).

Or, they are defined by a need to be convincing:

> Do you agree with Robert as he tries to convince people that he is normal and partakes in normal daily activities just as that of heterosexuals (extract from 1.40W3A5).

Or even by the way learners might be required to measure the legitimacy and authenticity of non-heterosexual identities by measuring them against practices that are defined as heterosexual:

> Do you think that gays and lesbians can be able to raise children as other heterosexual couples do? (extract from 1.10W4A4).

The language of difference, 'us' and 'them', is a tool for separating the hegemonic and the 'normal' from the subversive and nonconformist. It is a language that Thompson (1987) calls fragmentation which is a mode of operation of ideology used to highlight the separateness of things. This includes dividing symbolic constructions, perhaps through various modes of representation, into binaries and dichotomies that reinforce oppositional relationships. That is, fragmentation constitutes

> the dispersal of individuals and groups capable of mounting a challenge to dominant groups (Brantlinger, Majd-Tabbari and Guskin, 1996, 578).

In the case of this student's materials, this fragmentation is maintained as between the accepted and hegemonic sexual identity that is heterosexuality and less-accepted sexual identities like homosexuality, bisexuality or even asexuality. The separation of and differentiation between hegemonic and non-hegemonic thus maintains that the hegemonic form is a given, unquestionable form. Any representation that might unify the hegemonic with the non-hegemonic might imply that hegemony itself is constructed, maintained and reproduced through power relations that could be disrupted by socially unacceptable representations. Such fragmentation is thus a construction which aims to avoid associations between queer

discourses and hegemony that might reveal that hegemony is itself a fallacy (Butler, 1993).

In each example, the decisions about language use and, therefore, the representation of heterosexuality as a hegemonic ideal in relation to non-heterosexual identities do not always show a thorough awareness of the meanings that are being constructed. That is, the use of fragmentation (Thompson, 1987; Janks, 2005b) may not have been a conscious decision by the students who use it. Rather, by way of its repeated use and naturalised status in conventional gendered representations of sexualities throughout everyday texts and contexts, students may have unconsciously drawn on familiar discourses. And while this is explicable within this context, as well as somewhat reasonable considering the brevity of the course itself, it also signifies a less than satisfactory critical self-awareness in students' practices. More time would be needed in order to help students become more aware of their own uses of language and the social effects that these could have on their learners.

The second main form through which students sometimes reproduce or maintain heteronormativity involves religious evaluations:

> People have different ways of expressing their gender in terms of roles, behaviour, and attitude. There are people who are gays, lesbians, and bisexuals [...]
>
> From the above statement, do you think that these types of people were made by God to be the way they are or they chose how they wanted to be? Substantiate your answer (extract from 1.10W2A2).

The reference that some materials make to religion, god, or scripture (in one case there is an activity that explicitly asks learners about their understanding of the Bible) echoes religious debate about the origins and authenticity of non-heterosexual

identities. This is usually done in relation to constructions of heterosexuality as established, accepted and anointed:

> What are the general stipulation of gender and sexuality according to the bible and other religious scriptures of other religions?
> In view of the manner in which the world has evolved with its outlook on gender and sexuality, do you think that it has maintained the 'protocol' of what the religious scriptures stipulate on gender and sexuality?
> What challenge, do you think, does the church have in terms of drawing the line of accepting the gender-challenged people and loving them but also not being in favour of gender immorality? (extract from 2.12W3A6).

In each of the above examples, a question about how real and authentic non-heterosexual identities are has been tied to religious scripture as a yardstick for human rights, morals and values. What is religious is valued, and that which challenges religion and its mortal institutions needs to be evaluated before being acceptable. Hence, then, the reference to being 'made by God' in the first extract, or even the challenge that subversive identities and 'gender-challenged people' create for the religious institutions that need to define human morality in the second extract.

Both extracts, however, usher in the conundrum, and fallacy, that there is an original and true identity that precedes the diversity experienced in the world (Butler, 1993). The 'new-found' diversity of the world, then, constitutes a mere mimicry of that original. While Butler's (1993 and 2006) work has revealed that heterosexuality is often represented as this original, it has also debunked the authenticity of these representations.

But, these representations persist, hence the emergence of the extracts cited above, and such representation comes with its own set of social effects. In a study conducted in 2008, Attribution Theory was used to measure some common beliefs about sexual diversity in the United States (Haider-Markel and Joslyn, 2008). A part

of this theory, most relevant to my discussion, proposes that within any situation or context people will often try to predict and/or control their environment, which then influences behaviour and whether or not one is perceived to be responsible for that behaviour (Haider-Markel and Joslyn, 2008; Kelly and Michela, 1980). This would mean that at the intersection between a religious right and the presence of sexual diversity, especially where such a religious position has been influenced by the representations of heterosexuality as the original and anointed sexual behaviour, a set of beliefs about sexual identity and responsibility emerge. That is, if the gay, lesbian or bisexual person is perceived as being born with their sexual 'deviance' or that god has given such a person their 'gender-challenged' identity is it beyond that person's control. The person displaying such nonconformity thus has no control over their preordained disposition, and they can therefore be sympathised with and even supported. However, if their sexual orientation is perceived as a choice, then it is controllable and so the nonconformist can be responded to negatively. Haider-Markel and Joslyn (2008, 293) clarify this by distinguishing that

> there are causes for which a stigmatized person may not be held responsible – uncontrollable – and others for which there is personal responsibility – controllable.

This, then, influences how and possibly even whether or not the stigmatised, marginalised or condemned can be perceived as being worthy of support and tolerance.

In a set of educational materials where these discourses of religion, authenticity, responsibility/controllability and support/acceptance have been used, it becomes problematic because learners are also encouraged to evaluate what kinds of diversity might be deemed acceptable using a non-standard yardstick. Instead, a more global human rights perspective might allow learners to reflect on diversity

beyond their own religious, or non-religious, positions. Furthermore, questions like those of the extracts from sets 1.10 and 2.12 maintain that heterosexuality is an original form from which homosexuality or bisexuality emerge as copies (Butler, 1993). As a result, there is no question or regard for anointed or valued forms of non-heterosexual behaviour and identity throughout history and across contexts and belief systems (for example Foucault, 1978, 1984a/1992 and 1984b/1992; Gevisser and Cameron, 1994; Tucker, 2009).

The third, and final, form through which (hetero)normativity is sometimes maintained in students' materials involves representing the conflations between sex, gender and sexuality. While this is not always evident in the questions that students ask in their materials, the conflations between sex, gender and sexuality can be found amongst the expected answers provided in attached memorandums. This seems to suggest that students' own understandings of the representations of sex, gender and sexuality are still bound to normative binaries and conflations.

In data set 2.1 there is a conflation between gender and sexuality. That is, in this instance, homosexuality is defined as both same-sex desire as well as gender performance and interests that are conventionally associated with femininity:

> A metrosexual male is a male that is physically attracted to females but who is also interested in fashion and keeping up his physical appearance. A homosexual male is someone who is physically attracted to males and is interested in fashion, keeping up his appearances and being part of the homosexual community (extract from 2.1MEMO).

