

MOVING TOWARDS A PARRHESIASTIC PEDAGOGY

by
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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, ‘Moving towards a parrhesiastic pedagogy’, explores the relationship between experience, social power and transformation through a Foucauldian (1972, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000a, 2002c) discursive analysis of the author’s coming out journal. As a critical autoethnographic (Reed-Danahay 1997) study, it examines how the dominant discourses of the journal construct versions of sex, sexuality and gender that simultaneously enable and constrain multiple positions of subjectivity (Butler 1997b; Davies 1991).

This investigation into the nexus of power, discourse and the construction of the self is an important vehicle to advance critical and feminist pedagogy’s agenda towards promoting individual social change and transformation (Taylor & Vintages 2004). The thesis explores how agency results from a critical reflexivity that examines the practices of self-constitution within/against (Lather 1991) dominant discourses and their concomitant relations of power. Analysing the strategies and techniques that are invoked to both sustain and resist the play of these relations maximises capacity for transformation and change (Foucault 2002c; Poster 1989).

The aim of the discourse analysis is to uncover and dissect discursive conventions and make apparent the partiality and situatedness of language and knowledge production. This will involve understanding the frames and boundaries that discourses establish around what can be considered as knowledge; how these knowledge systems construct normalising effects, creating fictions of truth that appear natural and unquestionable; the techniques through which the self is induced to govern itself and comply with these normalising ideas, and the ways in which the self is never fully subsumed within discourse, always refusing to be fully determined. A view of poststructural agency is constructed for educational practice that facilitates a critical ontology of subjectivity within parrhesiastic (McLaren 2002; O’Leary 2002) moments that disturb dominant versions of truth/knowledge/self practices (Foucault 1993, 1998, 2000; Gore 1993, 2002; O’Leary 2002; Tamboukou 2003).

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Introduction

1.1 Overview of the research study

The research of this thesis is a critical autoethnographic (Denzin & Lincoln 2002; Reed-Danahay 1997) and Foucauldian (1995, 1998, 2002c) discursive study into my coming out as a gay man. The primary text for the discursive analysis is a journal that was kept at this time. As an autobiographical document that focuses on social change and transformation, being written in the quest for agency, the coming out journal is significant. It is an ethnographic record of the construction of subjectivity within a range of discourses that compete to establish relations of power. It also provides a record of how the self was involved in simultaneously complying with and resisting these power relations. The research inquires into how the self of the coming out journal was constructed within dominant discursive frames, as well as analysing how the self did not succumb to the power of discursive narratives and practices. The research therefore theorises resistance and survival from marginal and subjugated voices (Butler 1990, 1997b; Foucault 1995, 1998, 2002c).

The research discursively analyses the coming out journal text using a combination of Foucault's genealogical method (Carrabine 2001; Tamboukou 2003; Tamboukou & Ball 2003) and constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002). A thematic/category analysis of the coming out journal leads to the construction of five prominent discourses that are used to inquire into the effects of normalising practices and regimes of truth on the construction of subjectivity, with a particular focus on sex, gender and sexuality (Foucault 1995).

In examining the effects of the five discourses on the construction of subjectivity, the aim of the analysis is to uncover and dissect discursive conventions and make apparent the partiality, situatedness and historicity of language and knowledge production. The discursive analysis will inquire into the hegemonic and subjugated knowledges of the journal and their multiple layers of meaning (Kamler 2001). Frameworks that influenced

the constitution of sex, gender and sexuality, and the strategies and techniques that were used by the self in governing and resisting such constitution, also forms a primary interest of the study. The research will investigate the ways in which some practices that were intended to increase freedom, such as liberation of an essential sexuality and the discovery of a true self, actually increased domination and normalisation (Foucault 1998; Gore 1993; McLaren 2002).

Sex, gender and sexuality are seen as effects of specific formations of power and discourse (Butler 1999). As a genealogical inquiry, the research does not seek to establish the origin of gender, the inner truth of same sex desire, or an authentic gay sexuality, that has been repressed. As a genealogical inquiry the study investigates the consequences of designating as an origin and cause, those identity categories such as gay, man, masculine and feminine. These categories are seen as effects of institutions, practices and discourses. The aim of the inquiry is to decentre the ways in which gay, man, masculine and feminine construct the subjectivities of the subject of the coming out journal. The construction of the five dominant discourses is not carried out within a hermeneutical ontology of finding the 'deep truth hidden by everyday practices ... the recovering of man's unnoticed everyday self-interpretation' (Dreyfuss & Rabinow 1983, xxii, xxiii). The aim of the research is to reposition the site of struggle – moving away from individuality and towards the discourses that individuality constructs. The thesis therefore works against the humanist desire to maintain a unified subject position (Britzman 2000). In researching the way in which language itself produces the fictions of sex, gender and sexuality and supports various regimes of power, the research methodology assists with the process of theorising the nexus between poststructural thinking and agency (Butler 1999, xxix).

The discourse analysis therefore looks at how the self is tied to a particular identity with respect to self knowledge producing a particular kind of subjectivity where

Theories and rules for governing conduct are formed according to an assemblage of historically contingent norms (Martino 2003, p.157).

The subject positions constructed by the five dominant discourses are powerful practices that fashion narrative versions of life events, giving them the appearance of working in a logical and common sense fashion. They affirm, reinforce and even create basic assumptions about culture and human existence such as time, destiny, selfhood, where we come from and what our purpose in life is. The discourses produce a process of individualisation that forms part of a wider practice of self-decipherment where the subject is obliged to examine his desires, thoughts and actions according to the meaning-

making frames of the five discourses (Cranny-Francis 1992, p.185; Gates 1995; Kress 1985; Miller 1995, p.72; O’Leary 2002).

Coming to an understanding of the relationship between the self and the world is not always attuned to the ways in which power masks its involvement in the simulacrum of this understanding. The aim of the research is to undertake a critical inquiry into this process. In carrying out a genealogical analysis of subjectivity, the analysis inquires into how the individual/self of the journal comes to know and contest the boundaries of its own constitution, struggling against subjection ‘against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way’ (Foucault 1983, p.212). The research engages in a process that rewrites the self and the social through constructing maps of the shifting and multiple identities. Matrices of power can be transformed through the processes of re-writing the self (Kamler 2001).

1.2 The fragmented self

This thesis considers feminist poststructural theory useful in its capacity to theorise ‘the relation between language, subjectivity, social organisation and power’ (Weedon 1987, p.12). Grand narratives that are established as solutions and foundations to social problems do not adequately contextualise the duality of people’s lives that are often filled with contradiction, incoherence and inconsistency. Concerned with the way in which individuals make meaning and construct their own subjectivities in relation to the social world around them (Lather 1991), this thesis situates meaning making within an environment of contest and contradiction. This struggle with meaning making necessitates a concern with social power: how it is exercised, how it is governed and how it can be transformed (Davies 1991; Kenway et al. 1994, p.189; Weedon 1987; Wearing 1996).

The theoretical underpinnings of this research stand against the liberal humanist idea of a unitary self, which in coming to know its essence causes a revolutionary conscientisation (Freire 1990), overthrowing oppressive structures and ideas. This thesis is positioned within poststructuralism’s decentering of binary thinking and the rational, unified and transcendental subject that is the lynchpin of a teleological approach to the emancipation of humanity in history. Rather than search for the truth of the self, aiming to know oneself, this thesis sees one’s self or selves, as forever shifting, contradictory, decentred and fragmented, enmeshed within an array of discourses that compete to establish positions of power. Fractured and multiple selves are involved in contestations and games of power

that operate to normalise certain subjectivities and construct them as truth whilst subjugating others (Davies 1991; Healy 2000; Weedon 1987).

The research explores transformation and change from a diasporic positioning (Docker 2001) of multiple and shifting subjectivities rather than in the name of some 'restored immediacy of self and voice' (Lather 2001, p.484). The self of the coming out journal is read and analysed as a construction of discourse and fragmented subjectivities. Positioned within postructuralism, this thesis takes the view that there is no real self to possess. There is no essential self that has been repressed by some condition, person, idea or social structure. If discourse is seen as constructing the subject, if one's conceptual ordering of experience is an effect of discourse, then discourse can be employed to deconstruct the normalised knowledges that 'push one to take up the impossible moral imperatives of policing categories, ensuring boundaries, and attempting to live the promises of a non-contradictory, transcendental self (Ang 1998; Britzman 2000, pp.36-37; Lather 2000, 2001).

1.3 Language and the constitution of the "I"

This research takes the view that language is constitutive of social realities. Meaning cannot be guaranteed by the subject that speaks it.

Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed (Weedon 1987, p.21).

Language constitutes social reality for us, rather than reflecting an already given social reality. The natural world does not have fixed or universal meanings reflected through language. The five discourses of the coming out journal construct dominant sites of subjectivity and are intelligible to the extent that they are established in language (Weedon 1987).

Language is not an external vessel which the self is poured into and then receives a clear and resolute image of its reality and truth. The "I" that confronts the world of language is constituted within its relationship to itself.

In other words, the enabling conditions for an assertion of "I" are provided by the structure of signification, the rules that regulate the legitimate and illegitimate invocation of that pronoun, the practices that establish the terms of intelligibility by which that pronoun can circulate (Butler 1999, p.183).

A central feature of this study is the view that the “I” of any claim for subjectivity is a consequence of the discourses that are available to and govern its invocation. What this means is that you never ‘receive me apart from the grammar that establishes my availability to you’ (Butler 1999, p.xxiv). The “I” is not outside of the language that structures it, but also it is not determined by the language that makes the “I” possible. The invocation of an “I” cannot stand outside of the discursive apparatus which suture its coming into being. The identity of the “I” is asserted through a process of signification in language (Butler 1999).

This has led to the research not being concerned with the fact that the majority of its voice has been positioned within the third person, even though it takes the researcher as the object and subject of its study. Claiming the use of the “I” within the writing of the thesis artefact as an autoethnographic study does not guarantee any greater access to meaning and truth. By refusing to locate the majority of the study’s writing within the first person the research process decenters and deliberately subverts the power of the first person to claim a space, a subject position, of greater legitimacy, depth, richness and more sonorous ways of knowing (Ellis 1997, 1999). Located within the dissonance of text, it reverses the priority of author over text through recognising that the role of the author is a product of discursive function, not a constant through time. The author is a construct whose domain is constantly invaded (Barthes 1986; Foucault 1972; Bouchard 1977, p.21; Smart 2002, pp.49-50).

1.4 The educational agenda of the thesis

Inquiring into the nexus of power, discourse and subjectivity, positions the research within education’s concern with facilitating agency and emancipatory change (Ball 1990). A critically reflexive account of the construction and transformation of subjectivity is well positioned to provide a site for learning about the limitations and possibilities of turning critical thought into emancipatory action. This focus on the day-to-day discursive positioning of subjectivity and its constitution makes more visible the work carried out in the name of emancipation. Education is concerned with understanding the ways in which we are socialised in our society. The school, along with other social systems and structures, powerfully influences individuals’ construction their identity and self. Individuals both participate within and resist these social constructions (Giroux 1985, 1988a; Lather 1991, 1995; Peters 1996, p.41).

The educational aim of this thesis is to chart an agenda that maximises the capacity for classroom practices to assist students in exploring their relationships with their self/selves (Foucault 2002c), investigating the boundaries of knowledge in which the self is constructed, the way these knowledges construct practices of normalisation and regimes of truth and the moral codes and practices which regulate how these knowledges are practiced and refused by the self in the action of daily life (Foucault 2000a; Kamler 2001).

Educative praxis is located in a world that is full of inequities and injustices that cause personal and collective distress and oppression (Friere 1990; McLaren & Leonard 1993; Pericles Trifonas 2003). While educational practice has the dual potential to be both an instrument of reproducing and maintaining such oppressive arrangements, it also has the capacity to transform social realities. This thesis will work towards advancing transformative pedagogies – those pedagogies that move beyond modernist examinations of oppression and liberation that seek to find the truth through the traditional humanist pathways of consciousness raising, deep self-reflection and search for structural rules. Transformative pedagogies seek

... not the curiosity to assimilate what it is proper for one to know, but that which enables one to get free of oneself (Foucault 1988, p.8).

Transformative pedagogies involve an examination of the way meaning is constructed and contested. The search for truth is replaced with a process of seeking to understand our relationship to truth (Foucault 1988; Gore 1993; Kincheloe 1993).

This thesis subscribes to the view that individuals can be involved in transforming oppressive forces within an interpersonal context. Individuals have the capacity to change and transform themselves, their selves or subjectivities. Educational practice can provide a conduit for this to occur. The capacity to facilitate processes of transformation and change and the capacity for individuals to establish agency – for the self to resist practices, ideas and behaviours that don't serve its best interests – are important educational questions that concern critical/feminist teaching practitioners and therefore this study. The research will work towards principles for praxis that contribute to learning processes and strategies aimed at refusing fixed subjectivities (Ball 1995; Dillabough 2002).

1.5 Agency and poststructural theory

The use of the term ‘agency’ is somewhat problematic as it is traditionally grounded within a modernist epistemology and ontology that recognises an autonomous, thinking self that can come to a subject position of freedom and liberation (Davies 1991). This thesis problematises this conception of the autonomous self and its dislocation from the relations of force that impinge upon its ability to act in ways that allow it to gain freedom (Butler 1997b). Chapter two considers in more detail the problematisations of the term agency with respect to poststructural thinking.

Through inquiring into the impact of poststructural theory on agency, this thesis explores the ideas of autonomy, subjectivity and power. These ideas underpin the concepts of empowerment, emancipation and authority that are central features of emancipatory pedagogies. Emancipatory pedagogies utilise or blend modernist critical and feminist theories in the effort to achieve emancipatory change (Gore 1993). These features have been problematised within the literature (Ellsworth 1994; Luke & Gore 1992; Kincheloe 1993; McLaren 1995a, 1995b; Gore 1993, 2002; Lather 1991; Kamler 2001) that explores the nexus of emancipatory pedagogy and poststructural theory (Cherryholmes 1988).

As a critical project that questions normative and reified power relations (McLaren 2002, p.22), this thesis argues that knowledge is possible; however, the search for a transcendental knowledge is replaced with an inquiry into local, specific and historical knowledges. These contingent and contextualised knowledges are situated within the parameters of how transformation and change can be possible (Foucault 2000a). Through ‘queering’ (Jagose 1998) normative frameworks, critique is possible. Such queering is positioned within a commitment to practices of anti-domination and resisting oppression. The concept of freedom is reworked so that it is understood as social and historicised. Whilst acknowledging the historicity of social processes, the trajectory of the research is still committed to acknowledging that things can be otherwise; that change is possible (McLaren 2002, p.21).

Positioned within a Foucauldian (2000a) conception of critique, the research involves an analysis of ‘our historically imposed limits ... and the creative attempt to surpass those limits which we judge to be no longer necessary’ (O’Leary 2002, p.161). Such a critique extends from a critical attitude towards the present and is positioned within Foucault’s (2000a) reworking of Enlightenment interests in autonomy and emancipation. Even

though some theorists (Habermas 1992; McNay 2000) see such a view as inadequate for proposing alternatives to current social relations, this thesis rejects the polemic between non-foundationalism, non-universalism and the ability to construct a social vision embracing social values. The dialectical ontology of such arguments is problematised. This thesis therefore seeks to find ways for poststructural theory to extend and advance the principles of emancipation and wide social change enshrined within the history of critical theory (McNay 1992, p.5, 1994, 2000; Lather 2001; O'Leary 2002).

1.6 Decentring regimes of truth

The research of this thesis examines the ways in which the discourses of the coming out journal act as regimes of truth, constructing polemical relations for its subject, mediating reality and excluding other subject positions. Truth is positioned as a correspondence between discourse and action, and emerges out of a certain relation with the self (O'Leary 2002, p.151). All claims to truth do not have to be rejected out of hand. The central tenet of working within this notion of truth is exercise of greater vigilance in ascertaining when a particular discourse is becoming established as a regime of truth (Gore 1993). A regime of truth is used to denote how any discourse can legitimate some knowledges and subjugate others. It is this subjugation of other, alternative knowledge that contributes to relations of power that can be oppressive and limiting (Foucault 1992; Gore 1993, 2002).

As a genealogical discursive analysis of the self, this thesis undertakes an historical investigation into the events that have 'led us to constitute ourselves and to recognise ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking and saying' (Foucault 2000a, p.315). It therefore seeks to identify the discourses, or boundaries, of knowledge that articulate what we think, say and do as historical and contextualised events. In identifying the contingency of these boundaries of knowledge, it does not seek to deduce an essence of truth in ourselves, but inquire into whether we can think beyond these constructions. This thesis believes an important aspect of critical educative practice is concerned with facilitating individuals to consider 'the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think' (Foucault 2000a, pp.315-316).

The task of critique, according to this thesis, is to chart how discourses of truth operate in relation to society's dominant power structures.

The problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how

effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false (Foucault 1980a, p.118).

What becomes significant is the analysis of the rules around which ideas of true and false are played out in the relation that the subject has with her/himself. The focus of poststructural critical analysis concerns the effect or status of truth and the political and economic role it plays. This thesis therefore inquires into games of truth and their effects as historical constitutions of experience (Foucault 1992, pp.6-7).

1.7 Examining relations of power

Power is viewed by this thesis as being bound up within strategies of struggle where forces construct a relationship of confrontation, each constituting for the other a limit and point of reversal (Foucault 1983, p.225). The discursive analysis of the five discourses examines the ways in which subjectivity resists and struggles against its own definition. The analysis does not look to locate power as something tangible that is or is not possessed. It explores the way that the subject of the coming out journal is involved in negotiating his relations within hegemonic and dominant discursive positionings of sex, gender and sexuality. It looks at how the subject of the coming out journal both participates in and contests dominant knowledges and seeks to open up other ways of being and knowing. Rather than being framed as a confrontation between two adversaries, this thesis positions power as those relations that structure and govern the possible field of action of individuals and others (Foucault 1983). There are limits to the way that power constrains action. Power may be displaced by the 'free play of antagonistic relations' (Foucault 1983, p.225; Smart 2002).

This thesis argues that critical analysis involves foregrounding the conditions in which 'different types of knowledge are produced, fought for, and established as valid' (da Silva & McLaren 1993, p.44). A perspective that considers power relations, their connection to discourses and the tensions and struggles for hegemony within and between them is prioritised over a search for abstract, universalised and systemised knowledges. An analysis that focuses on the struggles and tensions within relations of power is considered to be more useful for fulfilling emancipatory ideals of transformation and change. This replaces the traditional ideal of critical pedagogy where abstract and universalised knowledges are transmitted to the marginalised and disenfranchised as a way of freeing them from their oppression. The rigour applied to searching for moments of resistance and struggle is paramount in assisting the educational focus of the research's aim to promote

the capacity for pedagogical strategies to facilitate critical inquiry into the production of truth and its effects. This critical inquiry concerns the capacity within daily life to offer opportunities for refusing oppressive and hegemonic ideas (Cranny-Francis 1992; da Silva & McLaren 1993; Kress 1985; Foucault 2000a; O’Leary 2002).

1.8 Power and agency

This thesis constructs a view of agency as something more than freeing oneself from relations of power (Rogerson, 2001, pp.29-32). Agency is defined as the process by which relations of power are enacted with a minimum of domination (Foucault 1995, 2002c). Agency is formulated within the Foucauldian idea of getting free of oneself, of refusing what we are (Foucault 1983, p.216). Poststructural agency is defined as the ability to free oneself from the type of individuality, or subjectivities, that have been constructed through discursive systems and practices. ‘The refusal to be what we are, to be subject and hence subjected, opens up new possibilities for change’ (McLaren 2002, p.62). It is through an analysis of the performance of discourse and its constituent production of subjectivities that spaces for transformation are realised. It is in the clash of discursive meanings that one begins to see how some knowledges are successful in establishing positions of power and others are marginalised. Agency is recast as occurring within discursive practices (Butler 1990, 1993 1997a; Davies 1991, 1994; McNay 2000; Foucault 2000a).

This thesis does not view freedom as a state free of power that a teacher can bestow on her/his students through getting the right discourse, or unlocking the right consciousness. Freedom is not an ideal state that we arm students to possess with the right bag of tricks or skills.

It is neither an ideal state towards which ones strives by overcoming the finitude and limitations of one’s individual existence, nor is it an essential feature of a transcendently grounded human nature (O’Leary 2002, p.159).

Freedom, defined as relations of power that are carried out with a minimum of domination are historically and contextually conditioned possibilities that arise only within the context of power relations. Freedom arises within our capacities to refuse to be governed in certain ways, or to refuse to govern oneself in certain ways. Freedom becomes our ability to find alternatives to the array of discourses that seek to circumscribe our identities and selves. Freedom becomes looking for ways to move beyond the historically defined limits that seek to define us (Foucault 2002a).

1.9 Methodological principles

Drawing from critical constructivist research (Kincheloe 1997), the thesis takes the view that structures and phenomena that we are led to believe exist in objective reality hold no absolute validity. Stories of the self or life narratives are fictional constructs that reflect dominant discourses and ways of seeing the world. They have a fictional dimension that is dependent on an array of social, political and discursive dynamics. Power is central to the way these representations are shaped in patterned ways that construct a simulacrum of verity. The aim of inquiring into this process of fashioning is to sift through the ubiquitous nature of power. In inquiring into the fiction formulas that mobilise meaning and sustain domination, this research breaks down the authorial certainty of modernism's notion that language neutrally conveys a description of reality. Language is understood as the substance of social action (Couzens-Hoy 2004; Kincheloe 1997, pp.58-62).

This study is concerned with extending the capacity to recognise subjectivities as socially produced within the landscape of dominant culture. Critical reflection on the construction of subjectivities within the coming out journal occurs within a dynamic and textual understanding of the way power works at the macro, or structural level of society, and the micro, or particularistic level of daily life in shaping understandings of the world. The discursive analysis of the coming out journal is interested in identifying the points of contact between these macro and micro manifestations of power (Kincheloe 1997, pp.58-62).

As a study into aspects of my life history within a social and political context of examining and theorising moments of agency, transformation and change, this research draws from the contemporary educational research methodology of autoethnography (Baker 2001; Bochner & Ellis 2002; Bruner 1993; Bullough & Pinnegar 2001; Ellis 1997, 1999, 2001; Ellis & Bochner 1996; Denzin 1997; Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Flemons & Green 2002; Reed-Danahay 1997; Slattery 2001; Spry 2001; Varner 2001) where any narrative of the self is placed within a social and political context (Pratt 1994, p.28). In drawing from this methodology, the research actively challenges modernist conceptions of self and society.

the poststructural conception of self and society is one of multiplicity of identities, of cultural displacement, and of shifting axes of power (Reed-Danahay 1997, p.2).

Realist conventions and the objective observer position of traditional ethnographic approaches are challenged through poststructuralism's questioning of the coherent, individual self. The modernist binary that splits self and society and the objective and the subjective is decentred. The nexus of the ways in which personal issues provide insight and inform public troubles and the way public theory can inform private trials provides the grounds of self-study research taken up by this thesis (Bullough & Pinnegar 2001).

1.10 Critical interpretative analytics

As an analysis into contests of power (Foucault 2002c) the research privileges the confrontation and power relations between the different discourses and the construction of subjectivities of the coming out journal's text. The discursive analysis of subjectivity inquires into what we know, how we come to know it and how differently we can come to know what we know (Foucault 2000a). As such it replaces the search for one meaning, or the truth, with a critical interpretative analytic inquiry into the production of truth and its effects, in order to destabilise the effects of truth on constraining change and transformation (Dreyfuss & Rabinow 1983).

In rejecting a hermeneutical search for origins and deep meaning, or a structuralist search for rules and frameworks, this study valorises how other ways of being and knowing have the capacity to assist with transforming the dominance of normative ideas that restrict alternatives. In drawing on Foucault's (1972, 1984, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2002a, 2002c) critical interpretative analytics (Dreyfuss & Rabinow 1983), the five dominant discourses of the coming journal are analysed within three genealogical domains that provide the tools for investigating the modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects (Foucault 1983, p.208). These three domains include 'an analysis of systems of knowledge (archaeology), of modalities of power (genealogy), and of the self's relationship to itself (ethics)' (Davidson 1986, p.221; Dreyfuss & Rabinow 1983; Foucault 2000a).

These three domains are also utilised to ensure that the methodology does not pursue an analysis of discourse as all-determining and foreclosing of agency (McNay 1992). The discursive analysis of the coming out journal is interested in the way that discourses have productive effects. Power is not only seen as repressive, but also productive (Foucault 1998). Discourses not only constrain what can be known, they contain the traces and resources for other ways of knowing and being. Discourse contains the genesis of

resistance to, and transformation of, dominant ways of knowing and being. The discursive analysis is also interested in the way that the constructions of subjectivity within the coming out journal text defied normative ideas. In examining each of the discourses, the analysis is interested in how the self refused to be contained within dominant meaning-making processes and structures. This fulcrum of refusing the self and its own self-definition is considered vital to the theorising of poststructural forms of agency (Butler 1997a, 1997b; Couzens-Hoy 2004; O’Leary 2002).

1.10.1 The archaeological layer

The archaeological layer of the discursive analysis is interested in how historical conditions produce and execute certain ideas and how these ideas are performed as knowledge over time to become a discourse that produces certain social practices (Foucault 1972, 2002b). An archaeological method does not reveal the objective world. In excavating knowledges for the way they represent reality archaeological method moves beyond being an analytical tool to formulate truth (Rogerson 2001, 26-28). Rather than seek to investigate and reveal general forms and features, establish coherence of meaning, continuity of expression and the progression of identity, the archaeological layer is interested in foregrounding ruptures, inconsistencies and gaps. An archaeological method avoids reconciling contradictions into one particular dominant meaning. It seeks to diversify, not unify. The discourse analysis therefore actively seeks to work against searching for hidden meanings or deep structures (Foucault 1972, 2002b; Rogerson 2001).