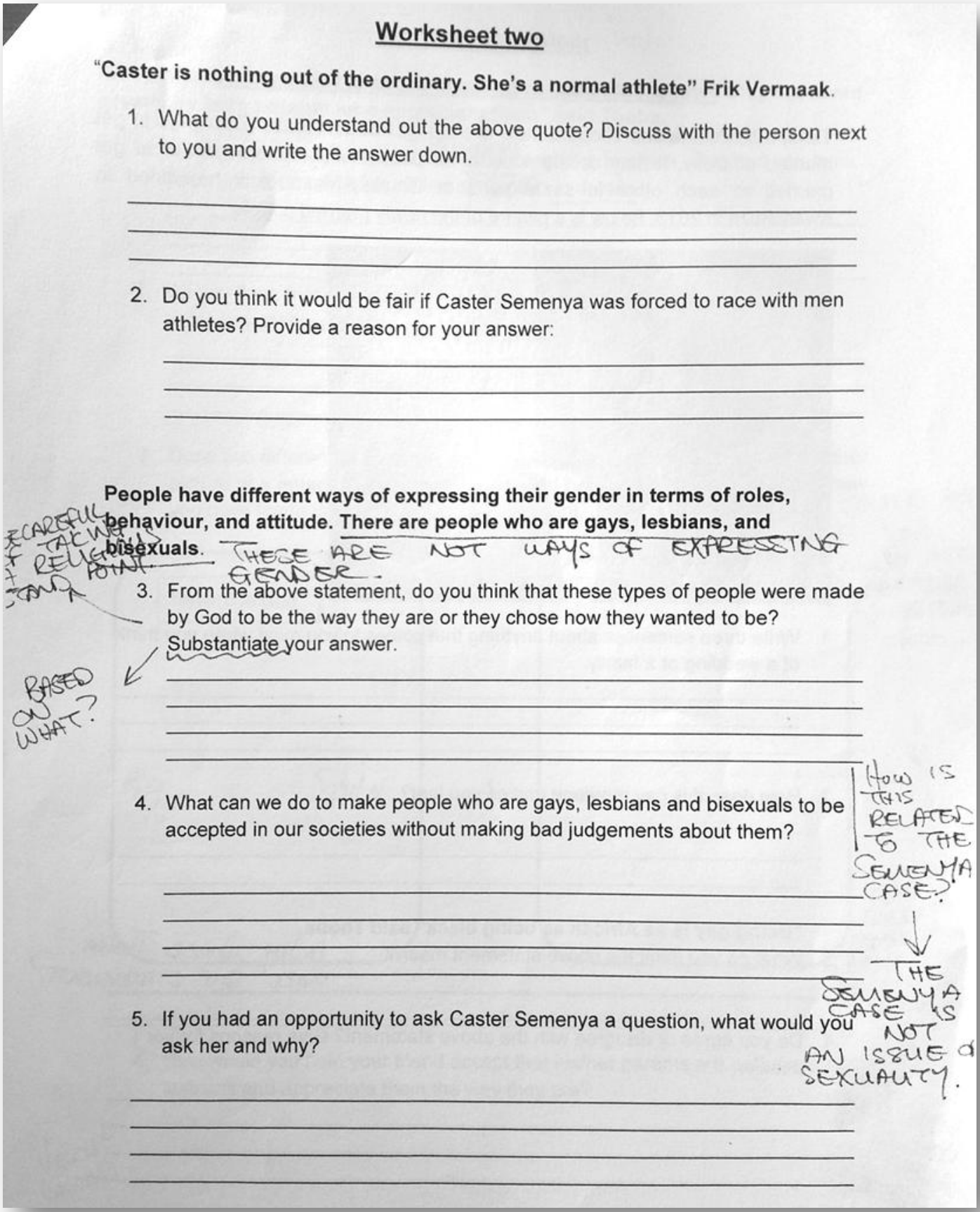
Differentiating between metrosexuality and homosexuality can be useful when trying to reveal metrosexuality as a gendered identity rather than a sexual identity. However, by repeating the gendered practices of metrosexuality in the definition for homosexuality results in the reproduction of a stereotype of gay men that is so often

seen in public and mainstream media: from local South African soap-dramas to international shows like *Will and Grace*, which still represent male homosexuality as identifiable by male femininity. Such definitions of homosexuality ignore the diverse gender practices of straight, gay and lesbian people, or as in the case above overlooks lesbianism altogether.

Furthermore, by stating that a homosexual male means 'being part of the homosexual community' also oversimplifies gay social life while ignoring that many gay and lesbian people need to face coming-out to family, friends, work colleagues or even strangers (Bilodeau and Renn, 2005; Sandfort, Melendez and Diaz, 2007; Renn, 2007; Altman, Aggleton, Williams, Kong, Reddy, Harrad, Reis and Parker, 2012; Anderson, 2002; and Harris and Dyson, 2004). In this sense, is being a part of the 'homosexual community' defined as being visible and participating in the politics of sexual orientation? Or, does the simple self-identification, visible or not, enable one to become part of the community automatically? The conflations and simplifications of non-heterosexual identities, then, limit one's understanding of sexual identity in relation to diversity and the political, personal and social complexities inherent in living any of these identities.

In another example of conflation, a student has misread the article on South Africa's Olympic runner, Caster Semenya (see Greenfield, 2012). In the memorandum for this student's set of worksheet, they have provided an expected answer for the question "5. If you had the opportunity to ask Caster Semenya a question, what would you ask her and why?" (extract from 1.10W2A2). This question follows from a question that asks whether learners think that god made gender nonconforming and non-heterosexual people, as well as a question that requires learners to think about how traditionally marginalised identities could be "accepted in

our societies without making bad judgements about them" (extract from 1.10W2A2). And while these questions might not seem overtly problematic, I find it interesting that such questions about sexual identity have been grouped with questions about Caster Semenya. Already, through the sequence of questions in this worksheet as well as the kinds of questions that have been grouped together, it becomes noticeable that there is a conflation between the issue of biological and gender nonconformity as related to the Semenya media mayhem and sexual identity. The media coverage of Semenya's athletic career seems often to conflate and confuse issues of biological sex and gender performance. However, in data set 1.10, there is a further conflation with issues of sexual diversity. That is, through the ordering of questions and the collocation of questions that shift from issues of sex to gender to sexuality without any breaks in-between, this particular worksheet seems to suggest that these three areas are too similar to differentiate:



Worksheet two

"Caster is nothing out of the ordinary. She's a normal athlete" Frik Vermaak.

1. What do you understand out the above quote? Discuss with the person next to you and write the answer down.

2. Do you think it would be fair if Caster Semenya was forced to race with men athletes? Provide a reason for your answer:

People have different ways of expressing their gender in terms of roles, behaviour, and attitude. There are people who are gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

THESE ARE NOT WAYS OF EXPRESSING GENDER.

3. From the above statement, do you think that these types of people were made by God to be the way they are or they chose how they wanted to be? Substantiate your answer.

BASED ON WHAT?

4. What can we do to make people who are gays, lesbians and bisexuals to be accepted in our societies without making bad judgements about them?

HOW IS THIS RELATED TO THE SEMENYA CASE?

5. If you had an opportunity to ask Caster Semenya a question, what would you ask her and why?

THE SEMENYA CASE IS NOT AN ISSUE OF SEXUALITY.

Figure 6.16: *The Persistence of (Hetero)normativity – example (extract 1.10W2A2)*

The expected answer that this student provides in their memorandum further implicates the conflations evident in the materials themselves:

> I would ask her [Caster Semenya] about how she feels when people make bad comments about her. This is because I would like to know how she takes the bad comments from people so that I would know not to do the same thing to other people who are not heterosexual or who are not seen as heterosexuals (extract from 1.10MEMO).

The question of Semenya's sexual identity was not discussed in the media coverage of her athletic career (Greenfield, 2012; Hart, 2009; Yaniv, 2009). Again, it is only in these materials that the issues of biological sex and gender performance have been consolidated to necessitate each other. This conflation, then, suggests the persistence of a hegemonic order: one that sees subversity or nonconformity in biological sex and gender performance as indicators of non-heterosexual identities. And while the student who has designed these materials, along with the attached memorandum, attempts at being inclusive, progressive and accepting of such nonconformity, hegemonic understandings of sex, gender and sexuality still linger and manifest in both their materials and their envisioned responses from the learners who might engage with these materials.