1.10.2 The genealogical layer

In addition to investigating the ordered rules of a discursive system and the historical establishment of truth through those rules, the genealogical layer of the discursive analysis looks to how norms as ethical propositions become established. This layer focuses on forms of normativity and seeks to investigate the ways in which the subject of the coming out journal is divided within himself or divided from others. It is concerned with the interconnections between knowledge and power. Genealogy is interested in the detailed struggle over truth-making – the formation of truth. This genealogical layer articulates specifically how power relations operate as a form of disciplinary social government (Rogerson 2001, pp.28-29). It focuses on the mutuality between systems of knowledge and modalities of power. Thus it looks at how there is a political regime in the production of truth. Genealogy attempts to expose the ‘origin of what we take to be rational’ (Davidson 1986, p.225). It ‘disturbs what is considered immobile, fragments what is

thought to be unified, and shows the heterogeneity of what is taken to be homogenous' (Davidson 1986, p.225).

1.10.3 The ethical layer

The ethical layer of the discursive analysis is concerned with forms of subjectivation (Foucault 1995), or the ways in which human beings turn themselves into subjects. It is concerned with the self's relation to self and interested in how the self is conscripted into perpetuating relations of domination that are not always in its best interests. This ethical layer is concerned with how the self of the coming out journal is simultaneously governed by discourse but also self-governing. The knowledge/power story of the genealogical method is often directed at outer narratives – what we say about others, say to others, have said to ourselves by others, do to others, or have done to ourselves. Genealogies can leave out the inner monologue, what I say to myself. They leave out the self-discipline, what I do to myself. Thus they omit the permanent heartland of subjectivity.

There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power, which subjugates and makes subject to (Foucault in Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982, p.212).

Including this ethical aspect ensures that the discourse analysis examines how social power not only governs an individual but also how power relations seduce an individual into governing him/herself (Rogerson 2001, pp.28-29).

The ethical arm is often neglected by many writers (McLaren 2002; O'Leary 2002; Rogerson 2001); however, it is argued that to effectively theorise poststructural notions of agency, an analysis needs to take into account how a person turns himself or herself into a subject. It needs to include an analysis of the self's relationship to itself – to 'how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions' (Rabinow 1984, p.337) The overall analysis is therefore concerned with an appraisal of how the knowledge/power/subject nexus constitutes reality for the subject/self of the coming out journal (Foucault 1983, p.208; Gore 1993; O'Leary 2002, p.9; Schrift 1995, p.33; Tamboukou 2003).

1.11 The significance the ethical layer for transformative educational practice

Foucault's (2000a, 2000b) ethical arm is considered vital by this thesis as it provides a theory of agency that integrates how the power of discourse shapes and governs people's lives; how modern forms of disciplinary power conscript individuals into self-government; how within these relations of power and domination there is resistance, and how the seeds for resistance lie in everyday action (Foucault 2000a, 2000b).

The locus of subjectivities and their constitution at the local, daily level of lived reality situates the central scope of this research as a study which extends the ability of educational practitioners to provide opportunities for transformation and change within this local milieu. Such a project is positioned as complementing wider, community-based projects that focus on systemic or institutional change. Social systems and institutions are not only located as concrete physical structures, legislation and government policy. Social systems and institutions and the discourses that permeate them are also played out in the ideas that people utilise daily in the way that they construct their subjectivities. These subjectivities are played out in classrooms on a daily basis (Davies 1994; Kamler 2001; Rowan 2001).

In promoting transformation of the personal, the locus of change is the nexus of the interpersonal and the social. The duality of individual and society is collapsed. Subjectivity and the processes of subjectivation (Foucault 1995), that is the way in which relations of power simultaneously enable and constrain, conflate the antagonistic relationship between self and society presented within traditional theorising of agency (Davies 1991, 1997). Through investigating the ways in which discourse is involved in constructing subjectivity through the simultaneous process of production and constraint, this thesis will work towards an educational agenda in which the self and the social are inextricably linked. Subjectivity and its construction becomes a rich social site in which teaching praxis can facilitate transformation and change (Foucault 1995; Butler 1997a; McLaren 1995a; Gore 1992).

1.12 Feminism's engagement with subjectivity, agency and empowerment

This thesis is situated within feminism's (Taylor & Vintage 2004) engagement with emancipatory modes of existence that involve thinking and acting critically in relation to current realities, within a context of uncertainty and contingency. An integral aspect of the discursive analysis is the replacement of the search for a homogenous identity with a commitment to the contextual and critical engagement of the self and the world. Focusing on intra-subjective relations, attending to the self and its construction also challenges the dominant dichotomy that rules the lives of marginalised people, for example, women and queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex), where others and the care of others are put before the care of the self. When care for others is the primary focus, knowledge about one's own desires, needs, values and beliefs is marginalised (Butler 1990; Grosz 1994; O'Leary 2002, p.102; Taylor & Vintage 2004).

The research therefore is an investigation into the nexus of the cultural assumptions of discourses and the narrative forms that the subject of the coming out journal utilised to construct his subjectivity. The discursive analysis of the coming out journal does not focus its investigation on the internal textual constitution of the discourse. It examines the effects of the discourses, and how they narrated the world, hopes, dreams and sense of personal autonomy at the time of coming out (Foucault 2000a). The aim of the discursive analysis grounded within its poststructuralist underpinnings is to carry out a genealogy into the construction of subjectivity, questioning ideas about self and identity.

... repeatedly to ask how certain categorisations work, what enactments they are performing and what relations they are creating, rather than what they essentially mean (Sedgwick 1990, 27).

The discursive analysis of the coming out journal engages in a process of relating the self to itself and as such inquires into the practices whereby an individual effects by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, minds, thought processes, actions and ways of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain amount of happiness, wisdom and change in such a way that minimises domination and violence upon other people and oneself (Foucault 2000a). This process involves detaching oneself from what is accepted as true, seeking other rules, displacing and transforming frameworks of thinking, learning to think otherwise, doing something else and becoming 'other than what one is' (Foucault 2000a, 327). This process of ethically caring for the way in which the self is constructed does not involve masculinist principles of mastery and control. A non-imperialist approach (O'Leary 2002)

is carried out in which principles of flexibility, curiosity, playfulness, generosity, friendship, love, experimentation, openness to surprise, uncertainty, not taking rules as sacred, guide its execution (Lather 1991, p.28; McLaren 2002; O'Leary 2002; Tamboukou 2003; Tamboukou & Ball 2003b).

This research is therefore concerned with the generation of theories that effectively account for the relationship between the individual and the social (McNay 2000). Subjectivities and the experience of everyday life becomes a crucial site for redefining patriarchal meanings and values and constructing effective resistances to them. The feminist political underpinnings of this research address questions of the production and distribution of knowledge. The thesis recognises the significance of competing subjectivities in constituting the meaning of women's, and marginalised people's lived reality. Subjective experiences, which form the action of classroom life, are a valuable starting point for understanding how power relations work in society. As a study that explores the relationship between experience, social power and resistance through a genealogical discursive analysis of the construction of subjectivities, this thesis is well placed to contribute to feminist theorising and educational practice (McNay 2000; Weedon 1987).

In line with its commitment to feminist thinking, this thesis will contribute to the contemporary feminist debate of notions of agency and gender identity as durable but not immutable within the context of vast changes in economic and social structures over the past forty years (McNay 2000). Whilst feminist thought has significantly contributed to the changing of old forms of gender inequality, the complex social relations negotiated by men and women cannot be seen to be wholly emancipatory.

New forms of autonomy and constraint can be seen to be emerging which can no longer be understood through dichotomies of male domination and female subordination. Instead, inequalities are emerging along generational, class and racial lines where structural division amongst women are as significant as divisions between men and women (McNay 2000, p.2).

Learning to live and struggle with the differences and contradictions of our subjectivities is therefore a key aspect of contemporary feminist theorising. Discovering and utilising these differences is considered to be an important source for creative change. Notions of agency offer hope and the possibility for transforming and challenging structural and systemic inequalities. The significance of the 'lived importance of the self' (Francis & Archer 2004, p.29) in carrying out our day-to-day lives and the struggle for coherence and identity that often forms a part of it means that researching the conceptions of agency and

subjectivity within the parameters of poststructural theory is most relevant (Francis & Archer 2004; Sawicki 1986).

1.13 Overview of the chapters

The following overview of the remainder of the thesis is offered before moving into the next chapter. Chapter two conducts an overview of the concept of agency within contemporary sociological and poststructuralist feminist discourse, decentering the traditional debate of free will versus determinism. A poststructural position on agency as discursive change will be argued that draws on the work of Foucault (1990, 1992, 1998, 2000a, 2002c) and Butler (1990, 1993, 1997a,b). Chapter three explains the research's methodological principles drawing from feminist poststructural theory (Davies 1991, 1994; Kamler 2001; Lather 1991, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2001; Wearing 1996; Weedon 1987;), discourse theory (Carrabine 2001; Denzin & Lincoln 2000), critical constructivist theory (Kincheloe 1997), critical autoethnography (Reed-Danahay 1997), constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002) and Foucauldian (1984, 1995, 1998, 2000a, 2002c) genealogical discourse analysis. Chapter three also outlines the stages of data collection and analysis. Chapter four details the thematic/category analysis of the coming out journal as the primary data source and assists to make transparent the rigour that has been applied in constructing the five discourses. Chapter five discusses and analyses the five dominant discourses that circumscribe the construction of sex, gender and sexuality of the subject of the coming out journal data text. These discourses are explained and examined for their effects in terms of the construction of knowledge/power relations, normative practices and rules for living for the subject of the journal. Chapter six explores the implications of the discursive analysis for the advancement of emancipatory pedagogy, reworking and reframing the emancipatory principles of modernist critical and feminist pedagogy within a poststructural lens.

1.14 Conclusion

This chapter has positioned the focus of this research within poststructural ideas of language, subjectivity, discourse and power. The chapter has also given an overview of the method and methodology employed in undertaking a genealogical and critical autoethnographic study of my coming out journal. This textual fragment of life will be used to examine the way in which the construction and negotiation of subjectivities within

relations of power are carried out. This in turn will be employed to extend poststructural definitions of agency and develop principles of praxis for emancipatory pedagogies. Chapter two will progress the theoretical positioning of this thesis by examining contemporary debates in relation to agency and subjectivity, further positioning the poststructural underpinnings of the thesis within Foucauldian (1995, 1998, 2000a, 2002c) ideas of discourse, power and ethics.

Literature review

– a poststructural perspective on agency

2.1 Introduction

As a discursive analysis of my coming out journal, this research aims to contribute to feminist/critical pedagogy's goal of facilitating emancipatory change. It is informed by theories of agency in order to explore the relationship between experience, social power and transformation within a poststructural landscape. The aim is to develop an understanding of how best to maximise change and transformation – that is, agency – at the locus between the personal and the social (Taylor & Vintges 2004).

This chapter reworks the term 'agency' within Foucauldian (1980a, 1980b, 1983, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000a) poststructural theory. This reworking of agency will be used within the discursive analysis of the coming out journal to produce an attuned scrutiny of the way in which subjectivities, particularly sex, gender and sexuality, are maintained and resisted within complex and multifarious relations of power. In deconstructing the modernist foundations of the term agency brought about by poststructural theory, the chapter draws on the poststructural feminist approaches to agency of Davies (1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994), and Butler (1993, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2004), who have in turn been influenced by the work of Foucault (1972, 1980a, 1980b, 1983, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). The research is consequently positioned within the following poststructuralist ideas: subjectivity as constituted within language and discourse; discourse and its normative effects; subjectivity as a form rather than a substance; and power as subjection. Subjection highlights the idea that power is an enabling force that produces relations of duplicity (Foucault 1995); relations of power simultaneously constrain and produce moments of transformation and change (Butler 1997b; Foucault 1995).

The chapter's positioning begins with an overview of Foucauldian (1972, 1984, 1995, 1998) definitions of discourse as hidden and systemised rules that govern the production

of truth. The transformative potential of discourse is discussed within the view that power is relational and productive. Power is distinguished from domination and violence and defined within the Foucauldian maxim of wherever there is power there is resistance (Foucault 1998, p.95). Power is in constant production and simultaneously constrains action; however, this constraint also contains the conditions for transformation. Normative thought is considered in the way that it constructs panoptic (Foucault 1995) effects – the ways in which people are involved in acts of self-surveillance in relation to normative ideas. These normative ideas gain power through the absence of individuals interrogating their epistemological foundations. This is argued as a significant way in which contemporary or carceral (Foucault 1995) forms of power work to maintain existing relationships – relationships and practices that may not always be in the best interests of an individual. The research is committed to exploring the ways in which pedagogic praxis can challenge and maximise resistance to these relations of carceral, panoptic power (Foucault 1972, 1984, 1995, 1998).

This thesis defines subjectivity as a discursive category, decentering the stable and autonomous subject of modernism (Hall 2004). In standing against a pre-discursive subject, agency is relocated within discursive significations that construct the self (Butler 1999). The chapter argues for a decentering of the duality of free will versus determinism that structures much contemporary thought around notions of agency. Continuing to formulate a position on poststructural notions of subjectivity and agency, the chapter outlines agency as discursive change. Agency is seen to come about through an attuned analysis of the interplay between discourse and power and its effects on the construction of subjectivity. Subjection is considered as a site of agency (Butler 1997b) working the Foucauldian idea of power existing simultaneously within enablement and constraint. This is highlighted through considering performative ideas of gender (Butler 1999; Rubinstein 2001).

The poststructural definition of agency as a process of social change and transformation that this chapter sets out, is further illuminated through the discussion of particular strategies. These include intervening in the repetition of the normalising aims of discourse, reversing the boundaries and signifiers of discourse, the significant potential for agency within the convergence of multiple and conflicting discourse, and speaking at the borders of what is permissible. Such discursive acts involve engagement within ideas of parrhesia (McLaren 2002; O’Leary 2002, pp.147-150) or eruptive truth speech. In arguing for the relevance of a performative theory on subjectivity (Butler 1997a, 1997b, 1999), the chapter also discusses oppositions to these ideas within feminist (Benhabib 1992;

Eagleton 1996; Fuss 1989; Hartsock 1990; Mc Nay 1992, 1994, 2000; Soper 1994; Waugh 1989) theory. This relates specifically to the claims that a performative and discursive construction of agency has the potential to stifle the significance of identity categories as a basis for wide scale political change. The chapter locates the politics of the research not in opposition to these claims, but as an inquiry that complements such projects.

The discursive analysis of the coming out journal, with its focus on how subjectivities are constructed and resisted within relations of power is designed to assist with a theory of agency for pedagogical praxis that focuses on local and daily operations of power. Through the discursive analysis, the research works towards formulating pedagogic principles that interrogate these processes of government inviting individuals to explore the ways in which they comply with, and resist, such processes (Butler 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Gore 1993).

2.2 Discourse and power

In this thesis, discourses are seen as groups of related statements that cohere in such a way as to produce meaning and effects in the real world (Carrabine 2001). They have productive force, constituting versions of the objects of which they speak (Foucault 1972, 2002c). Discourse is therefore bound to the constitution of the social. People apprehend and interpret events through discursive structures and are not always aware of how they structure their understanding. Discourse does not employ language to translate reality. Discourse and its language structure the way we perceive reality (Mills 2003, p.56). Discursive formations are not just the order of language or representation, they structure and govern beliefs and practices, words and objects to produce material effects (Fairclough 2001; Smart 2002).

This thesis takes the view that discourses are regulated within society, ‘controlled, selected, organised and redistributed (Foucault 1981, p.52 in Mills 2003, p.57) within a range of practices and institutions such as schools, universities, government bureaucracies, family work and community social systems. Analysing discourse allows us to examine the complex relations between the production of knowledge and the rules by which new knowledge is generated. Discourses are not always cohesive since they contain within them contradictory and conflicting ideas and symbols (Mills 2003; Carrabine 2001).

Hooking into normative ideas and common sense notions, discourses carry moral messages about what is good, bad, normal, abnormal. In doing so they influence the way we understand, experience and respond to an issue, topic or social event. These representations construct meanings about a topic and construct our material, bodily ways of acting out these meanings (Carrabine 2001). Discourse categorises, includes, excludes and establishes boundaries. Discursive formations are delineated as much through what lies outside of them, as what is contained within (Foucault 1972; Danaher, Shirato & Webb 2000, 35; Mills 2003; Kress 1985).

Bound up with games of truth, rules by which truth is produced, discourse and its analysis are tied up with relations of power (Foucault 2000a, p.297). 'Knowledge both constitutes and is constituted through discourse as an effect of power' (Carrabine 2001, p.275). Discourse works to keep certain statements in circulation and exclude others. Discourse is seen as a 'constellation of hidden historical rules that govern what can be and cannot be said and who can speak and who must listen' (Kincheloe 1997, pp.58-62). Discourse therefore polices the boundaries of what can and cannot be said. Discourse mediates the productive value of statements (Mills 2003, p.66). Discourses circumscribe what can be known as truth at a particular moment. Often this relationship of power validates or valorises particular versions of truth and subjugates others (Carrabine 2001; Foucault 2000a; Kincheloe 1997; Mills 2003).

2.3 The transformative potential of discourse

A central feature of the thesis's view on discourse also relies on notions of power as productive (Foucault 1998), engendered with a capacity to transform, as well as being constraining and negative. The significance of adopting a discursive view on the construction of knowledge for poststructural praxis lies in the potential for discourse to be decentred and deconstructed. Even though discourse regulates and polices the boundaries of what can be known, its ambiguity and malleability constructs the possibilities for its transformation. This is because notions of discourse utilise poststructuralist ideas of language, the subject and meaning is neither fixed, nor permanent.

Discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but it also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart (Foucault 1998, p.101).

The fluid make-up of discourses means that they draw upon, interact and are mediated by other discourses, transforming 'existing knowledge to produce new knowledge and power effects' (Carrabine 2001, p.274). They can produce new, different and forceful ways of presenting the issue. Discourse offers a more complex and attuned analysis to how ideas that circulate within social institutions and systems are taken up by individuals. It is both a means of oppressing and a means of resistance (Foucault 1998).

2.4 The body as discourse

This thesis is informed by the view that the body is a social, cultural and historical construction, located within discursive practice (Foucault 1995, 1998). It is impossible to know the materiality of the body outside of its discursive significations, 'the body gains meaning within discourse only in the context of power relations' (Butler 1999, p.117). The body is seen as an object of knowledge constructed through discourse. The body as discourse is a site of political struggle and is therefore central to subjectivity and agency (McNay 1992). The body is constructed as standing within an ambivalent and contradictory relationship with power. It is both enabled and constrained. The body is shaped by normalising disciplinary practices, but it is from within these practices that the possibility for resisting those practices also arises. It is as an active surface for the discursive construction of subjectivity. The body is a diffusion of particular 'technologies' of power and integral to the construction of subjectivity (Smart 2002, p.75; Butler 1999, 1993; McLaren 2002).

2.5 Normative thought

The research is underpinned by a position that modern society is 'carceral' (Foucault 1995), consisting of judges of normality that invade contemporary life to the point that they prevent other, viable ways of life from being considered. Normative categories are conveyed through discourse and structure, and shape the way we view things (McLaren 2002, p.131). Through these norms, practices of comparison and differentiation are carried out. Norms are used as the measure against which behaviours are judged and evaluated. In addition to this comparative effect, normative thought also establishes a goal towards which all individuals should aim and work. Normative thought is not imposed by only one section, class or group of society. The individual is involved within a process where their

‘bodies, gestures, behaviours, aptitudes and achievements’ (Foucault 1995, p.304) are subjected to a reign of the normative (Butler 1999; Connell 1987, 1995).

Norms are therefore instrumental in the construction of panoptic (Foucault 1995) processes of power where people are engaged in a process of self-surveillance of their minds and bodies in relation to normative systems of thought.

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault 1995, pp.202-203).

People are involved in diagnosing and evaluating the success of their individuality against normative standards. Individuals are complicit in the formation of their selves through learning to normalise themselves. Normalisation produces power effects on the construction of subjectivity (Couzens Hoy 2004, p.65).

In order to avoid an overwhelming and non-agential conception of norms as instruments of power, this thesis posits that normalising strategies are in continual play. Individuals are in a constant and often contradictory process of reassessing, establishing and negotiating their position in relation to norms. Norms may have regulatory intentions but they may not always have regulatory outcomes. This ensures a conception of human agency that is active and constitutive, as opposed to one that is forever determined by discourse and overwhelmed by its power. It is therefore important to situate an examination of the power/knowledge nexus within social contexts and relations.

Normalization is a means through which power is deployed. It is a dynamic of knowledge, practiced and learned, dispersed around various centres of practice and expertise (Carrabine 2001, p.278).

The notion of norms and normalisation is not constructed upon a predicate of establishing a universal of the right way to judge human behaviour and action. The focus of any analysis of normative thought is to highlight the restraining capacity of thinking that there can be only one set of socially sanctioned ways to exist, and that behaviour must be measured against such social norms. The point is not to substitute the wrong norms with the right ones, but to problematise the process where norms become necessary, natural or universal (Couzens Hoy 2004). Such a process is situated within a queer (Jagose 1998; Pinar 1998) politics that moves towards strategies aimed at ‘resistance to regimes of the normal’ (Warner 1993, p.xxvi). These regimes can exist heteronormatively, within

dominant discourses of heterosexual discourse; and also homonormatively, within dominant discourses of homosexuality (Padva 2002).

2.6 Power as relational

The thesis takes the position that individuals do not possess power but participate within power relations (Foucault 1998). The analysis of the five discourses draws from a definition of power as producing new objects, discourses and sites of resistance. Power is central to the exploration of subjectivities, their construction and transformation that forms the course of this research. Power underlies all social relations and is considered a positive and enabling force (Foucault 1998). Power is more than a negative force that acts to repress. If power is seen only as repressive, it is difficult to explain how it maintains such a grip. ‘Why would I submit and continue to obey a purely repressive and coercive force?’ (Sawicki 1986). Power is defined as an ‘objectivising and subjectivising force’ (McNay 1994, p.4). Power both constrains individuals from taking action, and also constitutes the conditions of possibility for transformation and change (Foucault 1998; McNay 1994).

What defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions (Foucault 1983, p.220).

As a force that promotes capacity and action, power is a relation that exists between people. Rather than something that is done to people, power is in constant production among and between persons, institutions, things, and groups of persons.

Power is mobile, local, heterogenous and unstable. Power comes from everywhere; it is exercised from innumerable points (McLaren 2002, 37).

Power has mobility. It is local and unstable. Power is exercised from numerous points, existing everywhere. Through locating power within action, as a relationship of force between people the momentum for capacity, change, and therefore agentiality is maximised. The discursive analysis of the research study stands outside a traditional juridico-discursive model where power is seen as a negative relation that limits behaviour by imposing rules, prohibitions and access to things through the application and enforcement of laws sanctioned by the state (Foucault 1995). Power is viewed as being more than unilateral and negative. Power is positive, productive and relational (Foucault 1998, p.93; McLaren 2002, p.37; Mills 2003).

Through discursively analysing my coming out journal, the research examines how practices, power relations and discursive apparatus affect everyday reality. How inequality and oppression are created and maintained in subtle and diffuse ways through the everyday activities and behaviours becomes a focus for the discursive analysis. The research is not interested in analysing power in its central and institutionalised forms, such as state apparatuses and class relations. Rather than focus on why people want to dominate others, or what they want through their use of power, the analysis concentrates on the relations of force that are involved in the constitution of the self as subject. It does not ask what power is and where it comes from. It asks how is power exercised and what are its effects (Foucault 2002c; Rabinow 1984, p.97; Wearing 1996, p.33; McNay 1994; Smart 2002, pp.77, 107).

2.6.1 Domination and violence

Although adopting a relational model of power, this thesis considers that it is important to distinguish between violence and domination and other types of relations of power. Power is not exercised or distributed equally; however, power is always subject to reversal. If there is no possibility of freedom, there is no relationship of power, only a state of domination (Foucault quoted in McLaren 2002, p.49). States of domination and violence are relationships where the reciprocal nature of power, considered within a relational model is greatly reduced. Within a relational model of power, the one over whom power is exercised is recognised as a person that acts, and because of this a whole field of possible interventions, responses and reactions is opened up. This capacity to act is greatly minimised in states of domination and violence. It is therefore important to acknowledge that some relations of power, those of domination and violence, greatly limit and constrain the capacity for resistance (Foucault 1983, 2002c).

2.6.2 Resistance

The theoretical frame of this research includes the tenet that resistance is located where power is exercised. 'Where there is power there is resistance' (Foucault 1998, 95). There can be no power without resistance. Action is considered within a field of possibilities. Resistance is born out of the struggle between competing claims of power, not the ability to get outside of power (Foucault 1980a, p.98). Resistance is never in an exterior relation to (outside of) power. The self is never completely subsumed by discourse and power. Resistance is present everywhere power is exercised.

... a nexus of subjectivities, in relations of power which are constantly shifting, rendering them at one moment powerful and at another powerless ... Relations of power and resistance are continually reproduced, in continual struggle and constantly shifting (Walkerdine 1990, pp.3-4).

Parallel to any network of power relations are multiple points of resistance (Smart 2002, p.132). In order for power to operate it requires resistance. Through the articulation of points of resistance, power spreads through the social field. Conversely, through resistance, power is disrupted. 'Resistance is both an element of the functioning of power and a source of its perpetual disorder' (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983, p.147). Agency is constructed through gaining greater knowledge of how these relations and practices are constructed, maintained and resisted. Subjectivity and power exist within a reciprocal relationship. 'It is through power and its constitution of the subject that resistance is possible' (McLaren 2002, p.66). The subject is both an effect of power and an instrument for power.

2.7 Standing against the pre-discursive subject

Rather than see agency within a pre-discursive subject standing in opposition to power, this thesis relocates human agency within the processes of discursive signification that construct the self (Butler 1999). This assists a move outside a view of agency that conceptualises structural constraints in abstraction from human action or individuals and their values and moral choices in abstraction from social and historical locations. It therefore can assist us to carry out forms of agency within and against (Lather 1991) the dualism of free will versus determinism.

Agency is a contested term and is understood conventionally as human beings' capacity to conceive and execute their own actions and projects (Barvosa-Carter 2001), or, the degree to which persons are the authors of their own conduct or are controlled by external social forces (Rubinstein 2001, p.x). The ability to act, or exist within, one's world in a way that is empowering is traditionally conceived within modernist notions of being liberated from or free from power.

Much historical theorisation around agency revolves around the duality of free will versus determinism (Smart 2002, McNay 2000). This duality posits that agency is restricted or foreclosed because social structures determine an individual's capacity to act. Conversely subjects are seen as invested with an inherent human ability that can be accessed to enable

capacity and choice in acting agentially. This dualistic tension is often argued as needing resolution if a unified theory of human agency is to be formulated (Smart 2002, p.70).

Poststructuralism foregrounds the constraining nature of such a duality. This research is positioned in thinking beyond this dualism and exploring the consequences of this for pedagogic practice. The agency/structure dualism has made it difficult to adequately conceptualise the processes of social change. Social change has often been constructed as being influenced by either social structures or individuals' agency, or a combination of both (Giddens 1979, 1981, 1984). The assumption that social life is created by the capacity of agents, or social structures, or a combination of the two, is rarely investigated with respect to the feasibility of its epistemological foundations (Shilling 1992, p.70; McFadden 1995).

Theories that fall within the agency/structure dualism do not adequately explain the daily and local mechanics of how people resist dominant discourses, or why, when aware of the impact that discourses have on their ability to act, still act in ways that would be considered non-agential (Wearing 1996). Such theories do not assist with conceptualising the paradox, or contradiction of constraint and resistance that exists within relations of power. The epistemological foundation of the subject that can or cannot become agential is not questioned (Butler 1999). In a humanist model, agency is seen as an aspect of all sane adult human beings. It assumes an agonistic relationship between the self and other, and the self and society. Individuals are seen to be separate or external from society. Society then acts upon an individual in such a way as to constrain or liberate (Davies 1991, p.42). The problem of agency construed within the determinism/free will debate positions freedom within dualistic thinking, where power relations are seen to be determining and positioned in opposition to freedom and individual action which stands outside and external to such relations (Butler 1999; Davies 1991, 1994; Wearing 1996).

2.8 Decentering the substance of subjectivity

Subjectivity, as the result of discursive formations, decentres the rational, unified subject of humanism (Foucault 1984). This thesis views subjectivity as an experience, remaining enduringly open to inconsistency, contradiction and unknowing. Rather than being settled, fixed, coherent, stable, strong, tangible, or measurable, subjectivity is confused, slippery, illusory, uncomfortable, painful, awkward and contradictory (Ellis 1997; Britzman 2000).

Subjectivity is multilayered and constructed within complex and contradictory ways (Mansfield 2000).

Rather than subjectivity being the condition for the possibility of experience, it is experience itself that constitutes subjectivity (Foucault 1985). Subjectivity is constructed by this thesis as existing within an array of contradictory discourses that compete in relations of power to establish a truth about the self (Foucault 2000a). These contradictory discourses are not moments of false consciousness awaiting pedagogic transformation. The human subject is not 'endowed with a consciousness that power is then thought to seize upon' (Foucault 1990, p.58). Nor is subjectivity considered as undiscovered fractures of the self that need attention through therapeutic engagement, emerging in all their truth if given space, kindness and encouragement (Gore 1993).

Decentering the notion of a stable and autonomous subject is not the same as doing away with the notion of the subject (Butler 1992). In deconstructing the 'I' of subjectivity in the coming out journal, the discursive analysis does not deny its existence. The analysis inquires into how the 'I' of the journal thinks, acts and believes it is required to have a sense of agency. Undertaking this allows for a more attuned capacity to the way that agency is an effect of the constitutive force of discourse. In making this constitutive force more transparent, the discursive analysis will more effectively see how self(selves) is a discursive process rather than as a unique, fixed, personal invention, that needs to be discovered or completed. The subject is then seen to be constantly in process, and the discursive analysis employed by this research inquires into the way that the self is involved in a process of constructing an 'I' in and through discourse. The coming out journal provides a rich source of contradictory readings of conflicting selves and therefore becomes an extraordinary resource for exploring the complexity and dynamism between subjectivity and the discourses through which it is constituted (Butler 1992; Davies 1997).

2.9 The aesthetic inquiry into technologies of the self

Within this thesis's position that subjectivity is social and relational, subjectivity is considered as a process that is formed and created, not found.

From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence; we have to create ourselves as a work of art (Foucault 2000b, 262).

The creation of oneself as a work of art involves transforming the relation one has to oneself. It promotes action and agential activity. This practice of invention stands against notions of authenticity found within existentialism and phenomenology. The subject is a form, not a substance. The self is considered by this thesis as something that is forever being constructed and reconstructed. Rather than the passive receiver of social forces, as 'an always subjected docile body enmeshed in relations of power' (McLaren 2002, p.56) subjectivity is constantly being worked, never completed. The self is never a foundation or a starting point. This research therefore rejects notions of the self that attempt to fix an essence, or pre-given, natural identity; or tie it to a hermeneutic relation of searching for a deep-seated knowing (O'Leary 2002).

The research takes the position that moral conduct requires the ethical subject to work on her/himself. Moral conduct is not about conforming to rules, laws or values. Such work is not to be equated with self-awareness. 'One becomes an ethical subject through action' (McLaren 2002, p.73). A project of forming and constructing the self as an ethical subject through action is located within the practicalities of everyday life. It involves the intensification of the relation that one has in constituting oneself as a subject who enacts one's acts. This involves the subject acting 'upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself' (Foucault 1992, p.28). The examination of this ethical relationship of the self to itself within the discursive analysis involves four aspects. The ethical substance concerns the domain of the subject's self that is concerned with moral conduct. The mode of subjection refers to the ways in which the subject of the journal is invited to recognise his moral obligations. Techniques of self-formation or asceticism refer to the ways in which the subject acts on himself in order to behave ethically, and telos refers to the kind of being towards which the subject's ethical conduct is aimed (Tamboukou 2003, pp.16-17; Foucault 1992, 2000a).

Such ethical practices are intended to stylise as opposed to codify conduct and behaviour, and involve taking up an attitude of 'care of the self' (Foucault 1990) within the subject's surrounding world. This attitude is constructed as a concrete social practice that involves particular relationships, exchanges and communications between individuals. These social practices embrace interpersonal as well as institutional contexts. Care of the self is concerned with 'the government of the self by oneself in its articulation with relations of others' (Foucault 2000a, p.88). Caring for the self relies on communication with others and consideration of the effect of one's actions on other people. The attitude of caring for the self therefore does not result in individualism. Caring for the self is not an exercise in solitude; it is not solipsistic. Caring for the self involves attuned analysis of the ways in

which our actions are located within social, historical and political contexts. This focus on interpersonal action and change means that poststructural ethics can be easily incorporated into the classroom as a framework for praxis (Foucault 1990, 1992, 2000a; McNay 1992; McLaren 2002; O’Leary 2002).

Feminists such as McNay (1992, 1994, 2000), Flax (1990) and Grimshaw (1993) have countered the claim that such an aesthetic/ethical discourse offers a view of the self that is socially constituted and capable of autonomy and engaging in practices of freedom. They claim that such work is solipsistic in failing to acknowledge collective goals and aspirations. The focus on the aesthetic stylisation of the self that is constantly engaged in remaking itself is socially isolated and individualistic. This leads to a notion of the self that is detached from the feminist commitments of enduring relationships and participation within political communities. Foucault’s is a ‘politics of introversion’ that stands outside of any ‘politics of solidarity’ (McNay 1992, p.158). Rorty (cited in McNay 1992, p.159) contests that a project of aesthetics can only be indulged in by the privileged elite detached from the harsh political and material realities of life. Rather than dispute these claims this research does not see the necessity to preclude strategies for transformation and change that occur within an interpersonal framework. Such a project is considered by this thesis as complementing, rather than standing in opposition to more communal projects (Alcoff 1990; McNay 1992).

2.10 Agency as discursive change

The essentialist core that much humanist discourse seeks to uncover is recast within this thesis’s theoretical positioning as a part of a web of signifying practices that make available certain subject positions and exclude others. Traditional definitions of agency presume liberal humanist subjects that individually choose on the basis of their own personal desires. Their choice is seen to be free as opposed to socially constituted. This thesis positions agency as discursively constructed, involving the privileging of some subject positions to some people, but not to others.

... it is not a necessary element of human action to be agentic, it is a contingent element, depending upon the particular discursive practices in use and the positioning of the person in those practices (Davies & Harre in Davies 1991, p.344).

Abandoning the concept of the ‘male, other-than-female heroic individual who stands out from the crowd, whose life is the stuff of history’ (Davies 1991, p.50), agency is

positioned by this thesis in terms of speaking subjects being made aware of the different ways in which they are made subject, and who become authors of the ways in which they are disruptive or otherwise of existing discourses. The capacity to recognise such a constitution of the self, and to be able to subvert or transform it if one so desires, is the objective of transformation and change. Agency is not about an individual standing outside of social structure and processes, being free of discursive constitution, but becoming attuned to their interplay with the constitution of subjectivity. A discursive approach to investigating agency promotes a view of power structures that are more malleable and open to the impact of human activity than a modernist approach allows (Davies 1991, 1994; Eyre 2000). It is the use of discursive practices rather than the individual that needs to be seen as a site of contradiction. Understanding is shaped through the discourses that are made available. An aim of the pedagogic environment is to provide the opportunity to develop the critical skills needed to ‘engage in the conversational and textual analysis necessary to refuse, to change those practices’ (Davies 1991, p.359). The central question revolves around whether or not there is awareness of the constitutive force of discursive practices and the means for resisting or changing unacceptable practices (Davies 1991, p.359).

2.11 Problematising choice

Even though there is much potential in being able to position oneself differently within new discourses, there can also be deep resistance to the potential for such change, particularly if one’s body has learned to interact in the world in certain ways.

If one’s body has learned to interact with the world in certain ways, then these ways need more than access to new discursive practices to change them. Or the means of translating an idea into everyday practice may not easily be achieved, one’s life-practice-as-usual, or life as the practical expression of old familiar discourses always coming more readily to hand (Davies 1991, p.50).

Maximising agency is not akin to increasing choices of available discursive positions. A multiplicity of subject positions or discourses to choose from does not necessarily provide the armoury needed to stand against powerful discourses. Increasing available discursive positions is an important strategy of the poststructural educational practitioner; however, in instances where a discourse that would promote agency is not chosen or not able to be taken up, one is left with a determinist position that the discourse was too powerful if the idea of choice is not problematised. The act of choosing cannot be separated from the act of constituting subjectivity (Butler 1992, 1999).

Therefore locating agency within the idea of availability to a range of discourses, and understanding how subjectivities are constructed within discourses is not enough to consider the impact of modern forms of power in constraining and/or transforming change. Discourses invest the status of truth or naturalness and give the appearance of being the only way to do subjectivity or to construct reality. In addition to this, there needs to be an acknowledgement in terms of the ways in which power works to both constrain and promote transformation simultaneously. In doing this, the study draws upon Butler's (1997a, 1997b) and Foucault's (1995) notion of subjection and Butler's (1999) notion of the performative.

2.12 Subjection as the site of agency

A central feature of this study is the idea of subjection (McNay 2000), the simultaneous process of being subordinated by power as well as that power being the very condition for becoming a subject and containing the possibility of transformation. Subjection denotes the initiation of the subject through a primary submission to power. Power is duplicitous in that it simultaneously subordinates and produces. 'Power is the effect of the subject and that power is what subjects effect' (Butler 1997b, p.13). Power forms the subject, providing the conditions of our existence, and it is therefore not only something that we oppose, but depend on for our existence and 'what we harbor and preserve in the beings that we are' (Butler 1997b, p.2). Power not only acts on a subject, but also enacts the subject into being.

There is an irony in this duplicity of constraint and resistance being the site for poststructural versions of agency, where the experience of being dominated by power external to oneself is reframed as also containing the tools and resources for the construction and reconstruction of the subject. This site of ambivalence is the site where the subject emerges and where agency resides (Butler 1997b). Subjection is the making of a subject. Subjection is a power that not only 'acts on a given individual as a form of domination, but also activates or forms the subject' (Butler 1997b, p.84).

A prisoner or a gay man is not regulated by an exterior relation of power constituted by the subordinating aims of an institution or structure. The individual that is a prisoner or that is gay is formulated through their discursively constituted identity. Discursive regimes act in concert within individual bodies to approximate an ideal, a norm of behaviour or a

model of obedience and it is through this process that an identity or individuality is rendered coherent and taken up in a totalising way. The individual becomes the 'principle of his own subjection' (Foucault 1995, p.203).

The idea that power is the condition of the subject, that it initiates the subject, does not conflate with the power that is the subject's agency. The subject therefore obtains its agency from precisely the power that it opposes. 'The subject is neither fully determined by power nor fully determining of power' (Butler 1997b, p.17). A critical analysis of this simultaneous notion of power as constraint and enablement involves three dimensions. Firstly, it requires an account of the way in which regulatory discourses effect power relations to the extent that they maintain subjects in subordination by producing a demand for continuity, visibility and place. Secondly, it involves recognising that this continuous and visible place can never be fully realised due to language never being able to fix and determine a definitive reality. There are always limits to the boundaries of languages fixity that can be surpassed. There are always other ways of being and knowing. Thirdly, any account of the formation of subjectivity through subjection involves accounting for the way that agency may be realised through opposing and transforming the social terms through which it is made possible. The analysis of subjectification is double-edged in that it traces the conditions of subject formation as well as tracing the turns against the conditions for the making of the subject.

It is argued that this critical evaluation of the subject in formation is better able to assist with explaining the double binds to which our commitment to emancipation leads, namely simultaneous constraint and resistance, having a consciousness and awareness that acting in certain ways will not be in our best interests but still continuing to act in those fashions (Butler 1997b, p.29).

2.13 The performativity of gender

Positioned within a performative view of gender (Butler 1999) the discursive analysis of the research focuses on the productive aspect of power to produce and maintain categories of sex, gender and desire through social practices. Power works in such a way as to make these categories appear natural, and therefore uncontested.

Gender is seen as a technique of production for the constitution of the categories of man and woman. Gender is the discursive means by which the idea of man and woman as

natural entities, with fundamentally different essential characteristics is produced and established as a pre-discursive, politically neutral plane on which culture acts. Gender is therefore a doing, a performative, though it is not done by a subject that pre-exists the deed. Gender is performative in that it constitutes the identity that is purported to be. 'Performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual' (Butler 1999, p.xv).

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, as a set of repeated acts within a highly regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being (Butler 1999, p.44).

The internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts. These internal features of the self are anticipated and produced through bodily acts. Gender attributes are not expressive, but performative. These attributes then make up the identity they are said to express or reveal. The very expressions that are said to be the result of gender are actually what constitutes it. The stylisation of the body produces the effect of gender. Bodily movements, styles and gestures construct an illusion of an enduring and stable gendered self. This appearance of substance is then understood as a constructed variable, a performative act, a series of norms that can never be fully internalised. The idea of identity as seamless is replaced with the idea that gender identity is a stylised configuration of space, time and history. The structure of repeated acts seeks to establish the ideal or illusion of a substantial ground. Subjectivities, including ideas of the body are not seen as a surface awaiting signification and inscription, but as a set of boundaries enmeshed within social, individual and political significations (Butler 1999, pp.11, 33; McLaren 2002).

2.14 Agency as departure from repetition

This thesis takes the view that it is through the repetition of signifying practices that particular action is valorised and normalised (Butler 1999). The process of production and mobilisation of subjectivity involves the discursive repetition of normalising aims. Agency is therefore not determined by cultural norms or even through access to them. There is no agency or reality outside of the discursive practices that give meaning to terms and inscriptions (Butler 1999). The subject is signified within the regulated processes of repetition of rule-governed discourses.

It is the occasional discontinuity of these repeated acts that disclose and shed light on the temporal and contingent nature of these acts. The arbitrary relation between such acts, the possibility of the acts not always being repeated, their potential and inevitable

displacement provides the opportunity for exposing their solidity and naturalness as a political construction. Agency is activated at the point of departure from this repetition (Butler 1999, p.179).

The subject is not determined by the rules through which it is generated because signification is not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantializing effects. In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; “agency” then is to be located within the variation on that repetition (Butler 1999, p.185).

The subject is not determined by these rules that generate its intelligibility because ‘signification is not a founding act but a regulated process of repetition’ (Butler 1999, p.185). These rules governing intelligibility not only restrict but enable other possibilities for intelligibility and meaning-making. It is within the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of particular categories of identity becomes possible. The demand to be a gendered subject occurs within an array of conflicting discursive fields. It is within this convergence of competing discourses that the norm of reaching particular naturalised ideals becomes tentative and at risk of failing.

2.15 Reverse discourse

The possibility of repetition fuels the capacity to stall the consolidation of unity and undermine the force of normalisation. This can occur through practices of reverse discourse, such as the category of homosexual which has been used against the processes of normalisation that spawned its existence as a pathological category of the medical sciences to define those that were other to the normalcy and health of heterosexuality. Homosexuality, deployed in the service of normalising heterosexuality, has been used by queer communities to depathologise homosexuality as an illness. The risk is that homosexuality is renormalised, which has occurred within the gay and liberation politics that assume an essential and inherent genetic quality to gay and lesbian identity and sexuality (Halperin 1995).

2.16 Convergence of multiple and conflicting discourse

The other potential for resistance or subversion to subjection occurs through the capacity that is created through the convergence and intersection of multiple and competing

discourses. The inadvertent discursive complexity of the clash of discourses undermines the 'teleological aims of normalisation' (Butler 1997b, p.93). The contradiction and confusion of competing discourses undermines the ability of a subjectifying norm to repeat its invocation and substantiate itself. The reiteration of the discursive norm is interrupted. The clash of discursive positions produces other and alternative knowledges that provide a site of possibility, a place of subversion where the subjectifying norm can be redirected. The contestatory relations produced within the discursive clash of competing and contradictory positionings provides the site of agency. The discursive apparatus produces the subject but also contains the tools for subverting this production. The subject comes into being as a result of language, always within the terms of this language, and it is within these terms that other possibilities for being and knowing – hence, agency – occur (Butler 1997b; Foucault 1983, 1995; Michael White 2002).

2.17 Speaking at the borders of what is permissible – agency as parrhesiastic acts

Consistent with the poststructural underpinnings of this research is the idea that one never speaks a language that is fully one's own (Butler 1997a). Language only gains power through its repeated invocations. Language gains its temporal life only through the 'utterances that reinvolve and restructure the conditions of its own possibility' (Butler 1997a, p.140). Language and discourse can never fully determine subjectivity in advance. The possibility for language and discourse to take on non-ordinary meanings, to operate in contexts where it does not usually belong, to open up unknown contexts, to establish parrhesiastic spaces, provides the political hope for a theory of language as performative (Butler 1997a).

Parrhesia is a political practice and a practice of the self (McLaren 2002, p.152). Parrhesia is a form of free speech where the speaker is in danger from dominant modes of knowledge/power and resists that domination. Parrhesian discourse is not merely free speech, but frank speech in the face of indeterminate danger. The act of speaking involves costly consequences that cannot be determined beforehand. It introduces a context of conflict. 'The parrhesiastic act opens up a space of freedom and truth that was not there before ... a kind of eruptive truth-speaking where a breach is called' (Ransom 1997, p.164).

New discursive regimes are produced through the unspeakable. No position of subjectivity is possible or permissible without some other position being impressible or impossible. 'The formation of the subject is tied to the circumscribed production of the domain of the speakable (Butler 1997a, p.139). When a subject speaks at the border of what a discourse circumscribes as permissible there is a risk of redrawing the boundaries of what is and is not sayable and defined as truth or reality. This is what makes these acts parrhesiastic. Due to agency being an effect of power, as opposed to an inherent will or freedom, agency is constrained but not necessarily determined or foreclosed. It is within this space of foreclosure and constraint that the possibility of agency arises. The delimiting aspects of the discursive regime become the possibilities for transformation and change. The way in which a discourse limits and forecloses what is possible, what is sayable, what is truth, relies on its being repeated to reconsolidate its power and efficacy. 'A structure only remains a structure through being reinstated as one' (Butler 1997a, p.139).

2.18 Political oppositions

The position that there is no agency or reality outside of the discursive practices that give meaning to terms and inscriptions (Butler 1999) has been opposed by feminist writers, Waugh (1989), Benhabib (1992) and Soper (1994). They warn of the dangers in moving away from notions of a collective identity with respect to a political project. They claim there is political necessity in claiming common definitions of woman or gay or lesbian. This is to ensure that the oppression and discrimination that marginalised peoples experience is not reduced to individual acts, or made provisional and reductionist. Within the thesis of the dissolution of the subject, the subject is forever caught in the chain of signification and resultant fictive meanings. The subject then becomes yet another position in language. Its capacity to initiate is thus dissolved. Alongside this is the dissolution of concepts of intentionality, accountability, self-reflexivity and autonomy (Eagleton 1996, p.374).

The variation in repetition of signification does not require a subject or additional resource to bring it about. The variation does not have to be summoned. I argue that agency is never complete or founded, due to the fact that individuals are continuously being produced by and within relations of power. Agency has no controlling authorship about how a subject sets a certain course in guaranteeing its future signification. Agency is located within the performativity of signifiers that are repeated or cited. It is politically contingent. This is not to say that agency is determined or that the subject is dead, but that the notion of subjectivity is approached as a problematic and its 'constitution within

discursive formations seen as the very precondition of its agency'. Agency is then located within language where language is seen as 'an act with consequences'. The inability of language to be fixed and fixable to a definitive origin means that language becomes one of the most important tools to contesting power, 'language is always open to challenge and redefinition with shifts in discursive context' (Kumar 2000, p.85). Language becomes the condition of possibility for refusing the processes of subjectivication. (Derrida 1976; Butler 1997a, pp.6, 28, 1993, 1999; McLaren 1995b, p.237

2.19 The political use of identity categories

But the relationships we have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation. To be the same is really boring. We must not exclude identity if people find their pleasure through this identity, but we must not think of this identity as an ethical universal rule (Foucault 2000b, p.166).

This thesis does not research identity within a hermeneutic epistemology. Universality of identity is problematised but not exclusively seen in negative and exclusionary terms. If it is used as a non-substantial and open-ended category' (Butler 1999, p.xvii) it can have important strategic use in political and campaigns that are involved in ending discrimination and oppression within marginalised communities. Although acknowledging normative judgments must be made to enable political action (Francis & Archer 2004), this thesis is supportive of identity categories being deployed strategically for political purposes in relation to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex community issues (Butler 1993, p.229).

The mobilization of identity categories for the purposes of politicization always remain threatened by the prospect of identity becoming an instrument of the power one opposes. That is no reason not to use, and be used, by identity. There is no political position purified of power, and perhaps that impurity is what produces agency as the potential interruption and reversal of regulatory regimes (Butler 1999, p.xxvi)

The production of identity, and how this production can obscure the workings of power that produces it, forms a critical aspect of this study's investigation (Bickford 2001). This thesis does not advocate abolishing all categories but argues for attention to be placed on the ways in which identity categories act in normative ways as part of the operation of power. Within its commitment to a genealogical approach, this thesis is interested in exploring identity as a political category, researching its formation and effect. It questions the process formation and seeks to undermine its given-ness and solidity. In doing so it enables such identity categories to expand their scope and allow us to become more aware

of the implications in using such terms, their purposes and the power relations that bring about their usage (Rabinow 1984; Butler 1999, 2004; Foucault 2000b; McLaren 2002).

This research explores the possibilities for affirming identities in process that are ‘instituted and relinquished according to the purpose at hand’ (Butler 1999, p.22). The exploration of identity exists in a space where multiple convergences and divergences occur, refusing to be claimed by a normative ideal of definitional closure. Identity is therefore an effect of discursive practices (Butler 1999).

2.20 Investigating resources for agency

The idea that the subject is discursively produced does not mean that the subject is spoken into existence. The matrices of power and discourse that constitute the subject are multi-varied and enmeshed within complex, contradictory and competing relations. An identity does not need to be in place for political interests to be elaborated and acted upon. In relation to agency, the doer does not hold a stable existence prior to the act it negotiates or carries out. ‘There need not be a “doer behind the deed”, but that the “doer” is variably constructed in and through the deed’ (Butler 1999, pp.136-139). It is the construction of the subject and the act that the subject carries out, in and through each other, within the locus of discourse that provides the fulcrum for theorising poststructural agency. This thesis refutes theories that assume agency can only be established through a pre-discursive I; and that to be constituted by discourse invariably equals being determined by it, therefore foreclosing the possibility of agency (Butler 1999; Eagleton 1996, pp.342, 367).

Through the discursive analysis of the construction of the self that was enacted in my coming out journal, the research disputes the claims that the performative theory of the construction of subjectivity (Butler 1999, 1997a, 1997b) fails to identify the factors that enable the variations in repetition that are considered vital for an agency to contest regulatory norms of sex, gender and desire (Benhabib 1992; McNay 1992; Nussbaum 1999). The discursive analysis of the coming out journal is an investigation into the resources necessary for human agency. It provides a contextual site for examining how actual persons are engaged in realising change, and it claims that a fully socially constructed subject can bear agency (Barvosa-Carter 2001).