The tenacity of gender and sexual hegemonies emerge throughout many of the materials that have been submitted to this project. In small ways – through sequencing of questions and activities, through the types of texts used, and even through the expected responses from imaginary learners – many of the materials that students from the critical literacy course produced maintain a heteronormative front, or normativity in other ways. However, it might be harsh to label these assignment submissions as being unsatisfactory or problematic given the time frame of the course itself. Instead, these materials reveal how students use critical literacy practices to develop their understandings of sex, gender and sexuality and come to

terms with new ways of thinking about these conventionally sensitive or silenced topics. There is, then, a need for long-term interventions that do not necessarily have to be independent from other higher education or basic and further education curriculums. Instead, the mere inclusion of subversive identities across learning areas would help to fill the silence, while the critical deconstruction of hegemonic order and the privileged identities that exist through it might allow learners and teachers to become not only more inclusive but also more critical of what already has been constructed and accepted as normal. A critical literacy approach to teaching and learning does just that. It helps us to ask the right questions, identify real social issues and then take informed action (Janks, 2010 and 2014).

6.3 Positions and Dispositions: Measuring Students' Materials against their Course Evaluations

In the final lecture session of each of the critical literacy courses, students were asked to answer a set of simple questions that would serve as feedback on their learning experiences during the course itself:

1. What did you learn from this course?
2. Has your personal outlook on sexuality changed? If so, how?
3. As a teacher, has your outlook on issues of sexuality changed? If so, how?

These course 'evaluations' were recorded by the students in the notebooks given to them at the beginning of the course, thus contributing to the data set. It is important to note, however, that these questions were posed to students before the submission of their assignments. The questions, then, allowed students to provide a short response to the course content and my teaching methods before being graded. These responses become revealing, when measured against the materials that these

students eventually produced, of students' positions toward critical literacy and issues related to sex, gender, sexuality, or any of the conflations between them. That is, students had the opportunity to claim whether they saw relevance in a critical literacy approach toward teaching and learning, and furthermore whether the controversial issues related to sex, gender or sexuality can be seen to have a place in the language classroom. In this section, then, I am interested in understanding whether and how students' perceptions of sex, gender and sexuality have been claimed, and how this might be instantiated in the very materials they have designed.

This means measuring students' evaluations against some of their material design choices. In comparing what students say they understand about the critical literacy course content and the choices they make when designing educational materials, I will be able to examine the consistencies and disparities between claims and praxis. That is, if students claim to be comfortable with teaching controversial issues and using subversive texts in the classroom but only use 'safe' texts that deal with normative gender binaries it might become reasonable to assume that their approach has not changed much, if at all. Alternatively, if students claim to be uncomfortable or unsure about dealing with issues of sex, gender or sexuality and choose 'safe' texts in their materials, then there is a consistency between what they say and what they do. While this second scenario might also not indicate a changed perception, it still becomes important for understanding the extent to which the critical literacy course, and perhaps the approach itself, has worked to transform understanding and teaching practice.

To begin, then, it is useful to consider the range of responses or evaluations that the students wrote in their notebooks. The figure below, Figure 18 (page 300), plots these evaluations on a broad continuum: From evaluations that describe issues

of sex, gender and sexuality as being possibly irrelevant to language education; to responses that teem with uncertainty and fear; to claims that issues related to sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them need to be addressed in classrooms using the discourses and practices of critical literacy. Each extract comes directly from the respective student's notebook and illustrates their main claims or positions in relation to the evaluation questions that were posed to them.

Therefore, while students' responses illustrate a variety of understandings and approaches, they also signify three overarching positions or, what I call, scenarios: one, that critical literacy has value for addressing controversial issues in the classroom; two, that controversial issues are difficult to teach and that despite the course students still feel uncomfortable, unsure or resistant when faced with these sensitive topics; and, three, that the relevance of controversial issues such as sex, gender or sexuality in the language classroom is questionable or remains moot because of a sense that such issues are unsolvable. These positions have been represented as shaded areas on the continuum in Figure 6.17.

In Figure 6.17 I have also outlined those students whose evaluations and materials illustrate each of the above main scenarios on the continuum. For each evaluation that can be seen on the continuum there is a set of materials that can be considered in order to explore how students' perceptions have or have not been transformed through the critical literacy course and how this manifests in the materials themselves. Each set of materials has been reproduced in Appendix 4 for easy reference.

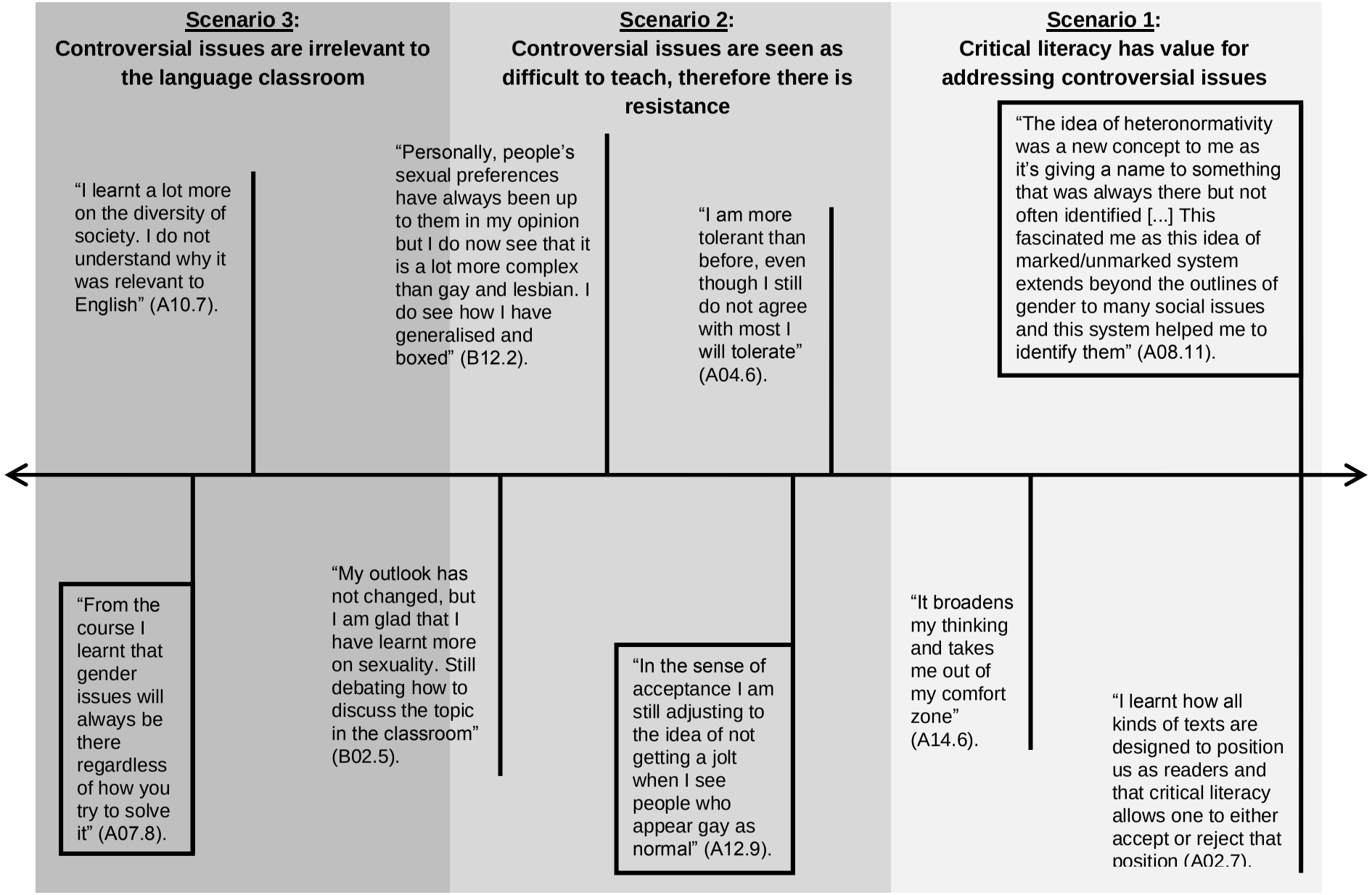


Figure 6.17: *Course Evaluation Continuum*

Scenario 1, which includes the first course evaluation (extract A08.11 in Figure 6.17) as well as data set 1.18 in Appendix 4, is an example of a position that sees value in critical literacy. It is easy to see that this particular student identifies the ability to name issues as a significant part of the critical literacy process. This draws on Janks' (2014) first move and thus gives importance to the ability to *see* social issues as they manifest in different texts and contexts. That is, by naming heteronormativity, one is then able to see and identify heteronormative practices in the world around them. The unmarked norm thus becomes marked by that name. Furthermore, because the "idea of the marked/unmarked system extends beyond the outlines of gender to many social issues" (extract from A08.11) this student also seems to recognise how critical literacy can be used to identify and address a vast range of social issues.

This also resonates with Gramsci's (1975/1992, 232) note on "Engels' very appropriate observation that even 'modes' of thinking are acquired and not innate traits", and that the ability to identify social issues and their textual manifestations comes from, in this scenario, an engagement with the course content. This looks promising because this student's claim to critical literacy echoes critical literacy practice using the right discourses. However, it is in the measurement of this claim against the materials that this student has produced that reveals whether or not this student has been able to *act* from their stated position. This means that because learning involves not only being a recipient of knowledge but also a participant (Biggs, 2003), any acquisition of the right 'modes of thinking' must be evident in the material designs that this student has produced.

However, the materials that have been produced (see Appendix 4.1: data set 1.18) seem to focus on gender as a safe topic. That is, despite this student's ability to

follow and apply Janks' (2014) 5 moves for critical literacy practice, the materials still play it safe by focusing on traditional gender binaries that are not necessarily subversive. For example, even with the use of Greenfield's (2012) article on Caster Semenya and gender testing in sports, there are no questions related to intersexed identities. In this way, the common male-female and masculine-feminine binaries are maintained, ignoring the range of possibilities for both sexed and gendered identities. Instead, these materials work toward deconstructing only normative gender performance. Again, while this is not entirely problematic, it is also not entirely sufficient when considered in relation to the course content and my use of the Identity Gem model (refer to Figure 2.2, Chapter 2.3, on page 58 of this report). This set of materials still suggests that the student has avoided territories that might be deemed too 'queer', and therefore too controversial.

There is, then, a gap between what the student claims to know and value in critical literacy and the kinds of design choices they made during the production of the materials. This gap, or contradiction, is particularly evident in the contrast between the material's safe design and the student's sophisticated discussion in the rationale component of their assignment:

> As previously stated, gender and sexuality is a hugely important issue [for] teachers and learners to deal with as they are exposed to it every day. If learners do not understand the issue, they are likely to parrot ignorant and hurtful views without understanding the impact they have on other people. By discussing this issue, learners are not only taught tolerance and acceptance for the views and beliefs of others, they also learn not to police themselves in accordance with what others say and therefore express themselves in whatever ways they feel later on in life without fear of not being "normal". The discussion of these issues in the classroom is the first step in breaking down the norms and

> conventions which dictate [society's] narrow views which, in turn, is the first step to creating an all-inclusive generation which does not draw lines based on issues of gender and sexuality (parentheses added: extract from 1.18).

It is useful to quote this discussion in length because it helps to illustrate this student's overall understanding of critical literacy practices. In isolation, this discussion can be commended for its sophistication. However, when viewed next to the materials that this student has produced, it becomes easy to see that despite all the claims that have been made about the need to address issues related to sexuality and gender identity, the student has not necessarily moved beyond traditional, hegemonic frameworks for understanding and representing gender itself.

The gap between the student's claimed position and the materials therefore also begins to highlight some of the internal discrepancies in the student's writing about critical literacy and sensitive topics. Very often, this student refers to the issues related to sex, gender and sexuality as a singular issue. To illustrate this, refer back to the extract above (data set 1.18) and note the following expressions:

- "gender and sexuality *is* a hugely important issue";
- "they are exposed to *it* everyday"; and
- "by discussing *this* issue" (extracts from 1.18).

This student's use of singular verbs and pronouns suggests that the many issues that relate to sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them are monolithic. This kind of language use indicates how the categories of sex, gender and sexuality are still perceived as parts of a whole: always interconnected but never separate. Such a viewpoint might even account for how this student's materials do not move beyond normative gender performance, because in deconstructing gender it has been

perceived that sexuality has automatically been addressed. Instead, sex, gender and sexuality are only related, in problematic ways, through the conflations between them. Each category is used in different ways to represent the other, to the extent that they have become a singular, essentialised issue. This can be seen in the spaces between each of these categories or continua on my Identity Gem model, where it is easy to see that patriarchal and heteronormative power relations exist in the conflations between sex, gender and sexuality. By not sufficiently separating each of these categories from each other, it becomes difficult to see the points of conflation and easy to reproduce the very hegemonic structures we are trying to resist.

However, it is also possible to read the gaps and internal discrepancies in students' work as consequences of the structure of the critical literacy course itself. In my own writing, speaking and teaching, I have often used the phrase "issues of sex, gender *and* sexuality" without necessarily and sufficiently separating each category from the other. This comes as a result of my own concern, and perhaps fixation, on conflations and the issues that arise from them: From textual representation, to ways of being, to the social issues that plague South African (and global) contexts. Therefore, a review of the course and the workbook it is based on is in order. In this review, each category would need to be fully deconstructed before addressing the conflations and intersections between them.

Scenario 2 (extract A12.9 in Figure 6.17) suggests a different relationship between how students have positioned themselves and the kind of materials they have produced. In this example, one student identifies as uncertain and in the process of "adjusting" (A12.9) which is reinforced by the set of materials they have designed (see Appendix 4.2: data set 1.22). That is, the focus that this set of

materials has on gender performance through ‘accessories’ on the first two pages can be justified by the student’s claim that they are unsure about how to confront issues of sex, gender or sexuality. On some level this is comparable with the ways in which the previously discussed set of materials focused on gender identities, but with a single clear difference: this student has also designed activities that help learners to deconstruct gender categories before moving onto more controversial territories.

In the activities following the deconstruction of normative gender identities, the student attempts to deal with the ways in which gender performance is sometimes used to make sexual identity visible in social spheres. That is, there is a meaningful shift from activities that help learners think about and organise their ideas about gender and gender performance through the use of accessories to more subversive ways of using gender to represent sexual identities across contexts. By using a dialogue extract that illustrates a conversation about a young man who dyed his hair orange (see data set 1.22W2A4 in Appendix 4.2) as a way of ‘coming-out’ as gay, as well as considering the use of cultural accessories in Africa’s first traditional Zulu gay wedding (Magee, 2013), this student shows that despite their uncertainty they are willing to explore controversial issues and texts. And, while some of the questions related to the texts they have chosen do sometimes essentialise the connections between gender performance and making sexual identity visible, the attempt that this student makes at unpacking these issues is valuable.

While there is still potential for this set of materials to be developed further and refined, it may still work well as a way to begin conversations about sensitive topics in the classroom. Joint efforts between teachers and learners might help to develop the conversation into more meaningful social action, or at the very least an interrogation of social norms.