2.21 The relevance to advancing critical pedagogy

As a study into the possibilities for an ethical subjectivity in a poststructural world, the research does not abandon the emancipatory ideals of freedom and truth central to critical/feminist pedagogies. A poststructural ethics reframes freedom, transformation and change as a critique of the ways in which knowledge and power discursively act to limit positions of subjectivity. Transformation and change can occur in local, daily and interpersonal contexts through adopting the attitude of caring for the self (Foucault 1990). The attitude of caring for the self is an ethical project located within a feminist commitment to enduring relationships and participation within political communities. Poststructural ethics contributes significantly to feminist politics in that it focuses on structural and systemic change through challenging dominant, hegemonic discourses at the locus of the interpersonal. The significance of the locus of the interpersonal was the main reason for choosing the coming out journal as the principal data source (McLaren 2002).

In this thesis poststructural agency is defined as the acknowledgment that one's current self-interpretation is only one among many others. People are more than one dominant interpretation they, or others, have of themselves. Critical resistance (O'Leary 2002) involves acting on and remaining open to other alternatives and possibilities. A pedagogical project that incorporates critical resistance facilitates a process of trying to know how and to what extent it is possible to think otherwise from what is already known. Critical resistance does not 'legitimate what is already known' (Foucault 1992, p.9), but allows thought to detach itself from what it silently thinks (O'Leary 2002, pp.8, 72).

A discursive analysis of subjectivities construction focuses on the networks of practices that constitute subjects in shifting, multiple, contradictory sites and leads to a more complex understanding of identity (Lather 1995). Agency is reconstructed as effects of techniques of subjectification rather than as natural rights or essences that the discourses of emancipation can unfurl (Donald 1985 in Lather 1991, p.42).

Context and meaning in everyday life are posited as co-constructions, multiple, complex, open and changing, neither pre-given nor explainable by large-scale causal theories, but made and re-made across a multiplicity of scattered practices (Lather 1991, p.42).

Agency is viewed within this thesis as a fluid, constantly changing landscape, always in motion as it negotiates a field of diffuse discourses and fragile systems (Lather 1991,

p.42). While the authoring of our lives is subject to regimes of meaning, people are involved in the discursive self-production of coherence and continuity. The self is constantly engaged within negotiating the boundaries of its own meaning within relations of power (Lather 1991, p.118). This decentering of agency is not to abandon a notion of the subject, but to reconfigure it within the plurality and agency of meaning and discourse (Lather 1991, p.120, 2000).

Pedagogy therefore becomes a 'discursive process of writing reality' where subjects are involved in a process of writing and being interpreted by themselves and others (Gabel 2001, p.178). Truth is regarded as a multiplicity, foregrounding the diversity of meanings and the continual process of reinterpretation. Truth is not a foundation towards which pedagogy strives to work towards finding. Text replaces the mind as the locus of enunciation. The self is seen as a textual artifact that is open to reinterpretation. The data analysis chapters of this study explore the self of the coming out journal as a textual artifact. Difference and discourse replaces identity as a strategy for reading the construction of subjectivity. Through reading the way in which subjectivity is played out within relations of power and discourse, identity becomes something that is forever shifting and changing. The familiar is made strange, normative frameworks are made queer (Gore 1993; Halperin 1995; Poster 1989, p.15).

In inquiring into how discourse and power is played out through the experience of the everyday living of coming out, this thesis argues that the capacity for individuals to choose and move between different subjectivities is integral to a sense of agency. If people are denied the opportunity to be choosers, rule-setters and self-makers with respect to their subjectivities then they are denied the moral capacity to live in freedom (Svensson 1997, pp.74, 90). This framework is aimed at changing oppressive relations, but within an environment that foregrounds a 'will to knowledge' (Foucault 1995) rather than a 'will to truth' (Foucault 1995). A will to knowledge is a general desire to know and emerges from an epistemology that embraces uncertainty and the repeated questioning of how one's thoughts and selves construct versions of truth. A will to knowledge stands in contrast to a will to truth, which involves a desire to know the difference between truth and falsity within discourse. The will to knowledge is used to assist in countering the construction of positions that stand as a will to truth, fixed and final, acting as a norm or law, protected from rethinking and change (Gore 1993, 10; Luke & Gore 1992).

2.22 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the study's theoretical positioning with feminist poststructuralist theory. It has outlined how discourse structures the perception of reality and frames normative ideas that categorise and establish boundaries around what is considered as truth. Discourses are not fixed and their ambiguity provides the potential to disrupt their cohesiveness. The normative impact of discourse constructs relations of power that have disciplinary effects on the construction of subjectivity. It has been argued that power is an enabling and relational force that simultaneously restrains and enables action. Subjectivity has been defined as a form, rather than a substance and its agency comes about through an attuned critical analysis of its construction through the interplay of discourse, power and truth. Particular strategies for maximising agency have been forwarded that include the disruption of the normalising aims of discourse, reversing the terms of discursive structures, investigating the borders of discursive structures for their potential to decentre their apparent fixity and fictions and speaking at the margins of discourses as a way of exposing alternative and subjugated knowledges. This reworking of the term agency within a poststructural landscape and outside the traditional duality of free will versus determinism will be employed by the discursive analysis of the coming out journal to investigate the construction of subjectivity. The investigation into the way in which discourse, power, and truth effect constructions of the self will be employed to advance critical/feminist pedagogies concern with maximising the capacity for interpersonal change and transformation. The study is concerned with the ways in which power is constructed and contested on a daily basis and within local milieus. The next chapter moves to detail the methodological principles and methods for the discursive analysis of the coming out journal that was the social site for examining this nexus between agency, subjectivity and transformation and change.

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodological principles that have guided this research. Its aim is to assist the reader gain a thorough understanding of how the research was conducted, and to validate the methodology's coherence with the study's poststructural meta-theoretical principles. The methodology for my discursive analysis of subjectivity and its (de)construction draws from the traditions of genealogy and ethnography whose 'meeting points are not always discernable or easy to classify' (Tamboukou & Ball 2003a, p.3). The thesis argues (after Tamboukou & Ball 2003a,b) that genealogy and ethnography are worthwhile traditions to draw from in poststructural research because they have the ability to question the validity and authority of scientific knowledge; take into account local and specific contexts within a critical perspective; move beyond existing systems of thought; disrupt current states of play within power/knowledge networks; focus on foregrounding marginalised and silenced subject positions and restore a political dimension to the research process (Tamboukou & Ball 2003a, pp.3-4). The chapter outlines the methodologies standpoint within critical constructivist (Kincheloe 1997), critical autoethnographic (Reed-Danahay 1997) and feminist poststructural theory (Lather 1991; Wearing 1996; Weedon 1987). The chapter then outlines the process of data collection and analysis within a constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002) and Foucauldian genealogical (Carrabine 2001; Gore 1993; Tamboukou 2003) discourse analysis.

3.2 Critical constructivist research

In drawing from critical constructivist research (Kincheloe 1993), the thesis is interested in making sense of power and exposing the places in which it hides (Foucault 2002c). Critical constructivist research works against a hermeneutic closure or production of a final reading, and the production of research narratives that are conflict-free, seamless, objective, coherent, consistent and official (Kincheloe 1997, pp.58-62). In embracing

poststructural thinking the relationship between fiction and fact becomes blurred. Rather than data accurately reflecting reality, data is analysed for how it constructs and presents reality within a historical and cultural frame. The research decentres the authority of empiricism, or the belief that there is a real tangible experience that can be known, narrated and read. The authority of language and the stability of meaning from which it derives are displaced. Also decentred is the authority of reading and understanding, which presumes a direct relationship between the readers' reading and the texts' telling. Within poststructural thinking the reality of ethnographic research is taken as the effect of the discourses of the real (Britzman 2000, pp.28, 38; Kincheloe 1993, p.197).

In using myself as a research subject and object of research, the study draws from critical constructivist (Kincheloe 1997) research to assist with the searching and re-searching of the multiple and conflicting selves that constitute the subjectivities of my coming out journal. This is done in order to enable reflexivity in the writer and reader so that we come to terms with the 'ideology of representation' (Morrow 1991, p.161 in Tierney 1997, p.25). The purpose of the research is therefore to defamiliarise not refamiliarise the re-reading of my coming out journal. This is achieved through deconstructing the authentic self, de-centering the text, making unheard voices loud and upsetting the silence that narratives use as a fictional ploy to construct their coherence. The aim is to 'produce an account of social life that bothers the writer's and perhaps the readers' confidence in truth, in the visible and the real' (Britzman 2000, p.30; Kincheloe 1997, p.72; Warren 1997, p.22).

3.3 A post-critical autoethnography of the construction of subjectivities

As an autoethnographic (Reed-Danahay 1997) piece of research, the study collapses the binaries of true/false, subject/object, researcher/researched, observer/observed, ethnographer/native, valid/invalid that are the epistemological foundations of modernist and positivist research. All of these positions are taken up simultaneously within an autoethnographic piece of research. The research process demonstrates the complexity of how life is lived within a poststructural world, its hesitancy, its refashioning and its challenge to a unitary and coherent narrative about experience. Rather than present the real story of my coming out, the methodology assists me to present a 'mystory' (Lincoln & Denzin 2000, pp.1055) text of multiple stories that, in turn, uncover how the real is produced as the real (Brodkey 1996; Davies 1992; Kamler 2001, p.3; Lather & Smithies 1997).

The discursive analysis engages in a fluid process of moving back and forth, first out, then in, then back and forth with the data, blurring the distinctions between the individual and the social. The process involves constructing oneself as the subject of the research, simultaneously with one being constituted as the object. In making connections between the personal and the historical, representational and political, a contextualisation of narrative accounts of life occurs. Such narratives begin with the veracity of autobiographical memories, epiphanies and existential crises, before moving into a critical analysis of these stories in terms of hegemonic meta discourse. Such a process analyses autobiographical stories in order to make visible that which is taken for granted. It is these critical re-readings that produce moments of transformation and empowerment. Such an activity is designed to promote ownership over stories that have been constructed within other discourses, transforming them into more powerful vehicles for social change and agency (Denzin 1999, p.514). As such, the analysis of my coming out journal can only offer partial truths. Experience does not speak for itself. Critical autoethnography (Kideckel 1997) evokes an examination of the interrelationship between what people own as their personal experience, with the materials and practices that originate outside of them (Brodkey 1994, 1996; Bruner 1993; Davies 1994; Flemons & Green 2002; Haug et al. 1987; Kamler 2001; Rowan 2001; Slattery 2001).

3.4 Problematising narrative research in education

The methodology is designed to subvert the modernist project of the sequential realist tale that constructs relations of cause and effect. The aim is 'to spatialise the conventional narrative and to locate the autobiographical in its social and cultural landscape' (Kamler 2001, p.2). Reframing personal experience as narrative production problematises (Kincheloe 1997) the tendency for narrative research (Barone 2001; Berger 2001; Bochner & Ellis 2002; Denzin 1997; Ellis 1997, 1999, 2001; Ellis & Bochner 1996; Polkinghorne 1988; Tierney & Lincoln 1997) to represent, as opposed to construct, a purer and richer version of the truth of the human condition. Narrative research is a discourse, or genre, that patterns constructions of reality (Gough 2002). Narrative research may not be attuned to its own normative constructions and foundations in relation to ideas about subjectivity. Narrative research can hide its storied events from constructions of gender, race, sexuality, ability, age, geography, culture, space and time. The shift in ethnography away from scientificity and the appropriation of other cultures through confessional tales of the field, authorial self-revelation and personal narrative risks romancing the speaking subject

where authenticity and voice are 'reinscriptions of some unproblematic real' (Lather 2001, p.483). As a critical autoethnographic study, the analysis of life events is located within the social and historical contingency of knowledge. The process of reflecting on life stories and significant moments from one's past are relocated as 'embodied social and political acts' (Kamler 2001, p.5). The examination of life stories is not the determination of some truth or the uncovering of a false consciousness, but an engagement with a process of dislocating and relocating experience within a multiplicity of constructions (Kamler 2001, pp.7-9).

It is not the ethnographer's work to "bestow" or to "disavow" the verisimilitudes of others. Instead, the problem is to theorise the modes of intelligibility that constitute subjects. The problem is not one where the ethnographer authenticates a particular truth. Rather, the ethnographer traces, but not without argument, the circulation of competing regimes of truth (Britzman 2000, p.36).

The methodology is designed to challenge the use of autobiography by some educators as a way of assisting the progression of the knowable, always accessible conscious self, progressing from ignorance to knowledge of self. Autobiography as a genre of research writing in educational research and as a method of reflective practice for teachers has become codified in recent years (Miller 1998). Such normative uses of autobiography limit and close down the possibilities for constructing open and resignifiable selves. This research therefore is about dis-identifying with my self(ves),

To dis-identify and to de-naturalise to make one's object un-natural is to strategically produce difference out of what was once familiar and the same (Greene 1996, p.327).

By focusing on constructions of the self, or subjectivities, the research argues that subjectivity is a process of becoming, never emerging into a final form, as opposed to focusing on where the subject may need to arrive (Barthes 1977; Probyn 1995, pp.4-8, 1996).

Introducing the notion of experience as an unstable construct does not depoliticise the agency and voice of myself as a marginalised gay man. In situating representation within the site of discourse, the political commitment to the right to speak and represent oneself is not lost. There is value in thinking the categories of agency and voice outside of humanist assumptions of a 'self capable of transcending history or a self that can somehow recover his or her authenticity from the unwieldy effects of discursive regimes of power and truth' (Britzman 2000, p.35). Poststructural thinking reframes ideas of voice and agency as the social effects rather than the originators of history and social relations (Foucault 1984; Kamler 2001; Smart 2002).

3.5 Working poststructurally with the data and its analysis

Poststructuralism is not seen as an alternative, successor regime of modernism, but as a theory that provides 'critiques and methods for examining the functions and effects of any structure or grid of regularity that we put into place' (Docker 2001; St. Pierre & Pillow 2000, p.6). The commitment to using poststructural thinking in the process of the research has been guided by employing some key principles that have assisted in maintaining a poststructural stance to working with the data and constructing the final artifact that is this thesis.

The research process has engaged in a working back and forth across the multiple and conflicting discourses that form the episteme (Foucault 1972) of poststructuralism/structuralism or postmodernism/modernism. Such a process involves a critically reflective dialogue or encounter that works through the interconnections and tensions in ways that belie the necessity of making a choice between two polar opposites (Giroux 1995, p.37; Lather 2001, 2000). Oppositional thinking reduces the complexities of any context and oversimplifies differences between positions; 'it constructs a politics of correctness; where one side must be seen as right and true, the other as wrong or outdated or theoretically and ideologically suspect' (Kamler 2001, p.22). Rather than working the tensions through in an oppositional or dialectic way, forcing a resolution by the emergence of a new synthesis, the methodology looks to immerse the researcher in a process where the continual coming up against 'stuck places' (Ellsworth 1997, p.xi in Lather 2001, p.482) provides a way of continual motivation in order to produce and learn from ruptures, failures, breaks and refusals (Lather 2001, p.482).

3.6 The researcher as flaneur

The research process has also evoked a subject position of flaneur to the data and data analysis. Rather than being autonomous voyeurs of the world around them, flaneurs are 'situated observers, located in material relations of power and privilege' (McLaren 1997, p.149). As a flaneur, the researcher is both subject and object of the gaze of the autoethnographic study. An ambiguous process of consumption and self-implication occurs through interpreting social and cultural relations through imagination and dreaming (McLaren 1997, pp.143-150). The discursive analysis has allowed me to exist both within something established and hegemonic, a white Anglo male but also existing outside of it, a

queer man resisting hetero and homonormativity. The research has involved negotiating spatial and temporal narratives, in private, public and hybridised spheres, and wrestling with the tension between the contingent and the universal, between presence and absence, between utopias and heterotopias, between temporal disjunctions and historical trajectories, and between implosions and explosions of subjectivity. This strategic and political process of merging the outside with the inside has assisted with the process of consuming and producing texts detachedly and actively. Often this process has occurred simultaneously. This study into the construction of my own subjectivities has sought new narratives, while purging myself of existing ones (Chang 2005; McLaren 1997, p.150).

3.7 Text as hupomnemata

Reading, re-reading, deconstructing and reconstructing the coming out journal data text, have been situated within the practice of hupomnemata (Foucault 1995, 2000; Kamler 2001). The keeping of hupomnemata, or personal notebooks, was a practice of self-writing within ancient Greece that assisted with the process of guiding and governing one's ethical behaviour (McLaren 2002, p.149). Rather than being acts of confessing private thoughts in an attempt to uncover truth, hupomnemata are acts of constituting subjectivities. As such they record quotations, fragments of things read, actions witnessed, arguments, reflections and are designed to be read, re-read, meditated over and used for conversation with oneself and others.

The intent is not to pursue the unspeakable, nor to reveal the hidden, nor to say the unsaid, but on the contrary to capture the already-said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read, and for a purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the self (Foucault 2000a, p.211).

They provide an interface between the personal and the social (Kamler 2001, p.50). Hupomnemata are to be distinguished from journals in Christian literature 'where the author seeks to tell the truth about himself and thus create a narrative of the self' (McLaren 2002, p.149).

Taking up a subject position of reading and rewriting my coming out journal as hupomnemata is different to the subject position that was taken up while writing the journal in my early twenties. The discursive frame that influenced its initial construction was one of using confession and deep self-analysis to come to a greater truth about my emerging sexuality, masculinity and therefore, identity. The aim of the coming out journal when it was first constructed was to ascertain the truth of my identity. Interfacing with my data text as hupomnemata assists to engage with a poststructural process of reading and

writing that moves beyond searching for hermeneutical depth and structural rules (Drefus & Rabinow 1983). The context is an engagement with rewriting the self through engaging with the clash of discourses that frame its constitution (Foucault 2000a; Kamler 2001).

3.8 Rigour and reflexivity

Consistent with feminist reconstructions of rigour in research, reflexivity has been encouraged at all stages of the process, fostering integrative thinking. Rather than minimise doubt and bias the research allows

... conflicting realities to coexist in their continuous reflection on research processes. The elimination of bias is presumed to be both impossible and inappropriate. Instead, it is the deliberate thoughtful assessment of how researchers themselves participate in creating and interpreting research data that is the mark of adequate feminist inquiry (Hall & Stevens 1991, p.21).

Rigour has also been applied in terms of the coherence between the methodological principles and the meta-theoretical principles underlying the study, the extent to which the text has the quality of polyvocality, critical subjectivity or intense self-reflexivity, and sacredness, or the extent to which the research process can contribute to human flourishing (Lincoln & Guba 2003).

Crystallisation (Richardson 1998) deconstructs the traditional notion of validity and reliability, providing a stronger grounding for the complexity and partiality of the topic at hand without losing structure and rigour. The result is that simultaneously we learn and know more about the data and we doubt what we know (Richardson 1998). Data achieves coherence owing to its reflection through an infinite variety of shapes, dimensions and angles, increased through the interface with the reader of the thesis;

Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose. Not triangulation, crystallisation (Richardson 1998, p.356).

The weaving of the data through five competing discourses, the juxtaposition of these discourses against the 13 categories, and the use of direct quotations from the coming out journal produce a series of different ‘takes’ (Richardson 1998, p.355) on the same topic, the one data set. This interweaving of the data and analysis provides multiple sites of invention, potential contestation and a decentering of authority and authorship. There is no fixed point or object that can be triangulated. Use of reflexivity and polyvocality cast the

data analysis in opposition to the truth telling of much modernist research (Gergen & Gergen 2000, p.1029; Richardson 1998, 2000).

The study also makes use of a systemised reflexivity (Lather 1991) which develops a conscious contextualisation of the theory-building process, regularly reviewing the process to ensure that the data is working towards extending theory and ensuring that the research process is producing constructs rather than being mere inventions of the researcher's perspective. Face validity (Lather 1991) has been employed within the supervisory relationship and participation within an ongoing research group through the duration of the candidature. This has assisted to construct an environment where the emerging analysis and building of theory has led to 'clicks of recognition and a yes of course' moments and produced moments where other knowledges and responses to the data not realised by the researcher have been able to be incorporated into the overall discursive analysis (Lather 1991).

3.9 Constructivist grounded theory

A constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002) approach has been employed in this research because it offers an opportunity to blend rigour and richness. The rigour applied through the coding process has assisted with a rich and evocative presentation of the data that is my coming out journal. This in turn has assisted in developing theoretical insights that resonated the complexity of the multiple and conflicting realities and viewpoints of the process of subjectivities construction. The constructivist grounded theory approach has assisted in the design of a palimpsestic methodology that assists the reader to mark the interface between researcher and data and decentre the division of object/subject (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002).

Grounded theory is an inductive approach to data gathering and analysis that argues that theory can be scaffolded through the attuned observation of the social world (Rice & Ezzy 1999). Concepts, categories and themes are developed while the research is in process. The purpose of constructivist grounded theory is to 'generate theory, not to verify it' (Charmaz 2000, p.513). This theory building occurs in an ongoing dialogical and flexible process between existing theory and the insights generated from the process of systematically working with the data. Situated within a constructivist epistemology it acknowledges

... the relativism of multiple social realities, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims towards interpretive understandings of subjects' meanings (Charmaz 2000, p.510).

In doing this, the study confronts proponents of the narrative turn in educational research methodology that claim grounded theory approaches are alienating (Richardson 2000) or prevent the portrayal of subjects' experience in its fullness (Reissman 1990b in Charmaz 2000, p.521). The analysis is informed by the view that literary narrative forms – in arguing for richness, depth and fullness – often belie their own discursive constructions. The theoretical and discursive standpoints that imbue the rich and full constructions of data are implicit. This lack of transparency leads to a romanticisation of the self. The constructed aspect of subjectivity and the authors' involvement within this process is not foregrounded (Charmaz 2000, p.510; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002).

Theoretical sampling was employed after each stage of the coding process. This involved returning to the coming out journal, sampling specific issues and looking for precise information that would assist in illuminating the emerging theory. This also assisted in building the textual layering of the chapters on thematic/category analysis and discourse analysis with direct quotations from the coming out journal. This sampling assisted in refining ideas, making them more useful and increasing the 'analytical inclusiveness' of the study (Charmaz & Mitchell 2002, p.160).

In addition to the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, the methodology has also employed memo writing aimed at building conceptual analyses and integration of the theoretical framework outlined in the literature review. Memos consisted of a range of notations. These included methodological notes concerning the processes of data collection and analysis; theoretical notes, which included hunches, ideas, poststructural connections, questions and uncertainties; and personal notes, which included more personal and emotional notes about the research, doubts, anxieties and pleasures. Interestingly, it was these notes that assisted in capturing the solidity of the modernist discourses that the discursive analysis was attempting to evade and decentre (Richardson 2000). Recording the 'stages of analytic development' (Charmaz 2000, p.517), writing memos helped to contend with the complexity and multifariousness of the data, to establish an analytic trajectory, to distil categories, to identify relationships between categories and to gain a sense of confidence in their ability to analyse data. This involved regularly going back and forth between the data and the drafts of chapters. This moving back and forth between the data and analysis contributed to the poststructural commitment to employ non-linear and multidimensional methodologies (Charmaz 2000).

3.10 Cultivating critical intelligence

This autoethnographic account of subjectivities, their construction and transformation is also grounded in moves to characterise social inquiry as a form of practical philosophy considering ethical rather than scientific considerations. Rigour has been applied to ensure the data analysis has significance and provides some purchase on the human phenomena under investigation. This kind of rigour also prevents analytical solipsism (Lincoln & Guba 2003, p.275). Rather than survey the validity of a study for what is true or false, incorrect or correct, the research is significant in terms of how it contributes to conceptions of the potentials and limits of human knowledge and functioning, cultivating critical intelligence and wisdom (Lincoln & Guba 2003, p.276). As such, it brings together ethics and epistemology (Lather 1993, p.686).

As a piece of social research that explores the nexus between choice and constraint within relations of power (Giddens 1979), this research is aimed at producing a praxis-oriented approach (Lather 1991) that enables me, the subject of the research, to change and reach greater understanding about my/the subject's particular situation, to develop a more attuned analysis of the ways in which 'taken-for-granted beliefs and the dominant culture has authority over us' (Bowers 1984 in Lather 1991, p.61). The research resonates with the lived concerns, fears and aspirations (Lather 1991) of myself as research subject and increases my capacity to see the connections between larger social issues and the particulars of everyday life. It is research that responds directly to the needs of an oppressed individual. Employing catalytic validity (Lather 1991), ensures the research process 're-orient, focuses and energises towards knowing reality in order to transform it' (Lather 1991, p.68).

A process of producing a sufficient account of the data in terms of its analysis (Seale 2002) has been achieved through the provision of detailed, rich or thick (Gertz 1973, 1991) accounts. The richness has been gained through embedding direct quotations from the coming out journal into the analysis chapters. Such techniques assist in constructing a process of dependability where 'decisions made are congruent with their circumstances and interpretations and recommendations are generally supported by the data' (Hall & Stevens 1991, p.19). This credibility was strengthened through a prolonged engagement (Hall & Stevens 1991) in the field of the data that was the reading, re-reading and interrogation of the coming out journal as a textual artifact. The complex

acknowledgement of the situatedness and historicity of people's lives is a hallmark of feminist research methodology (Hall & Stevens 1991).

3.11 Data collection

The process of data collection involved gathering a range of potential data. Eight sources of data were initially gathered prior to conducting any coding and thematic analysis. These sets of data included:

- 1 Notes and videotaped interviews from work that had been carried out with a therapist during 2000 and 2001. This therapy involved avocational issues and also vocational issues relating to a worker's compensation claim. The notes included summaries of the therapy sessions and recorded themes, ideas, phrases, and images from each session's conversations.
- 2 A journal kept in my early twenties while coming out. It contained personal writing, thoughts, poetry, quotes from novels and reflections on my university degree in Social Work. It documented time spent when voluntarily admitted to a psychiatric hospital. It also contained accounts of involvement within the gay communities' beat subculture. Beats are public places, usually parks and public toilets where men meet primarily for casual and anonymous sex.
- 3 Archive material on the plays and musicals performed in over the past ten years. This included biographical notes in programs, cards and letters from fellow actors and friends, review notices from newspapers, research and director's notes from rehearsals.
- 4 Recent journals that included poetry, creative writing, reflections on literature.
- 5 Journal material from Masters studies.
- 6 A memory box, which contained things of significance such as treasures from childhood.
- 7 Gay community and popular cultural news press at the time of coming out in my early twenties.
- 8 Key theoretical texts that were studied whilst undertaking an undergraduate Social Work degree.