Finally, scenario 3 (see extract A07.8 on Figure 6.17) involves a student who did not see relevance in dealing with issues of sex, gender or sexuality in the classroom. This is conveyed in this student's understanding that "gender issues will always be there regardless of how you try to solve it" (extract from A07.8). Such an understanding seems to exhibit an air of pointlessness: that regardless of our efforts, there will never be a solution, thus rendering those efforts moot.

Again, this student's understanding of critical literacy as well as issues related to sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them become apparent in the design choices that this student has made when constructing materials (see Appendix 4.3: data set 1.21). From activities that involve filling-in the missing word to read-recall comprehension-type exercises, the materials that have been produced seem less than critical. On one hand, many of the questions that have been asked elicit opinion-based answers:

- Should people of the same sex be permitted to get married? Why/why not[?] (1.21W2A3);
- Do you think people spend too much on weddings? Why does it cost so much?
  Do you think marriage should be for life? Why/why not?
  Is marriage too old fashioned to survive in [the] 21st century?
  (1.21W2A4);
- Write a diary entry about what you think about this marriage? Is it correct or does it go against your beliefs (1-2 pages)
  Make a poster and state if you support the decision or are against it (listing reason on the poster) (1.21W4A8).

As I have discussed in section 6.2.5 of this chapter, under the heading *The Hypothetical and the Opinionated*, questions that elicit opinions from learners might be useful to a point. However, they also ignore how opinions themselves can be

sexist, heterosexist or even phobic. In these situations, what moral yard-stick should be used to determine which opinions can be regarded as socially just or fair? It becomes difficult, then, to develop critical literacy practices and ways of thinking when learners are not always pushed to engage with ideas beyond their own opinions.

On the other hand, some of the questions above are useful for engaging learners and attending to their interests. This is especially evident in questions such as “Do you think marriage should be for life?” or even “Is marriage too old fashioned to survive in [the] 21st century?” (extracts from 1.21W2A4). These particular questions ask learners to evaluate what they already think about marriage, even if only from learners’ own opinions. If these were followed by a question on same-sex marriage in relation to socio-cultural context, these questions would play an important role in getting learners to re-evaluate their initial positions or opinions. However, as it stands, it is the wayward sequencing of the questions, as well as the opinion-based answers that many of them elicit that makes this set of materials less than critical.

It becomes easy to see, then, that when issues of sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them are viewed as unsolvable, critical literacy practice itself becomes near impossible. That is, if one does not see value in deconstructing and transforming texts and the social issues they imply, then deconstruction and transformation themselves become impossible. Instead, only superficial, read-recall questions are asked. Like any other approach to teaching and learning, or even worldview, critical literacy requires “not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement” (Freire, 1972, 69) before it can be enacted meaningfully.

What is also important to note is that, on some level, this student’s work can be seen as a criticism of critical literacy itself. From New London Group’s (2000)

concept of (re)design and Janks' (2010a) redesign cycle, it is easy to see why critical literacy practices could be conceived as being pointless. If every design can be redesigned, and then redesigned again and again at infinitum, then perhaps it is safe to say that there is no necessary solution that can be achieved. However, to perceive critical literacy practice as a means toward a singular end suggests that education is itself perceived as being finite. Instead, education is

> concerned with the extent to which, and the ways in which, actual and possible social practices and conceptions of reading and writing enable human subjects to understand and engage the politics of daily life in the quest for a more truly democratic social order (Lankshear and McLaren, 1993, xviii cited in Morgan, 1997, 6).

From critical literacy's Freireian roots emerges an understanding that education itself is not a means to a finite epistemological end. It does not culminate in a final truth claim or omniscience. Instead, education is a process for developing "*conscientizaÇão*" (Freire, 1972, 74). To develop consciousness of the hegemonic structures and instruments around us so that we may learn to position ourselves rather than be positioned by social norms and conventions, unjust power relations or even misrepresentations of our own identities. A critical literacy agenda means growing agency and the capacity for change. That is,

> it makes possible a more adequate and accurate 'reading' of the world, on the basis of which, as Freire and others put it, people can enter into 'rewriting' the world into a formation in which their interests, identities and legitimate aspirations are more fully present and are present more equally (Lankshear and McLaren, 1993, xviii cited in Morgan, 1997, 6).

In this sense, the cycles we follow in order to redesign the material world are just concrete methods to be used in order to develop this consciousness. Therefore, it is not only important to share information in the classroom, but also to engage in critical

skills development through praxis and social action as well as see the classroom as a space for writing oneself into the world in more socially just ways.

The positions that students claimed in their course evaluations thus illustrate a range of responses to critical literacy and its practices, as well as issues of sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them. Their materials, thereafter, functioned as the manifestation of those positions. Therefore, throughout the materials that were submitted to this research project, students' design choices, question types, choice of texts, selection and sequencing of topics and activities were informed by the values and ideologies that they claimed. This has resulted in the three main scenarios that can be seen in Figure 6.17. Each scenario is defined by the kinds of claims that students made in relation to critical literacy and controversial topics as well as the kinds of materials that they produced. The connections between students' positions and their design choices thus help to illustrate how students have or have not transformed their thinking or practice throughout the critical literacy course. In some cases, students' reservations about dealing with controversial issues limited their design choices, while in other cases even a position of uncertainty manifested as critical, subversive materials and activities.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendations: Endings and Beginnings

Type the phrase ‘sexual orientation’ into the Google search bar and click on the magnifying glass to begin. As expected, a list of online entries appears, each related to the ‘sexual orientation’ search phrase. Definitions, Wiki-entries, and a variety of expert explanations on sexual orientation fill the screen. Scroll down to the end, however, and take note of the list of suggested searches:

Searches related to sexual orientation

sexual activities

sexual orientation types

sexual orientation test

sexual orientation straight

sexual orientation list

klein sexual orientation grid

sexual orientation quiz

sexual orientation straight means (Google.com, retrieved 9/09/2014).

On September 8th, 2014, my eye was drawn to the link ‘sexual orientation test’, and my exploration of Google search entries and the websites they connect to led me to an online resource for measuring one’s sexual orientation, sexual drive and sexual flexibility. This is Epstein’s (2014) *The Ultimate Sexual Orientation Test: Straight, Gay, or In Between?*

The test itself is comprised of eighteen questions: nine on same-sex attraction and nine on opposite-sex attraction, each with a selection of simple yes, no and maybe multiple choice answers (Epstein, 2014). After my first attempt at the test, my results showed that I was unquestionably homosexual. After the second attempt, I emerged unquestionably heterosexual, while a third attempt registered me as

heterosexual but with the potential for some same-sex desire. Each set of test results appeared to me as a set of coloured bars on the 'sexual orientation continuum' (Epstein, 2014):

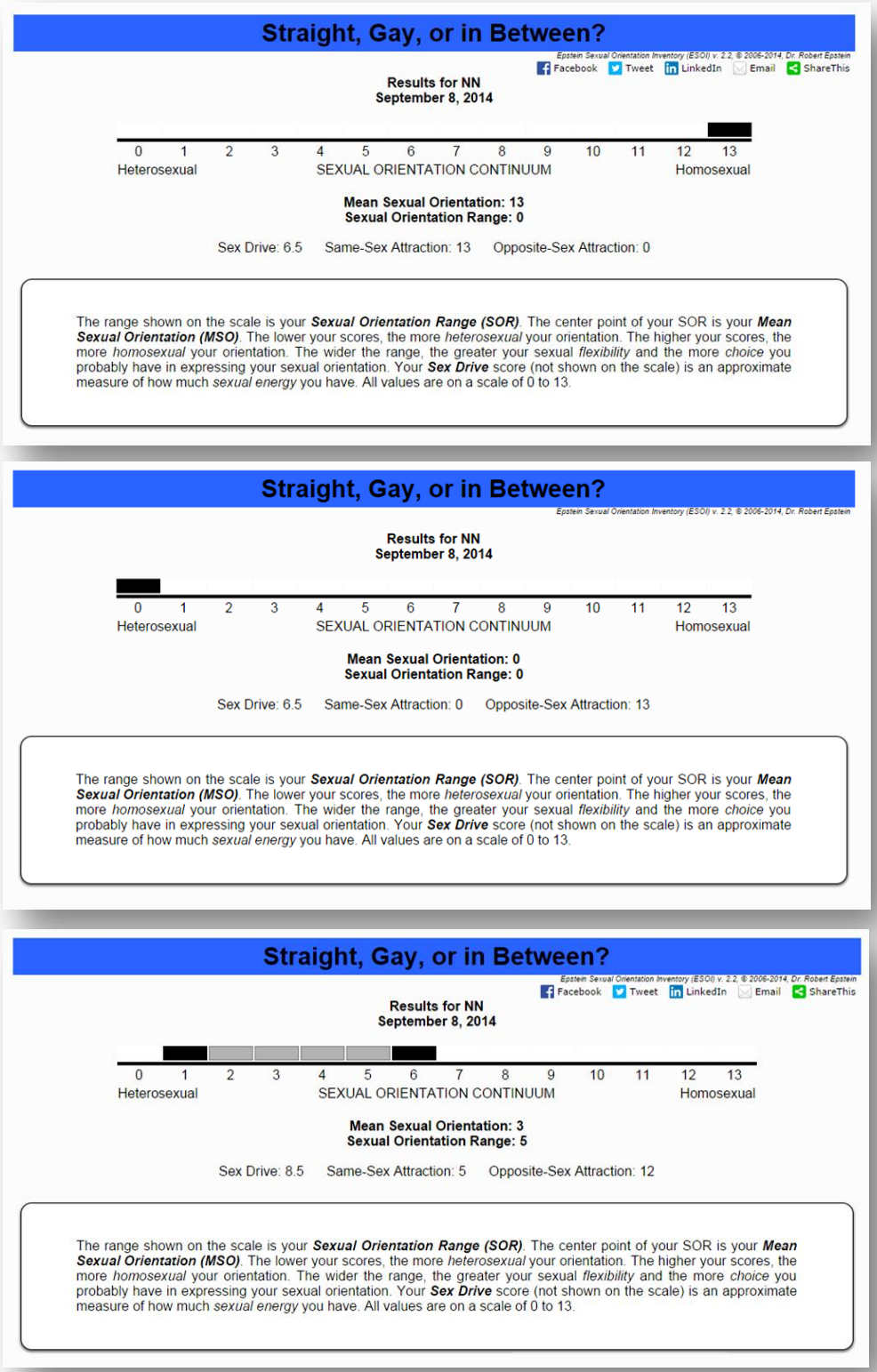


Figure 7.1: *Screenshots of my Results for the Ultimate Sexual Orientation Test*

What is interesting to note is that Epstein (2014) represents sexual orientation on a continuum, with heterosexuality on one end and homosexuality on the other. This, unfortunately, still seems to maintain the heterosexual-homosexual binary – where one can identify as either straight or gay/lesbian with the potential for being 'in-between'. The problem with this kind of representation is that it negates all other identities: from men who have sex with men but who do not identify as gay (Altman et al., 2012), to bisexual identities that are not necessarily bound to binaries of sexuality and that are, furthermore, not identities that can be seen as 'in-between'. The cloud that I use to represent sexual identities in my identity gem model (Figure 2.2 of Chapter 2.3) attempts to address over-simplified representations of sex, gender or sexuality like Epstein's (2014). Linear representations of sexuality, then, pose problematic assumptions.

And, given the questions about sexual desire, fantasies and sexual encounters, the results of the test might seem accurate. However, it is also easy to see how manipulatable the test results can be. The fact that I was able to change my results by answering the questions in different ways suggests that sexuality is still an invisible difference that can be actively closeted. The semiotic and performative ways that many people find to try and represent sexuality, then, also usher in a range of problems: From the essentialisation of sexuality in binary relationships, to the conflations of sexuality with sex or gender which results in stereotypes, misrepresentation and even discrimination.

Negotiating the gendered representations of sexualities, then, requires that sexuality be understood as more complex than conventional understandings allow for. Furthermore, it requires that sexual identity be considered in its relationship with other social categories such as sex, gender, race, class, culture and language. This

negotiation, then, involves exploring sexualities as both normatively represented through social performance as well as ultimately *un*-representable (Butler, 2006). It is the negotiation of language: What words and phrases can be used to express identity? What are the limitations of this language, and how does this influence the ways in which we understand and represent sex, gender and sexuality? And, perhaps most importantly, what kinds of social effects emerge as a result of language use and understanding in different contexts?

This calls for a critical literacy approach to teaching and learning. With evidence that representations of sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them permeate more than just life orientation and even language classrooms (Paechter, 1998; Epstein and Johnson, 1998), the need for a more critical education is justified. This is especially noteworthy in the face of a context, both global and local, that is riddled with homophobia, transphobia, gender-based violence and the everyday policing of identity through text and social interaction (Msibi, 2011 and 2012a; Bhana, 2012; Matebeni, 2011).

And, while a critical approach to education might allow teachers and learners to develop their own social, political and cultural agency, it also allows these agents to confront and address controversial issues:

> In the past we South Africans signalled to each other through our differences – the distinctions of race, sex, colour, creed and religion that separated us. The debate about non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation offers an invitation to us to deal not in this coinage but in something different. We have quarrelled with each other enough in this country. Let us quarrel now rather each with ourself in examining

> our own deepest prejudices (Cameron, 1993, as cited in Christiansen, 2000, 997).

In the face of persistent separatist apartheid discourses and the constant battle toward developing a more meaningful human rights discourse in schools, tackling issues that are often considered controversial might allow teachers and learners not only to critically engage with the world around them, but also with their own ways of dealing with diversity. Critical literacy, then, is not only about the larger political issues of the world, but also about the personal and commonplace interactions and understandings that make individual lives (Janks, 2010a).

In order to engage with the world through a critical literacy approach thus means following a set of steps:

1. Identification,
2. Deconstruction,
3. Disruption, and
4. Transformation.

Each of the above steps draws on Janks' (2014) five moves for designing a critical literacy project in the classroom, New London Group's (2000) notion of (re)design and Janks' (2010a) redesign cycle. However, here it can be considered as both a theoretical framework for understanding critical literacy as well as a tool for practising critical literacy in the classroom.

What is important to note is that I have taken Janks' (2014) five moves and reduced, and reconfigured, them to four. On one hand, this renaming of Janks' (2014) moves for developing a critical literacy project in the classroom enables critical literacy to be seen as both a theoretical framework and a framework for classroom practice. On the other hand, while it may seem that reducing this framework to four steps neglects or underestimates the role of research in a critical literacy process, it

is not actually the case. Instead, I see research and the interrogation of information as ongoing throughout any critical literacy project. That is, access to a range of information sources is required, and should be inherent, in each of the steps stated above (and outlined below). Without such knowledge, teachers and learners would be restricted to the realm of uninformed opinion and hearsay. A critical approach to teaching and learning, by its very nature, should oppose this by enabling learners and developing their skill to access authentic and valid information.

But, every process begins with a first step. In this case, as in Janks' (2014), the first step requires that a norm or social issue be identified. While norms and their origins sometimes seem to be hidden from sight, they are still identifiable in common social behaviours, unquestioned roles, and especially in social institutions that hold 'value'. This can be found in the world all around: from religious spaces and people to the mass production of binarised toilet signs and diapers, social norms become manifest in the discourses of everyday life. Identifying those norms, then, involves seeing, naming and teasing out the different discourses, texts and ideologies of the world in even the smallest places and most mundane practices.