3.12 Selecting the data for analysis

The data were chosen for their potential to offer rich narrative material for conducting a genealogical analysis of the construction of subjectivities, with a particular emphasis on gender and sexuality. The first decision was to select out some of the data sources as the overall data set was too large to effectively work with in the allocated time period of the research. The work with the therapist was selected out as it would have involved re-immersion in material and events that were emotionally too painful. Archive material from theatre was jettisoned as it was one of the least rich sources for examination of contradictory discourses. A considerable amount of time was then spent reading the coming out journal. It was realised that the journal offered a richly attuned source of data that powerfully constructed subjectivity. It was also written within different discursive frames and contexts from the writing and researching of the doctoral thesis. The discursive sites of modernism, Marxism, socialist and liberal feminism that the journal was originally constructed within would provide an interesting social site to revisit from the current nascent framework of poststructural thinking. A very cursory coding process of the coming out journal was conducted and an assessment was made that the data would well lend itself to discourse analysis. In consultation with my supervisor, it was concluded that the journal offered an extensive amount of material to work with and would become the primary data source. All the other potential data would become secondary sources.

3.13 Open coding and the construction of themes

The research process involved an initial open coding process where events, actions and interactions within the coming out journal were explored and compared for differences and similarities. This involved interacting with the data and posing questions to it. Coding assisted the overall aim of gaining new perspectives, which in turn were aimed at providing focus for the further analysis of the data. This conceptualisation of the coming out journal data produced the first 27 themes (Table 1, below). This was the first attempt to conceptualise the data in a way that exposed social processes and looked at the data in new ways 'to see relationships between events or interactions, and to develop new ways of describing these relationships' (Rice & Ezzy 1999).

Table 1. Themes emerging from initial open coding process

- 1 Acting on the world.
- 2 Reflecting on the world.
- 3 Searching for cause and effect.
- 4 Comfort with a decentred self, multiplicity and contradiction.
- 5 Either/or thinking – construction of thinking with binaries.
- 6 Searching for the truth.
- 7 Secrecy and hiding. Confessing something no one else knows.
- 8 Measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard (which may or may not be clear).
- 9 Violence, humiliation and hate.
- 10 A quest for depth, searching for something hidden and deep inside the self.
- 11 Conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices.
- 12 Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.
- 13 Structural analysis (i.e. situations and events are explored with respect to social systems and structures) of situations and events.
- 14 Acting/doing with others – friendship and community.
- 15 Acting/doing alone – in isolation.
- 16 Describing self according to others' points of view.
- 17 Valorising and or recognising difference.
- 18 Struggle, perseverance, stamina.
- 19 Time as linear.
- 20 Identification of self as real – something that can be known.
- 21 Identification of self as constructed.
- 22 Acts of parrhesia (eruptive truth speech).
- 23 Power as sovereign (top down and hierarchal). Traditional power.
- 24 Power as dispersed (produced in context). NB changed this as reading to Modern power – power as government.
- 25 Subjugated voices.
- 26 Competition, achievement, pursuit of success.
- 27 Openness to new ideas and new ways of thinking.

3.14 Seeking feedback

A frequency account (Table 2) of the initial 27 themes was then presented to a research group of colleague PhD students and my supervisor for feedback and reflection. Some interesting observations were made.

Table 2. Frequency account of the 27 themes	
<i>Themes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1 Acting on the world.	157
2 Reflecting on the world.	133
3 Searching for cause and effect.	159
4 Comfort with a decentred self, multiplicity and contradiction.	4
5 Either/or thinking - construction of thinking with binaries.	102
6 Searching for the truth.	75
7 Secrecy and hiding. Confessing something no one else knows.	284
8 Measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard which may or may not be clear).	420
9 Violence, humiliation and hate.	72
10 A quest for depth, searching for something hidden and deep inside the self.	45
11 Conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices.	104
12 Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.	107
13 Structural analysis (ie. situations and events are explored with respect to social systems and structures) of situations and events.	53
14 Acting/doing with others – friendship and community.	55
15 Acting/doing alone – in isolation.	32
16 Describing self according to others' points of view.	42
17 Valorising and or recognising difference.	17
18 Struggle, perseverance, stamina.	61
19 Time as linear.	8
20 Identification of self as real – something that can be known.	36
21 Identification of self as constructed.	6
22 Acts of parrhesia (eruptive truth speech).	24
23 Power as sovereign (top down and hierarchal). Traditional power.	44
24 Power as dispersed (produced in context). NB changed this as reading to Modern power – power as government.	42
25 Subjugated voices.	19
26 Competition, achievement, pursuit of success.	11
27 Openness to new ideas and new ways of thinking.	7

It was surprising that theme 19, 'Time as linear', recorded only eight counts. It was identified that all the specific references to dates and times had not been included. If this had been done the count would have been considerably higher.

This also led to discussing the journal text as an artefact, and considering it within the context of its genre as diary/confession. The genre establishes a secret of not being out and then records the traversal of the coming out process. This linear sequencing of time sees the issue of coming out being constructed within a time sequence of secret hidden, secret exposed, things confessed, things remaining hidden, and the ensuing struggle being played out with the end goal of resolution or transformation. Adding this to the meaning of the theme would have produced further counts of linearity.

The low count for theme four, 'Comfort with a decentred self, multiplicity and contradiction' was also noticed. Discussion produced the idea that perhaps this theme was too large in its scope and read more like a category therefore inhibiting the recording of pieces of texts that were relevant to what this theme was attempting to capture. Alternatively it was suggested that perhaps because of the embeddedness of the writing within modernist notions of the self, power and social change that the coming out journal text would reveal very few instances of a more poststructural notion of the self.

The group also read the list of themes as a piece of text and wondered to what extent they were constructed within a modernist as opposed to a poststructuralist framework. The initial close reading of the texts accorded a further immersion back into modernist thinking and this perhaps influenced the construction of the themes. The dominance of a modernist epistemology within the 27 themes was gleaned from the fact that many were constructed within a binary framework. For example, theme one, 'Acting', versus theme two, 'Reflecting'; theme 11, 'Conforming', versus theme 12, 'Resisting'; theme 14, 'Acting with others', versus theme 15, 'Acting alone'; and theme 20, 'Self as real', versus theme 21, 'Self as constructed'. This insight was useful in highlighting that there was no neutral space from within which the data could be judged. Often the frames that construct the meaning-making process remain hidden. It also validated the use of constructing collaborative ventures when conducting research as this produces a research space that opens up multiplicity and other ways of seeing and hearing the data texts.

3.15 The construction of categories

The next axial stage of the coding process involved more rigorous specifying of the themes in such a way that categories could be constructed. In the first instance the following six categories were constructed.

1 The application of traditional power _____

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
3	Searching for a cause and effect	159
13	Structural analysis (ie situations and events are explored with respect to social systems and structures) of situations and events.	53
23	Power as sovereign (top down and hierarchal). Traditional power.	44
5	Either/or thinking – construction of thinking within binaries.	102

2 The constructed self _____

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
4	Comfort with a decentred self, multiplicity and contradiction.	4
17	Valorising and recognising difference.	17
21	Identification of self as constructed.	6

3 Resisting subjugation _____

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
14	Acting/doing with others – friendship and community.	55
22	Acts of parrhesia (eruptive truth speech.	24
25	Subjugated voices.	19
27	Openness to new ideas and new ways of thinking.	7
18	Struggle, perseverance, stamina.	61
12	Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.	107
1	Acting on the world.	157

4 Surveillance of the self – the panoptic gaze

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
8	Measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard (which may or may not be clear).	420
11	Conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices.	104
24	Power as dispersed (produced in context). NB changed this as reading to Modern power – power as government.	42
16	Describing self according to others' points of view.	42
26	Competition, achievement, pursuit of success.	11

5 Hermeneutic searching

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
10	A quest for depth, searching for something hidden and deep inside the self.	45
20	Identification of self as real – something that can be known.	36
6	Searching for one truth.	75
2	Reflecting on the world.	133
19	Time as linear.	8

6 Purging the soul – seeking truth through redemption

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
7	Secrecy and hiding. Confessing something no one else knows.	284
15	Acting/doing alone – in isolation.	32
9	Violence, humiliation and hate.	72

These categories were again reported to the research group for comment. What initially struck the group was that even though the categories captured interesting meaning-making, there was an absence of the richness of the data that had been discussed when reflecting on the 27 themes. In inquiring into the process that had been undertaken to construct these six categories, it was apparent that the categories had been constructed by grouping themes in such a way that they were not repeated between categories. That is, the 27 themes were distributed across the six categories without being repeated. Therefore the ability to generate meaning-making was curtailed and did not adequately reflect the

richness of the data. This led to a more liberal attitude to the grouping or clustering of the themes and the following 13 categories were constructed.

1 Poststructural sensibility – unease, uncertainty, non-stability, non-coherence, confusion

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
2 Reflecting on the world.	133
12 Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.	107
13 Structural analysis (i.e. Situations and events are explored with respect to social systems and structures) of situations and events.	53
17 Valorising and or recognising difference.	17
18 Struggle, perseverance, stamina.	61
21 Identification of self as constructed.	6
22 Acts of parrhesia (eruptive truth speech).	24
25 Subjugated voices.	19
27 Openness to new ideas and ways of thinking.	7

2 The self against the world

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1 Acting on the world.	157
2 Reflecting on the world.	133
3 Searching for cause and effect.	159
6 Searching for the truth.	75
7 Secrecy and hiding. Confessing something no one else knows.	284
8 Measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard (which may or may not be known).	420
11 Conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices.	104
12 Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.	107
13 Structural analysis (i.e. Situations and events are explored with respect to social systems and structures) of situations and events.	53
26 Competition, achievement, pursuit of success.	11
18 Struggle, perseverance, stamina.	61

3 The social self

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
2 Reflecting on the world.	133
3 Searching for cause and effect.	159
11 Conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices.	104
12 Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.	107
13 Structural analysis (i.e. Situations and events are explored with respect to social systems and structures) of situations and events.	53
14 Acting/doing with others – friendship and community.	55
17 Valorising and or recognising difference.	17
21 Identification of self as constructed.	6
23 Power as sovereign (top down and hierarchal). Traditional power.	44
24 Power as dispersed (produced in context). Modern power – power as government.	42

4 The pathologised/individualised self

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
6 Searching for the truth.	75
7 Secrecy and hiding. Confessing something no one else knows.	284
8 Measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard (which may or may not be known).	420
9 Violence, humiliation and hate.	72
10 A quest for depth, searching for something hidden and deep inside the self.	45
15 Acting/doing alone – in isolation.	32
16 Describing self according to others' points of view.	42
20 Identification of self as real – something that can be known.	36

5 Being proactive/making a difference

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1 Acting on the world.	157
12 Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.	107
14 Acting/doing with others – friendship and community.	55
22 Acts of parrhesia (eruptive truth speech).	24
27 Openness to new ideas and ways of thinking.	7

6 Compliance

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
8 Measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard (which may or may not be known).	420
11 Conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices.	104
16 Describing self according to others' points of view.	42
24 Power as dispersed (produced in context). Modern power – power as government.	42

7 Romancing the self

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
2 Reflecting on the world.	133
3 Searching for cause and effect.	159
5 Either/or thinking – construction of thinking within binaries.	102
6 Searching for the truth.	75
7 Secrecy and hiding. Confessing something no one else knows.	284
10 A quest for depth, searching for something hidden and deep inside the self.	45
15 Acting/doing alone – in isolation.	32
16 Describing self according to others' points of view.	42
20 Identification of self as real – something that can be known.	36

8 The application of power

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
3 Searching for a cause and effect	159
5 Either/or thinking – construction of thinking within binaries.	102
6 Searching for the truth.	75
11 Conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices.	104
12 Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.	107
13 Structural analysis (i.e. situations and events are explored with respect to social systems and structures) of situations and events.	53
23 Power as sovereign (top down and hierarchal). Traditional power.	44
24 Power as dispersed (produced in context). Modern power – power as government.	42

9 The constructed self

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
4 Comfort with a decentred self, multiplicity and contradiction.	4
17 Valorising and recognising difference.	17
21 Identification of self as constructed.	6

10 Resisting subjugation

<i>Theme no.</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
14 Acting/doing with others – friendship and community.	55
22 Acts of parrhesia (eruptive truth speech.	24
25 Subjugated voices.	19
27 Openness to new ideas and new ways of thinking.	7
18 Struggle, perseverance, stamina.	61
12 Resisting hegemonic ideas and practices.	107
1 Acting on the world.	157

11 Surveillance of the self – the panoptic gaze

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
8	Measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard (which may or may not be clear).	420
11	Conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices.	104
24	Power as dispersed (produced in context). NB changed this as reading to Modern power – power as government.	42
16	Describing self according to others' points of view.	42
26	Competition, achievement, pursuit of success.	11

12 Hermeneutic searching

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
10	A quest for depth, searching for something hidden and deep inside the self.	45
20	Identification of self as real – something that can be known.	36
6	Searching for one truth.	75
2	Reflecting on the world.	133
19	Time as linear.	8

13 Purging the soul – seeking truth through redemption

<i>Theme no.</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
7	Secrecy and hiding. Confessing something no one else knows.	284
15	Acting/doing alone – in isolation.	32
9	Violence, humiliation and hate.	72

The original six categories were incorporated, although the category, 'The application of traditional power', was changed to, 'The application of power', to reflect both traditional and modern forms of theorising about power in relation to the work of Foucault (1980a, 1984, 1995, 2002c).

The 13 new categories reflected more adequately the different selves that were competing within relations of power, and the tension between constraint and transformation. These were significant in terms of the research's aim to explore and theorise poststructural

agency. The expansion of categories also led to a more sonorous space for the ensuing stage involving the construction of discourses. Not only did these categories maximise the opportunity for making sense of the discourses in operation within the text, but it was hoped that these additional categories would assist the discourses capture the network of power relations which would form a central part of further analysis. This process of constructing categories aimed at ensuring all the themes had been fully elaborated and delineated.

3.16 The construction of three primary discourses

The next step involved an initial construction of key discourses operating within the text. It was recognised that these were likely to change with further analysis. The journal text was re-read through the 13 categories. While this reading occurred, reference was made to the memos that had been written and the writing that had been carried out in relation to the literature review and methodological principles. This allowed for further relationships to be developed within the frame of the research's motivation of exploring agency, power/knowledge and the construction of subjectivity. Three discourses were initially constructed: a discourse of governance, a discourse of resistance and a discourse of dislocation. The following extracts from the PhD journal are used to highlight the initial thinking.

A Discourse of Governance

A discourse of governance denotes the operation of power/knowledge on the construction of subjectivities. Power is examined both in terms of traditional or sovereign notions of power as well as more modern, disciplinary notions of power (Foucault 1995). This discourse examines how ideas about subjectivity govern what can and can't be known. Of particular importance is the impact of normalising practices on the production of truth. This discourse also examines the effect of genre of the journal text on the construction of subjectivity. This discourse constructs a position that argues the genre of the journal as a quest narrative and/or confessional sutures particular versions of subjectivities. The genre frames particular constructions that limit other ways of knowing. An irony is noted in that the original intention of writing the journal was as a tool of liberation. This discourse constructs a position that the journal was a device that limited liberation through the construction of its micro detailing of life and its monitoring and surveillance of the body.

A Discourse of Resistance

Within this discourse a socially contextualised subjectivity is positioned against hegemonic ideas. An important aspect of transformation is the ability to contextualise and critically analyse the self within a social framework. The struggle for supremacy between the different positions that subjectivity is able to take up is considered important. Transformation within the journal as a text is limited because of the construction of binary thinking, the dominance of power being viewed within sovereign/traditional definitions and the dominance of a hermeneutics of the self subjugating any structural analysis.

A Discourse of Dislocation

This discourse constructs parrhesiastic acts and those spaces that lie between discursive positions. These subject positions have the potential for transformation and change. This discourse is a marginalised and perhaps non-existent discourse within the journal text. When subjectivity is viewed as constructed, as a text that is involved in games of truth poststructural agency can be maximised for its transformative potential. This discourse asks the journal text to respond to the question how do I explain that I did not capitulate to the dominant forces of hegemonic power and self-governance? This discourse utilises the spaces and gaps; the continual questioning and not knowing, the ambiguity and uncertainty within the journal text as the starting point for constructing multiple constructions of subjectivity. This discourse foregrounds the constructedness of subjectivity.

The 13 categories and initial three discourses were then presented to the research group for feedback and generation of critical reflection. Group members confirmed a greater capacity for meaning-making of the 13 categories as opposed to the six. They also commented that while the discourses captured the tension between constraint and enablement, including only three discourses might limit the potential of the discursive analysis to illuminate this nexus.

3.17 The detailed construction of the categories

A closer analysis of each of the 13 categories was then carried out. In writing about each category, the journal text was again examined in relation to the clusters of themes that had been grouped under that category heading. Examples from the journal text were weaved into the construction of meaning that the category was attempting to generate. The outcome of this process is contained in chapter four.

While examining how the categories were constructing meaning, it was observed that the writing was imbued with the vestiges of a phenomenological and hermeneutic discourse. It was realised that the writing was using vocabulary consistent with ideas of trying to represent or reflect an essence of meaning within examples of data that were being imported from the journal text. Large tracts of data were employed in the hope that the truth of the data could be displayed to the reader. The writing process was attempting to gain access to the truth of the data in relation to the self as opposed to acknowledging that the process was actively engaged in the construction of certain meanings. This led to the construction of a more partial voice that positioned the meaning-making as possibilities and deliberate acts rather than some rigorous search for authenticity.

The memo writing was also increasingly used to record instances where the analysis struck upon relationships between the themes. This assisted with the continued construction of discourses and the analysis of the complexity of their relationship in theorising power and its effects.

3.18 The construction of six discourses

The first step in the construction of the discourses involved a re-reading of the more detailed 13 categories, contained in chapter four, alongside the coming out journal, using a critical literacy framework informed by the work of Kamler (2001) and Rowan (2001). This framework allowed the coming out journal data text and thematic/category analysis to be read for the way in which discursive conventions simultaneously illuminated and hid the partiality and situatedness of language and knowledge. Experience was dislocated and relocated within multiple layers of meaning (Kamler 2001). The data was read for both presences and absences, inclusions and exclusions. The texts were read for what was represented as natural and normal and how these interpretations were communicated and

valued. Contradictions and tensions were uncovered that allowed for a sharper analysis of power relations and their effects (Kamler 2001; Rowan 2001).

In reading the coming out journal data text and thematic/category analysis through the critical literacy framework, memos were generated. These memos assisted in articulating the patterns and variations in the data and data analysis carried out to date. This close reading for patterns and variations assisted the researcher in identifying the ways in which the coming out journal text was involved in the production of knowledge, power relations and the construction of dominant ideas around subjectivity, sex, gender and sexuality. Exploring the relationships between these ideas and the ways in which they cohered and clashed led to the construction of six dominant discourses that became the primary site for more detailed analysis. These six dominant discourses – romance, narrative, liberation, governmentality, confession and refusal – were constructed as dominant frames within which the subject of the coming out journal constructed his subjectivity. These discourses framed the boundaries around the production of knowledge, established powerful systems of normalisation and sanctioned particular moral claims for how the subject should live and carry out action in his daily life (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002).

3.19 Collapsing the six discourses into five

Initially, the ways in which the subject resisted these dominant ways of being was encapsulated in a separate discourse, a discourse of refusal. It was decided that this discourse, rather than be treated separately would be incorporated into the analysis of each of the other five discourses. It was perceived to be more methodologically and theoretically coherent to examine the ways that each of the dominant discourses and subject positions were refused and resisted by the subject. This decision was made in order to assist the process of researching the theoretical idea that where there is power, there is resistance (Foucault 1995). In examining the duplicity of power, or the simultaneous capacity of power to enable and constrain, it was decided to incorporate this aspect of the analysis at the site of each dominant discourse rather than leave it to a separate discourse. This assisted with the research project's aim of investigating the impact of power on action, transformation and change, or agency. These five discourses were constructed to provide the theoretical point of integration for the study (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002; Rice & Ezzy 1999).

3.20 Analysing the five discourses

The aim of the analysis was to

... uncover evidence of the forms of knowledge by which people are objectified, the interventions that operate upon them, the judgements, decisions and forms of authority to which they are subject, and the types of relationships with others in which they are situated. In addition, we must take account of how people interact with these issues, how they relate to themselves as particular types of beings tied to moral imperatives, how they act upon their own conduct in accordance with this moral sense, and how they might be struggling with, and resisting, the forces of power and subjectification that act upon them (Yates 2005, p.71).

The discursive analysis inquired into the mechanics of subjection, or the simultaneous production and constraint of any discourse. This involved exploring how the discourses constructed and maintained versions of the truth and normalised these to the extent that they subjugated other ways of knowing. It also inquired into how the discourses seduced the self into acts of self-governing behaviour and self-surveillance. The nexus between these self-governing techniques and the processes of normalisation was of particular interest. The analysis was also concerned with how the discourses assisted the self to refuse dominant ways of being and knowing. How alternative and oppositional readings to any discourse were constructed and how these readings assisted in opening up other spaces of subjectivity were considered important. To this end the analysis asked how the discourses interacted with each other to produce relations of power. This included how the discourses promoted and restrained transformation and change (Foucault 1980a, 1998, 2000a).

Through examining subjectivities construction, one becomes more attuned to the nexus of social and systemic ideas that are circulated through dominant societal discourses and their interpretation at the level of the interpersonal and individual. The critical autoethnography of this thesis explores the nexus of dominant societal discourse and how it is lived out within an individual's life. It is this nexus that provides the site for developing an attuned analysis of poststructural agency.

The analysis of the five dominant discourses of the coming out journal text contained in chapter five drew upon the work of Gore (1993) whose work was influenced by Foucault (1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000a) and Fehr (1987). This framework examined discourse for their relations of power with respect to political and ethical effects (Gore 1993). Effects are defined as the boundaries that the discourse establishes around knowledge and its construction and what is regarded as true or false. The discursive analysis was interested

therefore in examining the normalising effects of the discourse, the way in which they regulate what can be counted as knowledge. Effects of discourse were also defined as the moral implications and judgments the discourse impelled the subject to make about himself. The analysis was therefore interested in how the subject of the coming out journal was implicated in, but also resisted these processes of governance (Gore 1993; Tamboukou 2003, Tamboukou & Ball 2003a, b).

Each of the discourses was examined for the ways in which they established binary thinking. In looking for the way a discourse constructed differentiations, the focus was on how knowledge and power worked to allow the subject to act upon the actions of others. The analysis examined the aims and functions of power and the specific techniques and practices that actualised these relations of power. The discourses were also examined for normative statements that classified, regulated, categorised, judged, measured, and compared behaviour, actions, thoughts and feelings. These normative statements assisted with analysing how the discourses included certain ideas and knowledge and how they excluded others. This analysis of normative thinking assisted to analyse the way in which the discourses promoted a moral judgment to be made by the subject of the coming out journal text on himself. The analysis was interested in how the subject himself was implicated in constructing and governing boundaries around what is known and what is regarded as true and false. It therefore looked at how the subject disciplined or styled himself within the boundaries of a discourse, the moral codes that guided this self-styling, the practices and behaviours that allowed it to be carried out and the overarching goal that the self aspired to be within this practice of self-governance (Gore 1993; Foucault 1990, 1992). These moral judgments form a crucial aspect to the mechanics of power and its investment in the production of subjectivities that simultaneously promote and restrain agency (Davidson 1986, pp.228-229; Foucault 2000a; Gore 1993; Tamboukou 2003).

A detailed analysis of each of the five discourses is provided in chapter five. An overview of each discourse is given, before describing the discourses' main features, illuminated with reference to specific examples from the coming out journal text. Each discourse is then examined for its political and ethical (Gore 1993) effects on the construction of subjectivity. The analysis of each discourse also includes a section on how the self of the coming out journal can be seen to resist the normative expectations of that particular discourse's meaning-making system; how the subject refused to comply with that discourse. In the concluding chapter, findings are presented that examine the interconnectedness of the five discourses. Looking at this interrelationship is significant in examining the strength of discourse to restrain other ways of being and knowing;

however, it is also important in terms of understanding how resistance is possible and inextricably a part of any power relation. The examination of each discourse and the interconnections between the discourses was vital to the overall aim of the study to locate the ways in which day-to-day life contains the capacity to refuse and resist relations of power that do not always serve an individual's best interests (Gore 1993).

3.21 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological principles of the study, drawing upon critical constructivist research (Kincheloe 1997), critical autoethnography (Reed-Danahay 1997; Denzin 1997) and feminist poststructural research methodology (Britzman 2000, Lather 2001; Richardson 1998). It has argued that these principles cohere with the poststructural underpinnings of the overall research design. It has located the analysis of the construction of sex, gender and sexuality within the coming out journal as a Foucauldian discursive analysis that investigates three modes of a critical ontology of subjectivity: truth, power and ethics. The chapter has outlined how constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002) has been used to develop a rigorous approach to the thematic/category analysis of the data which, in turn, has led to the construction of five discourses. These five discourses form the central focus for the investigation into the analysis of poststructural forms of agency. They have been examined for their political and ethical effects in producing and constraining certain versions of reality and knowing. The five discourses were also examined in relation to their inter-connectedness. The discourses analysis will be used to reframe the emancipatory principles of critical/feminist pedagogical praxis within chapter six. The next chapter provides the findings of the first stages of the data analysis, detailing the 13 categories with specific references to the coming out journal text. These are offered as a way of illuminating the process by which the five dominant discourses have been constructed, which are defined and analysed within chapter five.