And while identifying a norm might seem easily done, it is usually only when a norm is resisted that it becomes apparent. That is, it is when representations misrepresent people and are met with disagreement that a norm becomes more visible as an instrument of power. For those who do not fit into the boxes that hegemony constructs and maintains, resistance is easy. However, it is just as important for those who do identify with their socio-cultural norms and hegemonies to be able to see how these norms help to construct, objectify and perhaps even subordinate them as well. This requires being critical of our own subject positions in relation to time and place, no matter how normal, natural, right or ordinary we may

seem. And, in order to do this, we as teachers and learners need to become conscious of the workings of everyday, commonsensical texts, representations, and uses of language. This means that teachers and learners need to engage with their contexts and the hegemonic ideologies under which they function, at both the levels of materiality (text) and epistemology (knowledge). Each of these can be understood as semiotic or discursive modes through which normativity becomes manifest (Hall, 1997) and regulated.

In the case of the critical literacy course and my own research interests, it has been the problematic representation of sexual diversity that led into an inquiry of how sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them function through a hegemonic heteronormativity. Again, however, it is my own 'nonconformist' and marginalised subject position and the resulting awareness of heteronormative representations that has allowed me to identify both heteronormativity and various gender hegemonies as the norms to be questioned. However, it is also this very subject position that has, from a critical literacy perspective, required me to step out of my own shoes and interrogate the ideologies that I have come to agree with as well.

Once identified, the norm then needs to be deconstructed. In many ways, this entails asking questions about the everyday representations that surround us whilst maintaining a human rights agenda:

> Part of the work of critical literacy is to make these workings of power visible, to denaturalise 'common sense' assumptions (Gramsci, 1971) and to reveal them as constructed representations of the social order, serving the interests of some at the expense of others (original parenthesis: Janks, 2010a, 36).

The deconstruction, or even denaturalisation, of norms and normative representations means critically analysing them in order to understand how they work and what comprises them: Who gets to be represented? How are they represented? What representations are common across texts, contexts and histories? What does this suggest about the communities that see and use these texts? By teasing out the ideological workings of normative texts, it might be possible to untangle hegemonic structures themselves and begin to understand what the criteria are for being socially acceptable in a given time and place. Whether this is in relation to identities of sex, gender or sexuality, or even race, class, age and religious affiliation, deconstructing the norm picks apart at the taken-for-granted texts that actually reproduce and maintain a particular social order. The unquestioned acceptance of these texts allows hegemonic discourses and institutions to maintain their status as 'natural' and fixed. Critical literacy, however, is more interested in revealing hegemony as constructed.

The third step in developing a critical literacy approach to teaching and learning, disrupting norms, involves finding and deconstructing subversive texts.
It is a shift from studying and interrogating the dominant form or social norm and how it creates relations of power-marginalisation to an inquiry into alternative representations (for example Kumashiro, 2002; Janks, 2014): from Black South Africans who identify or are labelled as 'coconuts', a term that subverts normative racial performance in relation to language use and accent; to drag artists who subvert normative gender hegemonies in theatrical ways; to the role of accent in disrupting our assumptions about class-linguistic relations. In each case, the subversive is useful in its ability to reveal the constructedness of normative social practice and discursive representation. That is, the use of subversive texts encourages teachers and learners to displace normative discourses so that it becomes apparent that those

very discourses are insufficient and marginalising. The subversive, then, becomes a place of exploration and destabilisation, whilst extending our gaze outward and onward beyond what is traditionally visible – especially in school settings. The identities often ignored, even in much critical practice and theory, have a place in social understandings of how identity is performed, read, normalised, and sometimes even persecuted.

The use of subversive texts thus means that teachers and learners can explore representations of identity beyond the bounds of the established norms while placing the reality of the hegemonic form under question. It is, then, the exploration of already redesigned texts that resist normative constructions of sex, gender or sexuality, so that

> [w]hen such categories come into question, the reality of gender [or sex, or sexuality] is also put into crisis: it becomes unclear how to distinguish the real from the unreal. And this is the occasion in which we come to understand that what we take to be "real", what we invoke as the naturalized knowledge of gender is, in fact, a changeable and revisable reality (original emphasis: Butler, 2006, xxiv).

However, resisting hegemonic binaries often involves constructing an identity or representation that switches the binary around instead of re-imagining it. For instance, consider my previous discussion about hypothetical subject 'V' in the literature review (Chapter 2.3), where V performs masculinity in order to defy feminine hegemonies. Even in resistance, hegemony sometimes allows the imagination to become limited to normative binaries anyway. Exploring subversive texts might allow critical literacy practitioners to see beyond the walls of hegemonic-marginalised binaries and into a more vast space for identity formation and representation by placing truth, tradition, norms and 'nature' into crisis.

However, I imagine that it is this third step that teachers and possibly even learners might meet with uncertainty or suspicion because of the controversial nature of subversion. This is also because subversive texts have the potential to shake even the most convincing and steadfast subject positions. The third step in my critical literacy process, then, requires that teachers and learners deal with difficult conversations in the classroom. Only then will commonsensical and taken-for-granted structures and ideas be truly deconstructed and disrupted, making space for infinite possibility in transformation, (re)design and (re)imagination. Subversion, then, can be used to expand imagination, break down socio-cultural boundaries and develop a critical social agency.

Finally, the fourth step involves action through transformative work. This builds on New London Group's (2000) concept of (re)design as well as Janks' (2010a) redesign cycle to include material and discursive (re)design as well as conceptual (re)imaginings. That is, not only would this step encourage that learners materially and discursively transform the ways in which their identities, their world, and their relationships are represented; but it also means that learners transform their understandings of social systems and the power they hold. Such shifts in understanding might encourage a change of behaviour, a change in interaction with the world and its people in all their diversity. This is particularly important in South Africa and other increasingly more globalised contexts, where diversity has become intrinsic to personal, local, regional, and national identity as well as everyday experience.

It is important to note that while I have identified four distinct steps, approaching teaching and learning from a critical literacy perspective also means that the actual praxis of these four steps might not necessarily happen in the order in

which they are presented. The steps, then, are interrelated. They provide a guideline for practising critical literacy in the classroom: Teachers might begin with identifying a concept that is then deconstructed and disrupted; or learners might identify a problematic text first; or a subversive text may be taken as the starting point for interrogating normativity; or perhaps it is a learner's (re)design that gets put up for interrogation. However, it is the inclusion of all four steps that, I believe, makes the process fully critical; allowing for the exploration of dominant and subordinate perspectives with the aim of transforming how we understand social systems and the power relations inherent in them.

The following table outlines the kinds of questions that need to be asked at each stage in the critical literacy framework. It is also a tool for analysing one's practices in the classroom, or even during the designing of educational materials. The second column in the table asks a number of critical questions that are pertinent for each step of the critical literacy process, with space in the third column for teachers to note the answers they find in relation to those questions. This tool, then, should help in conceptualising and recording what actually happens when engaging with the four steps in relation to any particular norm or social issue:

	Criteria:	Own practice/ Text analysis:
Identification	<u>What can be seen?</u> What discursive representation or concept is being dealt with? What norm has been instantiated in the text? Can the norm be named? What ideology does this represent? Can it be named? Where and when has the text been produced and found?	
Deconstruction	<u>How has the norm been defined?</u> What constitutes a definition? Whose definition counts? How do different cultures, languages, contexts, eras or perspectives define the norm? Whose interests are being served? Can the privileged group be named? What is the history of the norm? <u>What is the grammar of power?</u> What modes have been used to represent the norm? (For example: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, performance, etc.) What linguistic devices have been used to express or reinforce the norm? (For example: hyperbole, metonymy, metaphor, etc.) What textual features are repeated across a range of texts? What are the criteria for fulfilling the norm? What marks the norm? What in-groups and out-groups are created by this? <u>What are the consequences?</u> How is the norm learnt? How does it influence behaviour, opinion, understanding, assumption? How does the norm compare to lived experiences?	
Disruption	<u>What is the grammar of subversion?</u> What makes a text subversive? What are the criteria for identifying subversion? What modes have been used to represent subversion, and how? (For example: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, performance, etc.) What linguistic devices have been used to express subversion? (For example: parody, satire) What are the different forms that subversion can take? <u>Are subversive designs/representations of the norm available?</u> How easily available are they? Where can subversion be found? Why? Who produces subversive representations? Why? What does the subversive form reveal about the norm itself? In what ways does subversion resist normativity? In what ways does it reproduce or maintain normativity?	
Transformation	<u>What counts as social action and social transformation?</u> What projects for design, redesign or social participation/action can be constructed? How can norms be redefined or reconceptualised? How can the texts and systems of knowledge that have originally been identified be looked at differently or changed? <u>What is the grammar of redesign?</u> What decisions have had to be made to transform the text or norm? What new relations of power exist? Who does the new text serve? Who is left disempowered? What modes of representation and linguistic devices were used for the redesign? Why?	

Table 7.1: *A Four Step Framework for Critical Literacy*

Whether issues related to sex, gender, sexuality, race, age, or even class need to be tackled in the classroom, it still becomes important to reflect on the questions and practices that teachers and learners engage in. Table 7.1, above, aids in this reflection process by asking critical literacy practitioners to always interrogate not only the ways in which texts have been constructed, but also the kinds of social impact that can be had from actively participating in the transformation of those texts.

Throughout this research project, I have attempted to explore issues of representation in relation to sex, gender, sexuality and the conflations between them. However, and just as importantly, I have also tried to engage in these topics by adopting a critical literacy approach. From the design and teaching of the workbook and the course to the design and implementation of the actual research project, critical literacy practice has been the main medium through which I have begun my own negotiations of the gendered representations of sexualities.

From a research perspective, critical literacy has allowed me to identify, deconstruct, disrupt and even transform how sex, gender and sexuality can be understood and dealt with through representation. This comes as a result of working in three main fields: Firstly, critical discourse analysis has provided tools and frameworks for reading social issues and engaging in critical literacy practice. Specifically, Fairclough's (1989) model for critical discourse analysis, a model on which this study has been plotted, has been useful for analysing texts for the course, developing teaching materials and questions. It has also been useful as a tool for analysing the responses that students gave during the course and the material designs they produced for the course assignment. Secondly, Gramsci's (1975/1992 and 1975/1996) notion's on hegemony has allowed me to consider not only base-superstructure power relations, but also how power works in everyday life.

Furthermore, it has allowed me to see the social and cultural instantiations of those power relations in the world around me. Finally, the myriad of feminists, queer theorists and studies on masculinities have informed the theoretical framework for this project. Here, theories of power, sex, gender and sexuality, as well as critical theory, pedagogy and literacy practices have been combined to develop tools for analysis and ways of engaging with controversial issues in the classroom.

Over and above these uses, however, it has been particularly useful working at the intersection between these three fields. At their meeting point has emerged the *Identity Gem* model. This is a complex new understanding of how the categories of sex, gender and sexuality can be conceptualised as individual categories of identities, as well as how power resides in the conflations between them. These conflations are apparent in performance: how one category is often used to represent the other, resulting in popular fallacies and self-regulating subjects. As such, the identity gem model represents how normative identity categories can be disrupted in order to reveal the workings of hegemonic social orders within them. Furthermore, this model attempts to provide a holistic view of the different schools within the fields of sex, gender and sexuality. That is, it helps us to see the relationships between theories in these fields, as work in these fields often seem scattered and positioned as oppositional to one another.

From a more practical and pedagogical perspective, however, this study has also explored critical literacy as a social practice of teaching and learning through materials design, the issues that emerge when addressing sensitive topics in classrooms, teacher-education and even models for implementing a critical literacy approach in schools. From the theoretical to the pragmatic, adopting critical literacy as a means for engaging with the world has enabled the transformation of ideas,

norms and understandings, as well as possible transformations in teaching practice, teacher and learner education and representation (from normative, to marginalised, to the silenced subversive).

Each data chapter has thus contributed something different to the overall argument of this research paper. In chapter four, the design of the workbook was explored to reveal the processes involved in conceptualising a critical literacy curriculum that deals with difficult conversations in the classroom. This has worked across semiotic modes, and has illuminated the need for a constant critical reflexivity in both teacher and learner education. That is, even materials and approaches that profess to be critical need to undergo constant evaluation, deconstruction and reconstruction. From this material design comes chapter five, which focuses on the implementation of the workbook. Here, student-teacher's responses, my own pedagogical decisions and the efficacy of my designs have been put under scrutiny. The discourses that arose from diversity in the classroom have revealed how semiotics function in the construction and reconstruction of what is often taken as truth, commonsense and nature. It has allowed me to reflect on the representations I have used in the course, the representations I have neglected, and the issues that emerge as a result of how I have represented myself when teaching the course. Classrooms, it would seem, are spaces for meaning-making in more ways than that which the teacher intends.

Finally, in chapter six, students' own material designs have been considered: from the construction of a task for measuring critical engagement with sensitive topics, to pervading design trends across the body of data, to the measurement of students' claims and positions in relation their actual practice in the assignment. Students' materials not only reflect the discourses in chapter five, but also the ways

in which discourses change over time. In many cases, the idea of ‘coming-to-terms’ with change and disruption has been evident, illustrating how students’ use of language across modes might be seen as the material discursive manifestations of their changing ideas and ways of representing. If a critical education means learning, unlearning and relearning, then consideration must be given to how students, teachers and learners exist and make meaning during the in-between phases of those processes. It is, almost, the ability to see ideas change, settle and change again through the very products that emerge from critical literacy practice, and then to value these products as part of life-long learning.

Perhaps, then, to negotiate also means to critically navigate. Turning back to Epstein’s (2014) sexual orientation continuum, it is easy to see how everyday texts try to position readers into particular ways of reading, writing, thinking, being and behaving (Gee, 1989). It is also important to note how easy it was to come across these texts. Without the skills and understandings that critical literacy helps to develop, confronting such everyday texts might also mean succumbing to them and the hegemonic ideologies that they maintain or reproduce. Without such skills for resistance, perhaps marginalised identities will remain peripheral to problematic commonsense ideas and representations. And, even more so, the subversive will remain silenced and invisible, negating its value in expanding imagination and the possibilities for seeing diversity as a resource.

The future of critical literacy thus holds promise. In relation to this study, a revision of the workbook needs to be followed by a more diverse implementation: in more teacher-education curriculums, in schools with learners across different grades and learning areas, and possibly in in-service teacher development programmes. Each new application of the workbook, and critical literacy, might reveal more and

more the possibilities for developing more critical and analytic teachers, learners and communities. It is in these people that education, social agency and power resides, and it is the role of critical literacy to develop the insight needed in order to grasp this. As one student wrote in their notebook:

> The idea of bringing these kinds of issues up with a S.P. [senior primary?] class has always frightened me. However, these are the things children are exposed to every day and I now see the value of these discussions. If children are exposed to this without fully understanding things, they could develop ideas that are damaging to themselves and society. Opening their minds to other ideas and viewpoints, helping them to analyse things happening around them is an important skill that can only help them later in life (extract from A08.11).

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