Data analysis – themes and categories

4.1 Introduction to the analysis of categories

This chapter includes the findings from the initial analysis of the coming out journal data text. The thematic and category analysis was carried out using a constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000) approach. Thirteen categories, that traverse different constructions of the self, have been constructed through a close reading the coming out journal as a textual artifact of competing discourses of subjectivities. Rather than capture an essence or a truth, these categories are possible readings of different subject positions, or subjectivities within the coming out journal. The process of attuned reading and re-reading was used to build the five dominant discourses that are analysed within the next chapter (Charmaz 2000; Tamboukou 2003; Davies 1992).

As a presentation of the findings of this stage of the data analysis process there is no analysis of the relationships between the categories. The presentation of these findings is intended to demonstrate the rigour that has been pursued in conducting a piece of critical autoethnographic research. The chapter is included as a way of making transparent the process that has lead to the construction of the five discourses analysed in the chapter five. The research is a critical investigation into the mechanics of how versions of the self are constructed and contested within relations of power. It therefore stands against a phenomenological investigation where the truth of the self is revealed (Reed-Danahay 1997; Kamler 2001).

4.2 Detailing the categories

The 13 categories include: the socialised self, the self against the world, the loveless self, the pathologised/individualised self, being proactive/making a difference, compliance, the application of power, poststructural sensibility, the constructed self, resisting subjugation, surveillance of the self, hermeneutic searching, and purging the soul – seeking truth through redemption. The description of each category will begin by outlining in italics the

themes used to construct the category. An overarching definition of the category is then given outlining its main features. These features are then more thoroughly explored and supported with specific textual references drawn from the coming out journal text. The specific textual references are highlighted using inverted commas (Charmaz 2000).

The category, 'The social self', signifies the importance of the subject of the journal socially locating its self within social systems, institutions and structures. The category, 'The self against the world', constructs the subject as existing within an antagonistic relation with social forces, many of which cause his oppression. The category, 'The loveless self', constructs the subject's gender within a binary logic; producing a tension between hegemonic masculine traits of strength, autonomy and competitiveness and the emphasised feminine traits of passivity, acquiescence and collectivity. This category focuses on the area of sexual relations and relationships. The category of, 'The pathologised/individualised self', reads the subject within an internal world of problems that are divorced from any social and historical context. Problems and issues are the result of the subject being faulty, or in need of rehabilitation. 'Being proactive' is a category that highlights a commitment to transformation where the subject inhabits a position of being motivated for change. The category, 'Compliance', looks at how the subject complies with normative thought. 'Application of power' extends the subject's capacity for being disciplined within normative thought, but also highlights the position of the subject being a victim of ideological forces; power is considered as external to the self. The categories, 'Poststructural sensibility' and 'The constructed self', highlight the nascent knowledge of conflicting and multiple selves and a socially constructed self. The category, 'Resisting subjugation', reads the subject as an active agent actively intervening in his oppression and discrimination. The category, 'Surveillance of the self', details the techniques that the subject uses to monitor his actions according to the judgments and expectations of others. The final categories of 'Hermeneutic searching' and 'Purging the soul – seeking truth through redemption' construct a subject position where the significance of confessing secrets allows access to an essential knowledge. Deeply searching this knowledge will lead to a truth vital for emancipation.

4.3 The social self

The category, 'The social self', is constructed from the themes *searching for cause and effect, conforming and resisting hegemonic ideas and practices, structural analysis, power, and reflecting on the world*. This category positions subjectivity within a social

context of society influencing action. Subjectivity exists in a symbiotic relationship with social forces. Subjectivity, according to this category, is moulded through social systems and institutions and can become known; it can realise its truth through understanding its relationship to these social forces (Healy 2000).

The social self, as constructed by this category, exists within various levels. The first level is that of a social milieu and includes family, friends and community. The second level is the social institutional level and includes education, work, government, politics and culture. A third, structural level, includes how ideas around gender, sexuality, class and age impacts on the subject. The subject, as constructed by this category, is both enabled and constrained by these different levels of social forces.

The importance of community and friendship is constructed through the phrase, 'I realised that I have no gay friends who I can talk to about what I'm feeling or going through'. Other people who have similar experiences and aspirations are considered important for the subject to develop his sense of self and come out as gay. Friendship is important and a relationship to be valued. Friendship is constructed as a vital support in the coming out process where 'they understand as you knew they would', 'appreciate that you are out and urge you to tell others'. Friends are constructed as being part of the social milieu that influence, guide and direct the development of an identity.

The family is an environment of great influence. This category constructs a picture of a mother whose 'maternal instinct' must 'surely know' that her son is gay. This mother is a person 'who will always love me' and 'the first to truly accept' her son's gayness. The father is constructed as a figure of the subject's guilt because he has 'hurt and destroyed' his father. The family is a site that impacts on the subject's social and emotional development. A measure of success in coming out is constructed as 'feeling comfortable about telling your parents that you are gay'. The family is also a place of 'so much hurt and pain'. Family members are constructed as needing to 'learn/re-learn to communicate' so that the pain and hurt can be 'expressed' and a healing process can occur.

'The social self' category is linked with a discourse of socialisation. Society is constructed, in this category, as a social force that dictates standards and rules that people are expected to 'conform' to. If they do not conform they are labelled 'deviants'. Society stigmatises people with mental health issues. The following example demonstrates a stigmatisation process: 'This label I've been given, this stigma'. Society should take responsibility for the cause of mental illness. The phrase 'it is the outside, the supposedly

sane that are directly attributable' demonstrates that society and people outside of the mental health facility are considered as being oppressors. This is also demonstrated by the following phrase 'You outside, don't you oppress'.

The journal text attaches significance to the way society and its views impact on individuals, in the construction of how society views people with HIV/AIDS through the use of such words as 'abnormal', 'ill favoured', 'degraded' and 'secluded'. A socialised view locates society's response to AIDS as abnormal, aberrant, degrading and other. Society and its views are hostile. Society is responsible for marginalising and excluding people who do not comply with its rules for normality and health. People with disabilities are constructed as another marginalised group that are 'treated and valued differently' by society. In the phrase 'They need to learn from you', society is constructed as a place that needs to listen to the voices and experiences of different peoples and cultures'.

Social context is seen as causing the problem facing the subject. In the following phrase 'I wasn't dressed right, I didn't look right. It causes my oppression', the gay club scene, with its standards and codes for dress and physical appearance, is constructed as causing marginalisation. The following statement is used by this category to construct gay subculture as causing marginalisation and exclusion: 'Gay men have created a culture that places tremendous emphasis on youth and beauty.' This emphasis on youth constructs an ageist culture that doesn't give 'older men respect' that they may receive in wider society. Society and its ideas are further located as being the cause of problems.

The social self supports a discourse of stereotyping as part of the socialisation discourse. The phrase 'stereotypical sexist chauvinist homophobic male that I despise' shows how men are shaped by ideas that see women as inferior to men and fearful of anything other than heterosexual. The use of the term 'stereotypical' infers that the majority of men think like this is due to a process of socialisation. Men are viewed as participating within a hegemonic order. 'Men are oppressors, they can never be oppressed.'

Ideologies impact on the subject in negative and oppressive ways. They are constructed as forces with a power that is immutable as evidenced in the question 'can I change my culture, class, education, parents, race, values, country, economic position?' These social variables are constructed as difficult to change, and yet change is constructed as something to aspire to. Such change needs to be 'nurtured' in order to 'wipe out the old patterns and habits'. In doing this, aided by 'time', 'freedom is around the corner' and 'fulfillment' will be able to be 'embraced'. Reflection and analysis of the impact of these

social forces is something that is ‘searched for’ and ‘strived for’. This process leads to ‘intelligence and insight’.

4.4 The self against the world

‘The self against the world’ category is constructed from the themes *acting and reflecting on the world, searching for cause and effect, searching for truth, secrecy and hiding, measuring, judging and valuing actions, conforming to and resisting hegemonic ideas, structural analysis, competition and achievement, and struggle and perseverance*. Within this category, the subject is pitted against social structures, systems and institutions – oppressive forces that limit subjectivities, opportunities and potential. Examples of structures, systems and institutions include gender, sexuality, race, class, age, body shape and size, gay culture/subculture, family. The subject, as constructed by this category, is seen to be external to these social structures, systems and institutions. The subject is engaged in a moral battle to transcend these structures, systems and institutions and gain freedom from repression. Critical thought and critical reflection are considered as the key to overturning this false consciousness (Freire 1990; Giroux 1985; McLaren 1989).

Hegemonic ideas (Gramsci 1971; Giroux 1988b) are considered as enemies. In phrases like ‘opposing patriarchy, supporting feminism, abhorring sexism, disliking capitalism’, certain ideologies are seen as the cause of societies problems. The subject of the coming out journal text exists in a relationship of opposition against these ideologies. The subject is constructed as a lone figure; ‘I am alone’ battling against these oppressive ideologies.

Being ‘trapped, imprisoned, silent, solitary’, the subject stands in an antagonistic relationship with the external world. A struggle, a battle is constructed that is fraught with difficulty and emotion. This battle may not be won. ‘The battle is too big, the forces too strong’. The subject is ‘angry, bitter, frustrated, confused, helpless’.

The heterosexual world of the coming out journal text, as constructed by this category, is a world that limits gay subjectivities’ potential. In phrases like ‘holds me back’, wider society is constructed as the cause of oppression. The heterosexual world is a place that ‘despises’ gay people. This category constructs a moral battle through which the subject struggles. The activity of not ‘thinking, believing and acting like other men’ is seen as being very fragile. The phrase ‘Am I free, or am I trapped’ is another example of the duality of the moral struggle between the subject and the determining structures of society.

The subject is constructed by this category in a position that is ideologically opposed to the values of gay subculture, those values being 'beauty, youth, physical attractiveness and big dicks'. The subject stands 'externally' to this subculture and is 'physically prevented' from being able to participate and 'belong' to the subculture. The subculture is a force that actively prevents the subject from 'belonging' and gaining 'identity and sense of self'. Gay subculture has wronged the subject and is the cause of his marginalisation and sense of being an 'outcast'.

This category constructs the subject as having 'a purpose, some meaning, some goal' in fighting oppressive ideas. The aim for the subject, as constructed by this category, is to find ways of transcending ideas that construct a false consciousness. Non-hegemonic versions of masculinity are valorised as searching for 'a real man'. The idea of a real man is constructed by this category as a state of freedom. Freedom is to be reached through constant critical reflection of society. There is always 'a conflict' and an 'attempt to make others understand that people, cultures and systems are my oppressors'.

The subject is constructed as existing in a private, secret space, misunderstood by the external world. Society is not seen in a positive light. The subject needs to escape from society because it has been wronged. It needs to create some kind of sanctuary from which to flee the horrors of the world. In this sacred space the subject will realise some truth and this will assist with accessing freedom from oppressive forces. A voluntary admission to a psychiatric hospital is seen as being caused by being 'in the wrong world' and in a 'world that fucks me up and doesn't understand'. It is society that is 'directly attributable' for the mental illness. The hospital is a place where the subject can feel 'safe and secure' from the world outside. It is a place of 'solitude' where the subject acquires 'inner peace and tranquility'. The hospital is constructed as a place where there is no 'responsibility', where the 'mind can wander' in a search for 'freedom'. In considering society as 'the other side' a dangerous place is construed from which the subject has to have 'time out'. The outside world is a place that must be eventually 'faced'. The hospital is constructed as a space where the subject is 'perched on a tender line' and the 'solution' is to listen and learn in the hope that he can 'come out and rejoin' the world with new skills of coping and accepting oneself in order that 'fulfillment and happiness' can be achieved and the ability to 'deal with everything outside'.

4.5 The loveless self

The category the loveless self is constructed from the themes *searching for cause and effect, either/or thinking, reflecting on the world, searching for the truth, secrecy and hiding, a quest for depth, acting alone, describing self according to others' points of view and identification of self as real*. This category constructs the subject through the binary opposition of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity (Connell 1987, 1995). This binary logic contrasts strength, autonomy and competitiveness with passivity, acquiescence and collectivity.

In this category the subject is constructed as the one who both waits for love and will be saved by love. The subject is constructed as being misunderstood by the world, tortured and overwhelmed by its beauty and horror. The subject exists in a space of great emotion, pain and unrequited love. Alternatively this category also constructs a subject that is highly competitive in his quest to secure sex. Sex is constructed as being consumed in a voracious way, as something that is carried out in an isolated and autonomous fashion. The gaining of pleasure is read as being carried out in a fashion that has little to do with reciprocity or mutuality.

A position of emphasised feminine subjectivity (Connell 1987) is constructed by this category where the subject is a forlorn and lost soul waiting for the kiss of the prince. Examples include phrases such as 'Alone, vacant, anguish, need love, someone special, close, downstairs, distant, helpless, hopeless' and 'Always in my mind, on my thoughts. Why can't he escape me?' The subject is constructed as passively waiting for the object of his love to realise that there is worth in returning his love. In another example, the subject longs to just sit with the object of his love and 'look at him, hold and touch him, love him'. This category constructs the subject as a self who waits patiently and passively to be saved by love (Gilbert 1994).

This category constructs a subject that yearns for a love that in some ways can never be: 'Can we be together?' In the example, 'Can my dream come true? Why won't you love me?', this category constructs the subject as a forlorn lover who waits for the hand of fate to intervene and overthrow the obstacles that are preventing the object of its love from being realised. When the object of desire/love strays, or doesn't return the love, the subject is constructed in the role of the vanquished, asking 'Did I mean anything to him?'

and filled with jealousy in that ‘they meet, without even a thought of me’. The subject plays a perpetual waiting game as demonstrated in the example ‘Yet, I wait. Oh how I wait’. Cast aside, spurned by potential lovers, even though he expresses his anger, he is again left alone, wanting ‘to touch, to hold, to feel, to love’.

Being overwhelmed by the emotions of his attractions to certain individuals also features. Phrases such as ‘Lost and falling slowly’ and ‘Oh what beautiful yet painful feelings love brings’ build an environment of isolation where the subject longs ‘To be able to scream and cry out my pain and suffering’. Even though love is illusory, the subject soldiers on, remaining true in his commitment to a romanticised pathos where ‘People tell me it is futile, but I still hope’.

Hegemonic masculinity is an important part of this category and is defined as a position of security, autonomy and anonymity. This category will now turn to constructions of the subject that are read for their hegemonic masculinity. The following is an example of the subject being secure and autonomous. In the role of a valuable mentor and protector, ‘Often I want to protect you, prevent you from a lot of things I have gone through’, the subject is made out to be a valuable resource that could guide and support the coming out process of the object of his desire.

The following is an example of patriarchal arrogance and superiority where the subject paternalistically judges the worth of the spurned lover: ‘You will make someone very happy.’ The subject constructs the spurned object of its desire as a ‘truly genuine and sensitive person that I have a very deep respect and admiration for’. The subject is positioned in a heroic act of martyrdom letting the object of his desire determine his own fate. ‘I have to stand back and not interfere.’

Further examples of patriarchal gender are constructed from sections of the coming out journal that diarise sex at homosexual beats over a period of a month. The feature of patriarchal gender that is constructed by this category is of a subject devoid of romantic love. The subject is highly competitive in his quest to secure sex. Sex is constructed as being consumed in a voracious way, as an act that is carried out in an isolated and autonomous fashion. Pleasure from sexual activity is predominantly selfish, self-indulgent, non-reciprocal. It has nothing to do with consideration of others nor mutual desire and reciprocity.

An example of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987, 1995) is the depiction of sexual activity phrased within sporting metaphors and ideas of competition. Phrases such as 'really gets the adrenalin pumping' and 'the anticipation, the games' construct the subject involved in a contest, a quest to secure sex. A privileging of the stamina in being able to maintain sexual activity '4 hrs at Umina beat' and records of the number of men engaged in sexual acts within certain periods of time are further examples of masculinised ideas of sex. Sexual activity is constructed in relation to action-orientated phrases such as 'sucking, wanking and fucking'. The phrase 'sucked a cock but it was a bit lifeless' constructs an implication that good sex has to be virile, hard, fast and anonymous. With phrases such as 'Another cock which barely fitted through the hole' and 'Big balls blown up due to his studded cock ring', hegemonic versions of male genitals, their size and hardness are constructed as an important factor in the subject maximising pleasure. Another example of how the subject adheres to hegemonic masculinity is through constructing sexual activity without any references to people's names. The subject constructs sexual activity solely through genital organs and what is done to them. The sexual activity the subject engages in does not include references to people's faces. Sex is constructed as anonymous, non-reciprocal and autonomous.

Ambivalence to hegemonic constructions of the subject is also expressed. The phrase, 'I want to please others and care little for being satisfied, or rather that is the lesser need', constructs an example of how a hegemonically masculine position on sexual activity is not always adopted. This construction positions sexual activity within a passive feminised role as the giver of pleasure and satisfaction, as opposed to the more masculine position of receiver of pleasure and satisfaction. A more sensuous form of sexual activity is constructed through the phrase, 'I meet someone who wants to come home and you can spend time kissing, lying naked, stroking, feeling'. This provides a contrast to other more hegemonic descriptions.

The subject who engages in homosexual beats is also constructed in terms of pleasure, sensuality joy and fun. Examples include, 'for the first time I felt a pleasure difficult to describe', 'in a great mood' and 'felt good about myself'. Other examples of homosexual beat sex being constructed as pleasurable include 'good stuff', 'quite satisfied', 'met some great people' and 'I shine'. This category also constructs sex as a demonstration of camaraderie and friendship, denoting qualities of mutuality and reciprocity in the giving and receiving of pleasure between men. There is an ambiguity in how the subject is constructed both within and against ideas of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity.

4.6 The pathological, individualised self

This category, the pathological, individualised self, is constructed from the themes *searching for the truth, secrecy and hiding, measuring, valuing and judging actions according to a standard, violence and humiliation, a quest for depth, acting alone, describing self according to others' points of view and identification of self as real*. The subject is seen as an individual with a problem/problems. This problem individual does not yet understand himself and does not understand his purpose or role in life. The subject is pathologised and individualised as immoral, sick and abnormal, directing violence and hatred towards himself for not knowing or not getting things right.

According to this category, the reason why problems are not overcome or solved is because the subject has not worked something out, is not good, or not doing something in the right way. The subject, as individual, has not reached a state of enlightenment and moral worth and therefore does not yet know his truth. The subject engages in acts of judgment, assessment and diagnosis, according to other people's expectations and his own expectations about himself. The aim of this process is for the subject to restore and rehabilitate himself (White 2002).

The subject's individuality is interpreted as the reason for not being able to be 'more open' in the coming out process. The subject 'holds back' the process of liberation and freedom from heterosexual oppression. He is filled with 'anguish' and questions whether he is 'ready'. The problem lies with the subject as an individual who has to figure out 'some meaning, some goal' to his life. The subject that does not come out gay is a subject that is 'denying, avoiding, lying and not accepting'. Authenticity is constructed as an important strategy in overcoming problems. Being overweight is constructed as a problem and the cause is located within the individual subject's psyche. 'Overweight represents a need for protection.' There is a need to search the interior depth of the self in order to locate the reason behind this problem.

A subject who does not understand himself or purpose in life is another aspect of this category of meaning-making. The subject is in a state where he 'denies' his 'true self'. There is something 'real' that can be known. This knowledge comes about through 'thinking about the direction of my life'. If the subject does not locate his purpose, then he risks 'not finding himself at all'. The coming out process is seen as an important step in

‘reaching my goal’. It is constructed as ‘a long journey’ that is ‘within my reach’. Reaching it will mean the subject ‘will arrive and will be fulfilled’.

The individualised subject of the journal text, engages in a hatred of himself, and is ‘only degrading’ himself if his actions do not correspond with the way he thinks. The subject is a ‘hypocrite’ that is ‘no worse’ than the people ‘he despises’. Certain sexual acts are construed as having a ‘passion for sin’. The subject is sick and often ‘sits and contemplates suicide’. He is an ‘outcast’ who wonders what his ‘funeral would be like’. In doing this, the subject is sick and immoral; he ‘wants to hurt people’ and wants them to be ‘angry’. This immoral aspect needs to be confessed and rehabilitated.

The subject needs to find a cause in order to fix a problem. Not identifying openly as gay is given as the cause of feeling ‘trapped’ and ‘about to explode’. Coming out of the closet is the solution to the problem. This ‘façade’ will come to an end when a truer and more essential version of his subjectivity is ‘let out’. Being a different person is considered as a way of increasing the opportunities for finding a partner as evidenced in the phrase ‘Change for him, body, mind, self, image’. The cause of the problem is located in the way that the individualised subject looks and thinks. Working on changing this will lead to overcoming the problem.

The subject judges, assesses and diagnoses himself in relation to his appearance. Being fat is constructed as a barrier to finding love: ‘Yet my appearance is in the way.’ Being thin is constructed as a solution: ‘I really think if I was thin a lot of my problems would be solved.’ The subject himself is the cause for preventing change: ‘I’m stuck between 95–97 kg. What the fuck is wrong with me?’ The cause is located within the subject’s individuality and there is, therefore, something wrong with him. Being fat is also a problem that prevents the subject from having good sex. In the following phrase, ‘Fucks are on the increase and good ones at that. I hate to admit it but it’s because I’m losing weight’, losing weight is constructed as the answer to the problem. Being fat is seen as being abnormal and needing to be changed. The reason for this change not occurring is because there is something wrong with the subject. He is sick and the ‘deeper underlying insecurities’ need to be diagnosed.

Phrases such as ‘needs time out’ and ‘try and work me out’ denote the subject and his problems as needing to be faced by ‘looking inside’. The only thing that can ‘break through’ is the subject himself. In the phrase, ‘It is me that stops it’, the subject is again located as the problem that needs to be overcome, worked out and solved in order that he

can become a 'better person'. This state of sickness is constructed as a transitional place where the subject is in 'a state of loss and confusion'. The subject is positioned as 'scared and frightened' as he needs 'direction'. He needs to 'learn new skills of coping and accepting' himself in order that he can 'deal with the issues' and 'face reality' and 'face outside, return' and find his 'identity'.

4.7 Being proactive, making a difference

This category, being proactive, making a difference, is constructed from the themes *acting on the world, resisting hegemonic ideas, acting with others, acts of parrhesia and openness to new ideas and ways of thinking*. This category constructs a subject that takes charge and acts in ways that break with usual patterns or habits. It constructs the subject as taking pride in the fact that he thinks carefully and rigourously about society. The subject is flexible, compassionate, considerate and full of pathos and is committed to bring about social change and redress the structural inequalities that constitute the society we live in.

Examples from the journal text that denote a subject that takes charge are phrases such as 'The secret is out', 'I finally made the step in ringing the Gayline' and the 'first step is getting hold of some literature about coming out'. The subject makes a strong decision to be open about being gay. 'The burden is lifted.' 'Priorities' are decided upon and these include 'developing a support network of gay friends' and 'telling people about being gay'.

A subject that breaks with usual patterns and habits is another feature of this category's construction. In the phrase 'I can never turn back', the subject makes a decision to not return to a life of being in the closet with respect to his sexuality. This commitment is made even if it means 'dreams, hopes' are 'destroyed, never fulfilled'. The subject does not care about what other people think, as evidenced in the phrases 'I should just go for it' 'Should I be bold? Shock, and not care?'. There is pride in his difference from heterosexuality and other hegemonic versions of masculinity. The aim of the subject is to 'rebel, to react against the norm'.

Phrases like 'I'm on my way' and 'that change continued and flourished' are examples of the subject motivated by change and possibility, affirming and strong. The phrase, 'If I desire a change then I must be that change before that change can take place', is an example of a subject who is affirming of personal change, always looking for

opportunities that involve ‘moving back to happiness’ and ‘feeling good about myself’. The subject rewards his successes and acknowledges when he ‘has achieved something’. He takes a strong stand and acknowledges ‘I have a right to acceptance and respect, a right of equality’. The subject ‘demands action and effective change’.

In committing himself to social change, the subject takes pride in thinking rigourously about society. The subject is actively engaged in a process of critical reflection, ‘I speak of politicising’, posing questions that challenge society’s dominant ways of thinking. He actively makes and seeks change. An example of this is in the phrase ‘courageously shun portraying a typical male (whatever that is supposed to be)’. The subject valorises acting differently to typical notions of masculinity through questioning society and the way it marginalises certain groups and communities.

Success in overcoming problems is another feature of this category. The phrases ‘come along way’ from not being able to ‘stand in front of a mirror and say that you were gay’ to ‘taking 2 seconds telling another friend that you were gay’ place the subject in a position of being able to transform and make significant changes. The subject is not overwhelmed by problems. He affirms life in his rejection of suicide as a viable answer to life’s problems: ‘There is so much of the world I want to experience and I think I have something to offer.’ In resisting traditional ways of thinking and behaving, the subject is not ‘bound by convention’, nor is he ‘accepting of morality’.

4.8 Compliance

The category of ‘compliance’ is created from the themes *measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard, conforming to hegemonic ideas, describing self according to others’ points of view and power as sovereign*. This category constructs a subject who complies with hegemonic thinking and ways of acting, although this category also constructs a subject who does have a critical awareness of this complicity.

The compliance of the subject occurs within a relationship to moral codes. These codes are not always clear. The standards against which the subject measures himself are not made explicit. Valuing and judging actions according to prescriptive ideas is common. The subject is described and evaluated according to other people’s points of view. The standards used to measure and judge are not questioned or interrogated.

In a quotation used in the journal text ‘some men like having lots of partners to satisfy their deep need for self-esteem (Hay 1987, pp.138-139)’, the act of having multiple sexual partners is subjugated to the heteronormative ideal of one life-long partner. Acting against this norm through having sex with multiple partners is pathologised as having a ‘need for self-esteem’. Another example of the subject complying with hegemonic thinking is the phrase, ‘I really think if I was thin a lot of my problems would be solved’. The subject is constructed as complying with the hegemonic idea that being thin is better than being fat. The subject exists within a system of measurement and classification to a prescribed standard. Another example of complying with hegemonic thinking is the phrase, ‘Every person has both feminine and masculine characteristics, traits or aspects to their person’. The subject is constructed within the hegemonic idea that a person’s personality is constituted by biologically essential determinants.

A feature of this category is valuing and judging actions according to prescriptive ideas. Phrases such as ‘Should I?’, ‘Should it be done?’, ‘What I have to’, ‘I should’, ‘It is better’, ‘You have to’, ‘I had to’, ‘It has to’, ‘What I must’, and ‘They shouldn’t’ are constructed as moral commandments. These phrases contain the idea that the action that is occurring is wrong. There are expectations and standards that are enshrined within these phrases that are not made explicit or clear. Action is prescribed within the boundaries of the implicit moral codes within these phrases. There is no room for flexibility and openness to other ways of thinking.

The subject also evaluates himself according to other people’s points of view. In the phrases, ‘I fear what you may think’ and ‘I always worry what others think’, the subject circulates within the boundaries of the consequences of what other people think. ‘Yet I frighten him’ is another example of how the subject constructs himself in relation to evaluation and judgment. The phrases, ‘did they talk about me’ and ‘I stood out, different’, are other examples of how the subject constructs itself within a space that privileges the thinking of other people.

4.9 The application of power

This category, the application of power, is assembled from the themes *searching for cause and effect, either/or thinking, searching for the truth, conforming to hegemonic ideas, resisting hegemonic ideas, structural analysis, power as sovereign and power as dispersed*. The subject is fashioned within relationships of power existing within both

traditional, ideological notions of power and more postmodern disciplinary notions of power. Within this category the subject examines problems and issues within a framework of cause and effect. If the cause can be identified, then a solution can be reached. The subject is constructed within a discourse of rationality.

The subject is influenced by centralised institutions and systems that produce material obstructions to freedom. Ideological barriers are realised and acknowledged to be challenged and overcome. Power is seen as repressive and monolithic. It is a force that the subject stands in opposition to. Power exists in an external relationship to the subject, an object of power's oppression and force. The subject is also constructed through an alternative understanding of power. Power is perceived as a capacity to produce certain forms of knowledge that construct normative standards and expectations. These relations of force dictate what is considered as acceptable, reasonable or normal behavior (Danaher et al. 2000).

Power is distinguished as being held in centralised structures or ideologies such as 'patriarchy', 'sexism' and 'capitalism'. The phrase, 'power that exists in men simply by way of their caste and gender', structures power as a tangible force that is held by some groups, but not others. Men are understood as having a 'socialised need and expectation for power and authority'. This 'socialised' need and expectation is constructed as the cause for men's abuse of their power and authority. The act of rape is considered as an outcome of patriarchal power that will not be stopped 'without ending patriarchy itself'. Patriarchy is the cause of rape. In the quote from the journal text, 'The same men and systems of power who victimise women are involved in the act of raping Vietnam, raping black people and the very earth we live upon', power is established as repressive and monolithic. It is a force that is mobilised within some bodies and is directed against other bodies that are less powerful. The capacity for resistance by the less powerful is limited. Another example of how power is seen as a force that stands external to the subject is in the phrase 'sexist chauvinist homophobic male that I despise'. The 'homophobic' male has all the power. The subject exists in an oppositional relationship to the homophobic male. Being less powerful, it is oppressed by the homophobic male. In the phrase, 'I root around. I seek sex simply for its physical gratification. I perv, ogle and check out men constantly', power is a negative force that limits and constrains equality. Power is constructed as a force in which one person has control and domination over another person. Centralised structures such as 'heterosexuality', 'homophobia' and 'patriarchy' cause 'discrimination, oppression and injustice'. These structures create a world where there is no 'choice' for some groups, creating 'false accusations and media lies'. These

power structures need to be resisted. They have to be ‘changed’ through a process of ‘politicisation’. People are required to ‘learn to transcend the very terms’ of these powerful structures. Another example of an institution that is constructed as oppressive is ‘marriage’, with its ‘heterosexist values’ where discriminatory ‘roles are played out’.

The subject is also comprehended by this category as a capacity to produce certain forms of knowledge that construct normative standards and expectations. These relations of force dictate what is considered as acceptable, reasonable or normal behavior.

In the phrase, ‘You say I am unfit for parenthood’, the idea that only heterosexual people can become parents is constructed as a social norm that prevents gay people from being parents. Power is involved in producing an expectation that prevents the subject from taking agency. Power is seen as having a material and tangible base. Society and its dominant thinking is the cause, the reason why the subject can not take up a position of becoming a gay parent. In the phrase, ‘you prevent me, you despise me’, society’s ideas are given a material effect in that they restrain the subject from taking up his preferred subject position.

In the statement, ‘I am alone as a man. Some would say more like a woman’, the subject is understood within the boundaries of expectations and ideas of what it is to be a man or a woman. Being man or woman is constructed in relation to biologically essentialist ideas of each person having ‘both masculine and feminine’ characteristics. The idea of being more like a woman is positioned as other or inferior to being a man. The subject is comprehended as ‘being different’, but this difference is not valorised.

The subject exists within ideas that relate to a particular body shape and size. A fat body is not acceptable, as evidenced in the phrase, ‘I really think if I was thin a lot of my problems would be solved’. In the phrase, ‘Don’t eat and exercise properly’, standards are enforced which the body has to measure itself against. In the phrase, ‘is my being overweight just a cover, a protection for some deeper underlying insecurity’, being fat is a manifestation of some underlying, as yet to be realised cause. These ideas establish a right or normal standard that has power over alternate forms of knowledge.

In the phrase, ‘Beats for me are like being a user, addicted’, homosexual beats are construed within a medicalised discourse that constructs sexual behaviour as being out of control and being sick. These ideas limit and constrain the possibility for other ways of

knowing. These ideas therefore have a relationship of power in the construction of the subject.

In the phrases, ‘a typical male’, ‘a true person’, ‘a real person and a true man’, this category constructs significance in the ambivalence in the ideas that lay behind ‘typical’, ‘true’ and ‘real. The meaning of these words is not clear, yet they contain standards and expectations that promote a picture of what the subject is supposed to look like. These words and their meanings therefore carry power in the way that they validate certain ideas and subjugate others.

4.10 Poststructural sensibility

Poststructural sensibility is constructed from the themes *reflecting on the world, structural analysis, valorising difference, struggle and perseverance, identification of self as constructed, acts of parrhesia, subjugated voices and openness to new ideas*. The category assumes a poststructural approach to the subject. It suggests that multiple selves do not cohere and are often in conflict (Davies 1991). The subject is a contested space, continually troubling the boundaries of its own definition (Weedon 1987). This category problematises the existence of one truth and valorises difference. It positions a growing acceptance that there does not have to be an answer to every problem. The subject is seen as comfortably existing in a space of not knowing (Probyn 1996).

Contradiction is a feature of this category’s construction. Places and or issues are seen from different and contradictory constructions. This category assembles the subject as non-foundational and continually shifting. Nothing is certain. Action is the ability to think critically about the world. However the thinking self thinks, does not always mirror the acting self. This dissonance between thought and action is constructed by this category as a curiosity more than a problem. Meaning-making is bound up with ideas of partiality, fragility, uncertainty, non-stability, non-coherence, confusion and uneasiness.

A range of meanings about the self and engagement in homosexual beat sex is central to this category. Homosexual beats are public toilets and parks that are frequented for casual and usually anonymous sex. The subject within these spaces takes on different constructions through this category. Some are marginalised. Others are privileged. Some are empowering. Others are not so empowering.

In this 'dangerous space' the subject is constructed as one who engages in immoral, non-intimate and selfishly self-gratifying sexual activities, surreptitiously carried out. For example, in the phrase, 'in this world of darkness, filth, disease, danger, stench. In this silent world, this room of contempt and immorality', the subject of beat sex is perceived as a site without celebration and pleasure. Another example, 'Dark, stench, filth, cold, scared, no words, just a look, behind doors, no sound, used, so quick', constructs coldness, solitariness, and the fear of the subject that participates within the subculture of the homosexual beat.

In its acceptance and recognition of contradiction, this category also understands beat sex as a place of excitement and lust. 'Passion, hot, steamy, sweat, lusting, deep and long', has the subject participating in homosexual beats as a site of pleasure. Another phrase, 'Anticipate, a glance, this is it, queasy, horny, warm, fast, a scent, animal', signals the subject engaged in beat sex in a space where adrenalin fuels a chaotic moment of bliss. In the following example the idea that beats are places of 'immorality and contempt' is challenged: 'Reject all the values of the society and enjoy sex. When you're dead, you'll regret not having had fun with your genital organs – Joe Orton Diaries.' Through this example, the subject participating in beat sex is seen for its potential to offer spaces and subject positions of pleasure, free from wider society's rules about sex.

The subject that participates in beat sex is also considered as a site where intimacy can be found. An emphasis on intimacy is demonstrated through phrases like, 'I receive love, affection, sensuality' and 'I am wanted and needed'. Phrases such as, 'I don't even know his name', read through this category, construct an alternative subject position despised for its lack of intimacy. The subject is ambiguous. The possibilities of multiple meanings highlight the consideration of the subject as open and partial, struggling against a fixed notion of truth.

The recognition of difference and the complexities of sexualities are very important to this category. Old men are often vilified within gay male subculture, so the words, 'I fucked an old man tonight. It was the first fuck for ages. I feel revolting. I want to make love', are read as an example of the subject not conforming to dominant ideas of sexual attractiveness in gay subculture. The penetrative nature of the sexual act is constructed in a contradictory way conforming to dominant ideas that surround a younger partner taking the active role and the older man taking the passive role. Penetrative sex as constructed within the confines of a penetrative act is constructed within traditional masculine ideas of sex (Connell 1987, 1995).

A feature of this category involves the dissonance between critical thinking and action. Thinking and action do not always cohere and they construct a space of tension for the subject. The solidity and coherence of the subject is questioned. This category's feature of ambivalence and the subject existing in a space of not knowing is demonstrated through the phrase, 'Yet longing to be so much apart of it'. The subject is constructed as possessing a desire to belong and fit into the gay scene even though he has a critical awareness that gay subculture may limit available subject positions. The tension between a critical awareness of the gay scene, where dominant images and body types are questioned, and wanting to belong and fit in is constructed by this category as an example of the subject existing in a contested space, not fixed, forever shifting and struggling to understand itself (Davies 1991).

In this example the subject is comprehended as believing in the worth of challenging heterosexual sexism, yet its sexist behavior towards other gay men is constructed as a curious contradiction: 'I abhor oggling and sexism of men towards women, yet I spend half the day checking out balls and cocks.' Critical thinking does not translate into action. This dissonance is pictured as a curiosity. Examples such as this are used by this category to construct a reading of the subject that is contested, multiple, often in conflict and continually troubling the boundaries of its own definition (Lather 1991).

4.11 The constructed self

The category the constructed self is built from the themes *comfort with a decentred self, valorising and recognising difference and identification of self as constructed*. This category constructs the subject as a social construction. It is non-essential. In being fashioned or performed through the repetition of dominant ideas, the naturalness, normalcy, or taken for grantedness of the subject is questioned. The subject and its construction are open to contestation. The category also denotes the absences of large numbers of examples from the journal text to support its construction. It is considered as a marginal voice within the journal text as compared with other categories. It is a subjugated and counter knowledge.

The subject is a contestable space actively involved in negotiating its constitution. It 'can move, not stagnate' and is a force that has control over how it positions itself in the world. Ways of being are not fixed and rigid. In the phrase, 'am I creating them as I create my

illness', the subject is actively engaged in its own construction. Ideas and their impact on the ability to act and make decisions are not seen as immovable. There is a choice in how the subject responds and interacts with a series of ideas about how it can act within the world around it.

The subject is likened to participating in a game where aspects of competing selves are not necessarily real and based in some kind of essential and authentic realm. In the phrases, 'I'm not creating yet again another façade?' and 'I created him', the subject is seen as knowing that it is actively engaged in negotiating the boundaries of its own constitution. The idea that the subject is tied to some form of essential reality is challenged. The phrase 'not because of any inherent quality' denotes a resistance to the idea that the subject is an essential entity whose reality can be known.

In the phrase, 'Only now that I can courageously shun portraying a typical male (whatever that is supposed to be)', the subject valorises a marginalised position of masculinity that is not considered the norm. It questions the norm and is perceived as being fashioned and open to interpretation and change.

In the phrase, 'My sexuality, my homosexuality is only but one part of my self', the subject questions that there is something essential in being gay. The subject is constituted from multiple selves. The statement, 'Yet a man, a contradiction', is a further example of the subject being considered in a fashion that acknowledges that it is not fixed. The phrase, 'it isn't like last time', foregrounds difference and change in the way the subject resists being static.

A feature of this category is a construction of the subject as always being open to change and movement. This category reads the continual use of questions such as, 'I question whether' and 'what stops me', in the journal text as constructing the subject as being committed to shifting its positionality. Through posing questions of himself, the subject exists in a space of continual movement, opposing rigidity and valorising flexibility. The subject 'does not have to settle', possessing 'power to respond and relate'. There is openness to how this power can be used to effect transformation and change. There is the potential for the subject to have control in how it 'wants to use' this power and 'how it can use it' to effect such change. The subject has 'a choice'. In phrases such as, 'yet there is a conflict, a dilemma', this category constructs such conflict as a positive force in the constitution of subjectivities. Such conflicts and dilemmas are constructed as opportunities

for difference and diversity to enable other ways of being and knowing that fuel transformation.

In the phrase, 'I'm finding it difficult to accept that I'm worthy now, fat and all', this category constructs the potential for the subject to take up a position that he may not regard as being ideal. There is significance in the fact that there is an alternative, more than one way of being. There is an opportunity for the subjugated position, worthy and fat, to be a legitimate subject position. Through this idea of there being a choice in subject position, this category's feature of the subject being non-essential and a contested space is further illuminated.

4.12 Resisting subjugation

The category resisting subjugation is constructed from the themes *acting/doing with others, acts of parrhesia, subjugated voices, openness to new ideas, struggle and perseverance, resisting hegemonic ideas and acting on the world*. The subject is as an active force that resists oppression and discrimination. It is seen as strong and agential, engaged in a continual struggle to overcome any limitations placed on it through society's expectations and values.

The subject is 'not bound by convention'. Its role is positioned within a context of 'ignoring values, to react against the norm'. The subject is an active force continually engaged in struggling against its subjugation. In instances when the subject is under threat from oppressive ideas, it recognises 'I would have been giving in. I decided the next day to continue the fight'. In confronting a world that is full of injustice and inequity, the subject constructs a role for himself that doesn't accept dominant ways of thinking. The subject questions morality, 'what the fuck is that?'. The role of the subject is 'to rebel, to react against the norm, to argue, to be different'. In the comment 'no one asks people why or how they became heterosexual, so why ask the same of men and women who are homosexual'. the subject reacts against hegemonic ideas and resists standardised conventions of how it should be and what is considered normal. The subject also questions the dominance of certain ideas within gay subculture, involved in a process of continually questioning what can be known and what it is expected to be. Able to understand the way that culture and societal ideas can constrain its assembly, the subject is able to resist such constructions. The ability to do this is accessed through the way it questions and decentres expectations and norms of both wider society and the subcultures that it circulates within.

Hegemonic ideas construct ‘false accusations and media lies’ that create injustices that need to be changed. In the comment, ‘If you are not young and beautiful it’s almost as though you don’t count. The person does not count, only the body counts’, the subject acknowledges the way that gay subculture and patriarchal values of youth and beauty limit the potential for valorising difference within the gay community.

In the statement, ‘Every person has both feminine and masculine characteristics; however, society coerces people into identifying with only one, that one that correlates with biology’, the subject, whilst being complicit in maintaining the hegemonic idea that a person’s personality is constituted by biologically essential determinants, is also constructed as being able to acknowledge that there are other ways of thinking. The subject acknowledges that some people in society benefit, and others lose from certain dominant ways of thinking. Subjugated knowledge is foregrounded and given a potential space for the subject to position itself within. The process of the subject becoming attuned to how it both is constrained by and resists hegemonic discourse is constructed by this theme as an important part of the process of transformation.

This category constructs the subject as continually striving for change. Its trajectory is one that is about striving to ‘reach my goal’. Even when those goals still have ‘along way to go’, there is a motivation and perseverance to continue to seek change and resist subjugation by oppressive ideas and/or systems and institutions. The subject locates itself within a mantra of ‘it is now within my reach’ and ‘you have come along way’. Taking pride in the way it resists oppression and injustice, the subject applauds its ability to change from ‘not being able to stand in front of a mirror and say that you were gay, to standing in front of the mirror and whispering that you were gay’. The subject is constructed as rejoicing in the liberation that the process of coming out as gay instills. There is power in not conforming. There is power in being different.

The subject resists the subjugation of a moral discourse that precludes the body experiencing pleasure. In the excerpt from the coming out journal, ‘The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it ... Pleasure is the only thing worth having a theory about ... When we are happy we are always good, but when we are good we are not always happy (Wilde 1949, pp.42, 105-106), the subject is able to challenge heteronormative ideas of pleasure and love. Pleasure, friendship, commitment, and relationship exist outside heterosexist ideas of long-term monogamy.

In the phrases, ‘Why is there no sanctuary in our society for people to legitimately take time out’ and ‘why don’t people have a right to say I can’t cope’, the subject resists the stigmatisation of people who are mentally ill as pathologised and sick individuals. People with a mental illness are constructed as people with ‘courage and strength’ in being able to resist the expectations of wider society. The subject and mental illness are contextualised within the institutional and systemic parameters that impinge upon their positioning. ‘Those in control and power’ label and position people who have a mental illness in a particular way that is tied up with certain economic, political, social and cultural discourses and power. The subject of mental illness possesses an alternative ‘knowledge’ that challenges dominant ideas of health, illness and rationality.

4.13 Surveillance of the self

This category surveillance of the self is constructed from the themes *measuring, valuing, judging actions according to some standard, conforming to hegemonic ideas and practices, power as dispersed, describing self according to others’ points of view and competition, achievement, pursuit of success*. This category constructs the subject as engaged in a continual surveillance of its own limits within normalising ways of thinking and acting. The subject is always under the gaze (Foucault 2002c) of what other people think and how other people may judge. Adhering to moral codes that weave notions of what is right and what is wrong, the subject is engaged in a process where it monitors itself according to these codes. The subject is constructed by this category as not possessing an awareness of this code.

In the phrase, ‘I fear what you may think. I always worry what others think’, the subject is concerned about being judged. The actions of the subject are monitored through how other people may perceive them.

The subject perceives itself in relation to the potential for love and romance within phrases such as ‘an instant attraction’ and ‘near perfection’. These phrases establish parameters for how action should be carried out in relation to subject’s search for relationships. A moral code is established that normalises the attraction to another person as having to be ‘instant’ and the state of being in love as having to reach ‘near perfection’. When the subject, constructing himself as gay, finds himself attracted to a woman, his response is to have the woman ‘grow a penis for me’. Sexuality is positioned within an essentialist

notion of gay, meaning same-sex attraction. Sexuality has to be fixed within a duality of homosexual or heterosexual.

Within the statement, 'My sexuality, my homosexuality is only but one part of myself; of the whole Paul. What I have to work towards is a synthesis of these two things – a balance', the subject is bound within an idea that for it to be healthy it must be in balance. There can't be any conflict. Conflict is seen as a signifier of bad health. The subject must resolve this tension between conflicting parts of his makeup.

The search for sex within homosexual beats is understood as having no intimacy, where sexual activity is constructed as 'dark and cold' carried out in environments of 'stench and filth'. The subject yearns to 'make love, warm, in bed'. This is a standard from which the subject judges the worth and value of the sexual activity that it engages in. 'Making love warm in bed' is the norm within which all other types of sexual activity are judged against. It is the standard against which other sexual activity is measured. Weight and physical appearance are other standards against which the subject judges his worth. Being thin would lead to the solution, to 'solve its problems'. If the subject's appearance 'was different', he would find himself in a relationship. If the subject was 'dressed right' and looked right', then he would be able to participate and 'belong' to gay subculture. In the statement, 'Seeking sex simply for its physical gratification and perving and ogling other men is no worse than the stereotypical sexist chauvinistic male', the subject and his desire and pleasure are constructed within the parameters of feminist discourse. Feminist ideas normalise what is considered acceptable and appropriate. As the subject continues to engage in this behaviour, he is constructed as only paying lip service to his philosophical commitments. The subject is a 'hypocrite' and has a long way to journey before he realises himself as a 'real man'. The ideas of what it is to be a real man are circumscribed within feminist discourse.

In the phrase, 'Why do I stagnate, yet others move on', the subject sets a standard for himself where he has to exist in a continual search for betterment and improvement. He is always involved in a project where he has to 'have to work towards goals and priorities'. In defining his problems and seeking their causes, the subject has to overcome obstacles and continually be developing himself.

The subject in his 'madness' has to deal with the issues that led him to 'really getting down'. The notion of 'really' is taken to mean a place of truth that the subject can come to know. This claim to truth acts as a moral commandment from which the subject must act.

Life is about ‘achieving fulfillment and happiness’. Even though only a few people ‘achieve this’, searching for this ‘happiness’ is what ‘life is about’. Ideas of health and happiness construct the parameters within which the subject assesses, monitors and evaluates himself. The subject is constructed in a continual game of ‘self analysis’.

4.14 Hermeneutic searching

This category is constructed from the themes *a quest for depth, identification of the self as real, searching for one truth, reflecting on the world and time as linear*. The subject exists in a world of secrets. These secrets are often not able to be shared or voiced outside of the internal world of the subject. The subject must engage in a continual process of trying to get to know himself and reveal his truth. Confession of these secrets to himself and revealing these secrets to an outside source, or external world is an important part of the discovery of this truth. The subject is constructed by this category as something real that can be known through rigorous and deep searching of the self (Foucault 2002c).

In the phrases, ‘My secret, One person knows’ and ‘No one suspects, no one knows, held deep within’, the subject is located in a space of secrets. The subject holds secrets of gay sexuality that are ‘held deep within, encased, lid on tight’. Romantic longings are held where feelings ‘are never expressed’. Sex with other men is conducted in ‘silent worlds’. Depression is experienced that leads to ‘often sitting and contemplating suicide’. Such secrets lead the subject to be living life as a ‘façade’. Such a façade prevents ‘fulfillment, satisfaction and freedom’. Keeping such secrets leads the subject to be ‘angry, bitter, confused and helpless’. Such secrets need to be ‘revealed’ and, in doing so, the subject will gain access to his truth. This truth is constructed as an ‘enlightened path’. The subject needs to travel a journey along this path, always reminding himself that such a path is the ‘reason for my existence’, but always unsure of whether he ‘will ever reach the end’.

In the phrase, ‘I want to reveal, denying my true self’, the subject is an entity of truth that can be revealed. The true self remains hidden, located deep within some part of the self. Truth lies at the essential core and being of the subject. The subject is involved in a quest always asking the question ‘Where is my identity?’. The consequence of not asking this question is that people ‘don’t find themselves at all’. In the phrase, ‘Was it destiny, was it fate’, the subject is bound by a larger force that controls and guides his trajectory of knowing himself. In phrases like, ‘Trapped can’t get out, imprisoned, solitary’, the subject is engaged in a struggle against the oppressive forces that subjugate the true self. The

subject's mission is to free himself from these forces by getting to know his reality and hence truth.

In the phrase, 'I didn't choose homosexuality, homosexuality chose me', sexuality is seen as an essential part of the subject's makeup. The objective for the subject is to come out and express his gay sexuality. In the phrase, 'Out, more and more is revealed. I will arrive. I will be fulfilled', the process of coming out is distinguished as an important part of the subject coming to know himself and his truth. This process of searching leads to a situation where 'I can start to become a true person, a real person and a true man'. This truth remains hidden to the subject, yet he hopes that he may be able to get close to it 'in my lifetime'.

The subject, through this category's construction, asks many questions of himself. These questions seek the cause to the problems that prevent him being able to know himself. If the cause of a problem can be discovered there is more likelihood that a solution can be found. This solution will lead the subject to a situation of knowing himself in a deeper and more truthful way. These questions appeal to reason and logic. All answers can be found. Not knowing, or there being no reason for a problem is not acceptable to the subject's quest for truth. Questions such as, 'Why won't you love me?; What holds me back?; Why can't I be more open?; What stops me?; What does it mean?; Why do I feel the way I do?; Why do I?; Must I look a it?' are considered as examples of the subject's continual searching for answers to its own dilemmas and contradictions. Such questions lead the subject to become clearer about his 'purpose'. This purpose is the key to discovering his truth and ensuring that he does not 'stagnate'. The goal of the subject is be continually in a state of moving towards knowing his truth. As such, 'every event or experience, task and chore has a purpose. I attach some meaning to it or ask, question, what it is supposed to mean; people are being placed in front of me for a reason'.

Additionally, this category constructs the subject within a sphere of moral commandments. These imperatives construct a space that does not allow what is happening to the subject be considered as valid. There is an idea that what is occurring for the subject is wrong. There are expectations and standards that the subject is compelled to act within as evidenced by expressions such as, 'Should I?', 'I have to work towards', 'Can it lead', 'I should', 'Will I be able?', 'You/I have to', 'What I must face'. These expectations and standards are the tools that the subject needs to engage with if he is going to be successful in his quest to discover who he really is, and overthrow those aspects of his makeup that prevent his authentic expression.

4.15 Purging the soul – seeking truth through redemption

The category purging the soul – seeking truth through redemption is assembled from the themes *secrecy and hiding, acting alone/doing in isolation and violence, humiliation and hate*. The subject exists in an environment where its sins, secrets, desires, bad will to others and himself, negativity and moral corruptness are confessed and laid bare. These aspects of the subject are not constructed as wholesome, healthy, moral or natural. They must be purged. This purging is seen as a necessary part of the process for the subject to become enlightened. Through purging and confessing these problematic aspects, the subject can gain a clearer insight to their cause and gain deeper knowledge of their resolve (Foucault 1998).

The subject is engaged in a process of recording secrets and fears. He confesses deep and forbidden taboo topics such as death, plans to suicide, imagining his funeral and writing his eulogy. These topics would be excluded from wider, more public social forms of discourse. In phrases like, ‘Yet I wonder what my funeral would be like?’ and ‘I want people to be hurt, I want them to be angry’ the subject purges his suicidal ideation and imagination of his funeral. In the phrase, ‘For one day (maybe longer) I would be the sole focus of their attention. Their world would be mine. I would possess their lives for a brief yet intense moment’, the subject confesses another secret, only known to himself. These confessions are understood as deeply held secrets and although harbored deep within the soul of the subject, their expression through confession will lead to some advanced knowledge about himself.

‘My secret, One person knows’ and ‘No one suspects, no one knows, held deep within’ – the ‘secret’ is seen as something that can only be confessed within a space of the subject confessing to himself. ‘I find lust an emotion undistinguishable from anger. Or at least, anger predominates when I see something I can’t have – Joe Orton Diaries 29/7/67, p.260. (succinctly describes how I feel towards *name withheld*)’. In this phrase from the coming out journal the subject confesses the uncontrollable strength of his emotions. Their power and innateness is beholden. In purging these emotions the subject is alleviated from, redeemed from their force and darkness. In confessing and purging such guilty thoughts he can gain access to some purer and higher form of self-knowledge.

The following extract from the journal text, from Oscar Wilde's 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', realises a subject who believes his drive to seek out sex with other men at beats is a 'passion for sin'.

There are moments psychologists tell us, when the passion for sin or for what the world calls sin, so dominates a nature that every fibre of the body, as every cell of the brain, seems to be instinct with fearful impulses. Men and women at such moments lose the freedom of their will. They move to their terrible end as automats move. Choice is taken from them and conscience is either killed, or if it lives, lives to give rebellion its fascination and disobedience its charm. For all sins, as theologians weary not of reminding us are sins of disobedience. When that high spirit, that morning star of evil, fell from heaven, it was as a rebel that he fell (Wilde 1949, p.226).

The subject has no control over his action. He is driven by its compulsion, having no choice, but to submit to this force. The religious imagery in this quote is comprehended as the willingness by the subject to confess to these sins. He seeks redemption for his ways through explaining that he has no control. Alternatively the interpretation of this quote can be seen as an attempt to recast this passionate sin as a form of rebellion. So, on the one hand the subject acknowledges guilt, acknowledges that his actions cast him as perhaps evil and disobedience, but on the other hand he admits that this is his lot 'and if necessary I will join that rebellion' (Wilde 1949, p.226).

4.16 Conclusion

This chapter has reported on the thematic/category analysis of the coming out journal data text that occurred as a result of using a constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000; Charmaz & Mitchell 2002) approach. Thirteen categories were constructed and explained using direct quotations from the source data. The category analysis of this chapter contributes to the discursive analysis of subjectivity and its construction that forms the central component of the trajectory of this research. The 13 categories have been reported on in order to assist the reader understand how the author has engaged in a rigorous methodological process. This chapter has also been designed to assist with making the process of the construction of the dominant discourses that appear in the next chapter more transparent.

The next chapter will outline the five dominant discourses that were constructed as a result of this thematic/category analysis and undertake an analysis of their effects in line with the politico-ethical framework (Gore 1993) outlined in chapter three. As such, the next

chapter continues to conduct an inquiry into the fields of knowledge – the discourses – that have constituted the way in which the author of this research has come to know himself. The continuation of the discourse analysis within the next chapter will examine the ways these fields of knowledge are constructed that make some appear more normal than others, that privilege and valorise some fields of knowledge and subjugate others. The construction of knowledge about my selves occurs within games of truth. The continuation of the discursive analysis of the construction of the subject within the coming out journal text is interested in the processes and techniques through which the discourses seduced the subject into believing that they spoke to *the* truth as opposed to *a* truth. The discursive analysis focuses on the way in which the I of the self is seduced into constructing its normativity. The object of this is to expose the processes of the simulacrum of the self. The object of the discourse analysis is not to search for, or come to know, the author's self, but to inquire into the games of truth that the subject participates in (Foucault 2000a, b). The analysis of how these five discourses constrain and enable transformation and change forms the fulcrum of this research's investigation into theorising postmodern agency and discussing its implications for critical pedagogical praxis.

Construction of discourses

5.1 Introduction

This chapter builds upon the category/thematic analysis of chapter four by analysing five dominant discourses that frame the construction of the sex, gender and sexuality of the subject of the coming out journal. The analysis is concerned with how the subject of the coming out journal text is actively involved in constituting and recognising himself within certain types of subjectivity, resisting and negotiating the complexities and contradictions of each discourse's boundaries and relations of power. The search for a foundational knowledge about subjectivity is replaced with a critical analysis of how truth, power and ethics circumscribe the construction of particular versions of subjectivity. Questioning the apparent truth and solidity of these versions is a significant aspect of establishing agential action. The analysis of the five dominant discourses and their effects on the construction of subjectivity, sex, gender and sexuality, becomes the principle vehicle for this critical autoethnographic study to research the nexus of poststructural thinking and agency and how critical/feminist pedagogies can maximise transformation and change (O'Leary 2002; McLaren 2002; Yates 2005).

In this chapter, each of the five discourses – romance, narrative, liberation, governmentality and confession – is defined before its features are described. The features of each discourse are illuminated with reference to specific examples from the coming out journal data text. These specific examples are contained within single quotation marks. Each discourse is then analysed more closely for its political and ethical effects (Gore 1993). The political effects focus on how the meaning-making of the discourses' frames, polices and gains authority over what can be counted as truth. A specific focus is on processes of normalisation and the way they construct relations of power. The ethical aspect of the analysis inquires into how the subject of the coming out journal is involved, or seduced, into sanctioning the moral imperatives of the knowledge/power nexus as principles for his being and action within daily life (Foucault 2000a). After looking at the political and ethical effects of each discourse, the analysis moves to consider how the

subject resists the moral imperatives and processes of normalisation of the discourses. This section focuses on how the subject of the coming out journal can be seen to resist the boundaries of each particular discourse, producing counter narratives and other, albeit subjugated, knowledge (Butler 1997b; Foucault 1998; O’Leary 2002).

5.2 The discourse of romance

5.2.1 Defining the discourse

The romance discourse is constructed primarily through the categories of the loveless self, the self against the world, the pathological, individualised self and the application of power. Most actions that are carried out in this discourse are motivated by romantic love. This love is full of uncertainty, passion and pain when unattainable, and brimming with security and warmth when granted (Altus 1984 in Gilbert & Taylor 1991, p.79). The romance discourse is constructed around the central idea that a woman, or the othered and therefore feminised sexuality of a gay man, is incomplete without a man. Romance channels the hopes and dreams for intimacy and connectedness into a relationship with a special person that mirrors the heterosexual conventions of monogamy and marriage. The subject within the romance discourse is constructed around securing and maintaining this person and type of relationship. Value and status is achieved through its acquisition as is the saving of hero(ine) from his victim status (Christian-Smith 1990; Gilbert & Taylor 1991; Hiller 1998; Walkerdine 1984, 1990).

5.2.2 Features of the discourse

Romance involves self-transformation and this change is the key to personal and social happiness. Successful romance provides a sense of belonging where the heart and hearth are bound together and the coarser aspects of sexuality are overcome. Desire in the romance discourse involves repression, little pleasure and considerable danger. The subject within the romance discourse can respond to, but not initiate sexual behaviour. Romance is the only proper context for sexuality. Beauty is considered as a ticket to romantic success, power and prestige. A consciousness and astute surveillance of physical appearance is also one of the preconditions for romantic success. Romance is invested with the power to transform the character of the protagonist or hero(ine). Securing a successful romantic relationship leads to confidence and self-worth. The subject of the romance discourse also operates in a private as opposed to a public realm where feelings and emotions are valorised and responsibility for the psychological maintenance of any

relationship are borne by the (hero)ine (Christian-Smith 1990; Gilbert & Taylor 1991; Walkerdine 1984, 1990; Davies 1994).

5.2.3 The trajectory of the discourse – the romantic novice

Within the coming out journal text, the subject of the romance discourse is positioned within the role of the romantic/feminine novice. As he has recently come out as a gay man he is finding it difficult to attract a boyfriend. This is complicated, he believes, by his large body shape, which is not akin to the stereotyped body shapes of ‘successfully’ gay men. Success is defined by the subject as ‘not fat, muscled, tanned and conventionally good looking’. The subject is therefore, he believes, different from other young gay men. This is offset however by his warmth, generosity, compassion and ability to love ‘deeply and loyally’. The narrative of the romance discourse for the subject within the coming out journal follows two key trajectories. He has to attempt to lose weight and make his external appearance mirror his ‘inner beauty’ and he has to lure a potential boyfriend by not only transforming himself, but by transforming the object of his desire. This transformation is to be achieved through getting the potential boyfriend to see the true inner self of the subject, to ‘really see me’. It also involves the subject getting to ‘know himself’. He has to work on the problems that make it difficult for him to secure romantic love (Gilbert & Taylor 1991:86; Hiller 1998).

5.2.4 Love as a vocation

Love becomes a vocation. Life is full of infatuation that overtakes other areas of life, ‘always in my mind, on my thoughts’. Vigilance is a necessary prerequisite for the successful acquisition of a romantic scenario, as evidenced in the passage ‘he is out there, somewhere, waiting. Be patient. Your high expectations will lead you to happiness’. Self-transformation is a key to personal and social happiness. The subject is impelled to ‘change for him, body, mind, self, image’. The priority in life is the pursuit of playing out any infatuation to its conclusion, which is more often than not unrequited love. When one romantic longing ‘has passed ... another has begun’. These new romantic attachments are not like ‘the last time’. They have progressed. The relationships are ‘stronger, possessing more communication, more closeness, more comfort, deeper and more cherished. Not infatuation, but respect, nearing perfection’. The longer-term quest for intimacy and connectedness is the pursuit of a monogamous and permanent lifelong partner to live with in domestic bliss (Christian-Smith 1990; Gilbert & Taylor 1991).

5.2.5 Passivity and helplessness

Anger and jealousy are expressed when things do not go to plan or other people get in the way, such as in the passages, 'They went out to dinner tonight, they did fucking so, can you believe it? If they dare talk about me?' and 'I feel anger towards you, I want to hurt you, you bitch, sting you, break through, no smash that fucking barrier you put up ... I wanted to hurt him, deeply, viciously, as he had hurt me, revenge', but they are only expressed within the sanctity and safety of the journal text. The subject does not get angry with people, only himself. Victory comes about through an allegiance to passivity and helplessness. Selfishness, anger, greed and jealousy can occur but they must never be outwardly or assertively expressed. Sufferance under cruelty and misfortune has to occur in silence. The subject is positioned within a private world, alone and emotionally isolated, 'I'm a lone wolf, cast off because I'm different and don't fit in. What to do? Hibernate, become a recluse, cut myself off to survive' (Christian-Smith 1990; Gilbert & Taylor 1991).

5.2.6 The valorised kiss

The expression of sexuality is confined within certain conventions. These include that the kiss is valorised over genital sex and becomes the dominant form of sexual expression. In the passage from the journal text, 'I don't know if all that sex is really what I like about beats. I love it when you meet someone who wants to come home and you can spend time kissing,' the subject subjugates the pleasure of sexual activity occurring at beats within the romantic idea of kissing. The kiss is valorised over other forms of sexual expression and activity.

The majority of sexual acts recorded in the coming out journal involve the subject taking up a position of passivity. Examples of this passivity include waiting for someone else to initiate sexual contact and being the person that performs the sexual act as opposed to the one who receives. The subject does not take the lead and initiate sexual acts, 'What I found myself doing was sitting and waiting until someone agreed ... someone else approached'. His life is marked by continual waiting.

The subject's desires are often never fulfilled outside of making his sexual partner happy. The subject's desires are subjugated to his partner's fulfilment. As the subject of the coming out journal states, 'In simple terms I do all the fucking work. I want to please others and care little for being satisfied, or rather that is the lesser need'. His responses to

any sexual activity are lost through an expressed focus on the male partner's actions. The subject's desires can sometimes be expressed, but they must be held in check. His desire is always at the ready, as is his alertness in hiding or being secretive of its overt expression. In this discourse, life is played out within an environment of tension between sexual excitement, the pursuit of domestic security and romantic opportunity (Christain-Smith 1990; Gilbert & Taylor 1991, Snitow 1984, Walkerdine 1984, 1990).

5.2.7 The naturalness of romance

The psychological aspects of a relationship are emphasised within the romance discourse. The worth in pursuing romantic love is confirmed and validated. Encounters are constructed within a frame of romantic love. Their potential to be read as other legitimate forms of relationship is limited. Physical responses to sexual activity are excluded or marginalised. Love, or the potential for love, is more valued than physical pleasure. This is another way in which the romance discourse is involved in constructing a passive, feminised sexuality. The experiences that are valued by the subject within the coming out journal are those encounters where 'by the end of the night we ended up affectionate' as opposed to those that involve having sex. This strengthens the naturalness of romance and the unnaturalness, the 'filth and stench' of beat sex. With the passage, 'he wants to take me away for the weekend ... with each meeting we've spent more time talking. We have similar interests, i.e. books and the arts in general. It's so pleasant communicating with someone', the psychological aspects of the encounter is again foregrounded. This quest is carried out in earnest because the promise of a long-lasting and loving relationship is seen to demonstrate the successful acquisition of a successful sexuality that mirrors heteronormative conventions (Christian-Smith 1990).

5.2.8 The logic of love

The subject expects, predicts and hopes for a happy life which is connected with love, material possessions and the acquisition of the prince (Hiller & Langridge 1993). He 'waits, oh how I wait' for 'this destiny', for this 'dream to come true'. As the subject reflects on his romantic longings, sharing his reflections through the coming out journal entries, he increasingly aligns himself to the spheres of romance and heteronormativity. These ideas are invested with a logic, causality and sequence (Gilbert 1994, p.58). In the passage from the coming out journal, 'my love for him will never subside, people will tell me it is futile, but I still hope. I yearn for the happiness that he may bring. I will always be waiting', the pursuit of romance is seen as a concrete and material goal, linked with sexual

and personal 'fulfillment and satisfaction'. Romantic happiness and the struggle to achieve it forms part of the subject's 'reason for existence' (Davies 1989).

5.3 Effects of the discourse of romance

The discourse of romance promotes certain self-relationships and relations with others, which impact on the taking up of particular subject positions, or subjectivities. The discourse of romance promotes the internalising of personal problems, equates homosexuality with femininity and pathologises any sexual behaviour or friendship that does not lead to a secure monogamous couple relationship.

5.3.1 Privatising action

Romance operates within the private realm, drawing from feelings and emotions, outside of public scrutiny. The power underlying private life becomes invisible and a veil of innocence masks the ability of the discourse to control the availability of subject positionings. The personal and private realms are involved in the construction of femininity and in particular the generation of structures of control (Christian-Smith 1990). The inability of the subject to achieve the self transformation is internalised and pathologised. Whenever the subject experiences a problem it is situated within the personal. Problems are located within the individual and not within the characteristics of the romance discourse itself. The fault lies with the individual as opposed to the discourse. This incapacity fuels the attention to monitor and conduct surveillance of the body and mind to a greater extent in the hope of achieving the goal of finding true love. The discourse therefore sets up a relationship of power that acts in a panoptic fashion (Foucault 1995). The standards of achieving a certain physical form and type of relationship construct normative expectations. There is no requirement for external control of the subject with respect to these normative expectations. The subject is involved in controlling himself in relation to these standards. These individualistic solutions are another way that the discourse works to privatise action and mask the way power relations work, thereby preventing a more public form of scrutiny and the possibility of change (Christian-Smith 1990, 28; Foucault 1995).

5.3.2 Resolving intolerable contradictions

The romance discourse mires the subject to a process of becoming feminine. The subject of the journal refers to the idea that he is more comfortable with his femininity and questions why he rejects traditional notions of masculinity, 'Because as a male I don't fit the stereotype, my feminine side is much stronger', and 'I am alone as a man, some would

say more like a woman. I am different'. The subject of the coming out journal, read through the romance discourse, can be seen to be on a journey to reconcile inconsistencies, seek coherence and find solutions. The subject is therefore involved in a struggle that is similar to becoming feminine (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991) and this

... represents the attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable; to seek coherence where there clearly is none; to find solutions to an endless stream of problems (Gilbert & Taylor 1991, p.78)

Constructing subjectivity through the romance discourse is one way of overcoming the dilemma of always being positioned as feminine or 'other' to hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) and homonormative masculinity (Padva 2002). Finding love fuels the attention paid to the face, the body, the hair and clothes; provides a reason for subjugating ones own interests and needs; and stems the anger at the humiliating subject positions on offer. Finding love, and the wait that often accompanies it, makes the pain of becoming feminine tolerable. The prince will provide the resolution to the intolerable contradictions that becoming feminine (other) produces (Gilbert & Taylor 1991, 78; Christian-Smith 1990).

5.3.3 Constraining the limits on pleasure

Within the romance discourse it is difficult to construct the interaction between bodies and pleasure within the beat scene as a point of agency. The subject's involvement in frequent and intense interactions with other men could be read as a refusing to be assimilated into the normative standards of love and pleasure within dominant ideas of mature and healthy relationships (Pitts 2000). The romance discourse assists to maintain the hetero/homonormative imperative of a true and successful relationship being one that involves a couple, preferably long term and monogamous. The couple unit is valorised and endorsed and maintains its status as the principle economic unit for consuming resources and products. Love is the object with which all relationships are pursued. Sex as pleasure between bodies, or friendship as pleasure between bodies is constrained from being given space as a legitimate subject position. The potential to establish non-romantic relationships or friendships is not able to occur. Romantic love is considered normal, and non-romantic pleasure – that is, casual and anonymous sex – is considered abnormal. The subject is compelled to structure pathology around his behaviour as a beat user. It is 'wrong', 'immoral' and pathologised as an 'illness' because it can never lead to 'love'. The romantic discourse with its focus on love and meeting Mr Right prevents or limits the construction of sexual activity at beats as pleasurable and a legitimate construction of sexual subjectivity. (Foucault 1992; Halperin 1995).

5.4 Resisting the discourse of romance

It is only the heteronormative conventions of the romance discourse that impose an order on relationships, intimacy and love having to be substantial, long lasting and occurring in domestic spaces. The subject's practices and actions do not always comply with the norms and conventions of the discourse. These resistances include entertaining hope for life being different and traversing the narrow dichotomy of masculine/feminine and male/female action (Butler 1997b, 1999).

5.4.1 Escaping the harshness of daily life

The romance discourse can be constructed as a space that positions the subject in a bracket from reality. It provides an escape from the complexities of day-to-day life. This escape also offers hope of transformation and can provide a counterpoint to the oppression and marginalisation being experienced in daily life. From this perspective the romance discourse constructs a space for the subject to hope, entertain possibility, fantasise, escape, and get relief. This ability to focus on change fuels resilience where the subject hopes for a better and different future, one that is free of the limitations of a heteronormative world. The romance discourse therefore can be read as offering the subject of the coming out journal an ability to regularly take up a space of imagining that his life can be different (Gilbert & Taylor 1991; Walkerdine 1984).

5.4.2 Traversing binaries

The subject of the coming out journal text does not act easily and neatly within the binary of emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987). Actions, behaviours and practices, what the subject does and does not do, traverse aspects of this binary simultaneously and in contradictory ways. The subject traverses both traditionally masculine and feminine behaviour. He works within and against these practices. He acts in both passive and active roles within sexual encounters. He waits and is often the person that 'does all the work', taking 'responsibility' to ensure his partner is satisfied. He also engages in sexual activity in a highly competitive fashion, consuming sex in a voracious capacity, likening it to competition and sport. Sex is consumed in a space where one 'does not know the other person's name'. The subject is involved in a process of reclaiming feminine aspects of his subjectivity such as expressing great emotion, irrationality, passivity and weakness. These are reframed as strengths of his masculinity. The subject also actively criticises the standards and conventions of youth and beauty within gay subculture. He sees them as 'barriers' to his gaining a sense of 'belonging'.

These contradictions have the potential to expose the simulacrum of solidity of the male/female, masculine/feminine binary of the romance discourse. The multiple and conflicting subject positions of masculinity and femininity cannot be easily incorporated within conventions and boundaries of the discourse (Butler 1999; Connell 1995; Davies 1991).

5.4.3 Stalling invocations to repeat

The subject's body is involved in relations with other male bodies that defy the linear and temporal dimensions of the romance discourse. The practice of the subject's body is involved in beat sex that is 'casual, anonymous, rapid and brief', yet, 'intense, passionate, intimate' and taken up in a public, as opposed to domestic landscape. This involves the subject's body in a space and place that is outside of the privatised and domesticated conventions of the romance discourse. These sexual encounters also pursue the masculine ideals of strength, competition and independence. The sexual encounters are expressed in language that constructs sex within sporting metaphors, privileging 'stamina and hardness'.

The subject's body although impelled by the discourse to become beautiful and lose weight and fashion itself more in line with the standard conventions of attractiveness in gay subculture, such as 'fit, lean and tanned', does not comply. The body resists and does not conform to these standards. The norms of the discourse may have regulatory intentions but these regulatory outcomes are not always adhered to (Carrabine 2001). The coming out journal narrative does not provide evidence of the subject ever reaching these goals. The subject's body does not conform to these normative conventions. The subject's body does not do what it is supposed to do. This means that the subject of the coming out journal is involved in practices and behaviours that actively resist or defy the conventions and boundaries of the discourse. The subject's body is engaged in doing things that don't comply with the conventions of the romance discourse (Butler 1993).

This therefore provides a tension and a contradiction which can be read as stalling the repeated invocations of the romance discourse to impel the subject to secure love and a long-lasting monogamous partner. These practices provide a significant point in rupturing the truth of the discourse. These contradictions are difficult to incorporate into the order of the discourse and have the potential to disrupt the discourse's appearance of reality. These practices decentre the naturalness of the given boundaries of the discourse. They

demonstrate that the subject is actively involved in negotiating the boundaries of the discourse. Although the romance discourse may contribute to the subjugation of this other way of being and acting in powerful ways, it is still important to acknowledge that the subject is not completely subsumed by the romance discourse (Butler 1993, 1999, 2004).

5.5 The discourse of narrative

5.5.1 Defining the discourse

The discourse of narrative is constructed from the categories the loveless self, the self against the world, the pathological individualised self, being proactive – making a difference and hermeneutic searching. It draws from the narrative theory of Propp (1968), Barthes (1974, 1977) and Roof (1996). This discourse is positioned within the ubiquity of narrative as a form that shares a fundamental interest in making sense of experience and constructing and communicating meaning. Narrative is a device that reveals (Miller 1995). People reach an understanding of themselves and the world through narrative (Gates 1995). Narrative gives access to actual and universal knowledge of the self because of the way it is uniquely placed within culture and history to facilitate such access to knowledge about human existence. Narrative is a ‘linguistic form uniquely suited to displaying human existence’ (Polkinghorne 1988).

Presupposing the world of experience as something that can be known, the business, or art, of narrative is to imitate this world, to copy it and represent it accurately. The purpose of narrative is to replicate the way things are and its merit is judged on its capacity to mirror real life. Within the discourse of narrative, the trajectory of the self is organised into meaningful patterns according to a temporal and causal logic of linearity. The trajectory of life and its challenges are sequenced into a chronology of beginning, middle and end. The successful progression of life through linear, developmental stages contributes to the self achieving wholeness and foundation. The discourse of narrative equates consecutiveness, this follows this, with causality, or, this causes this (Cranny-Francis 1992; Munt et al. 2002; Miller 1995, p.68; Gough 2002).

5.5.2 Features of the discourse

The features of the discourse of narrative are drawn from criteria used within the fields of narrative educational research (Barone 2001; Ollerenshaw & Creswell 2002; Tierney & Lincoln 1997); autoethnography (Baker 2001; Ellis 1997, 1999, 2001; Ellis & Bochner 1996; Bochner & Ellis 2002; Reed-Danahay 1997) and critical literary ethnography

(Clifford 1988; Clifford & Marcus 1986; Ford 1998; Denzin 1999), which themselves draw upon 'recognised literary traditions' (Bullough & Pinnegar 2001).

This discourse of narrative frames the journey for the subject of the coming out journal text as a quest. This quest involves the subject searching for his true and knowable self. The quest aspect of this discourse is fashioned around the idea that to understand something is to discover its origin and to recreate its genesis (Verene 1991, p.71 quoted in Colne 2000, p.191). The theme of the quest consists of a beginning, middle and an end. The course of the quest involves encountering and coping with various harms, dangers, temptations and distractions. Through facing these episodes and incidents the goal of the quest gains clarity and focus. There is a tacit push towards some kind of resolution. A dialectic tension exists between the 'emotional discomfort of disruption and the desire for some particular harmony' (Colne 2000, p.197).

The narrative begins with an initial situation that leads to the change or reversal of that situation. A revelation results from this reversal. There is also the use of personification, where a character or characters are created. These characters are inserted into the plot or sequence of events of the narrative. Usually these personages include a protagonist, an antagonist, which can be an environment or alto ego of the protagonist, and a witness who learns. The protagonist, antagonist or the reader of the text can be this witness. Another feature is a patterning or repetition of key elements such as a trope, system or complex word. This provides a context for the exploration of the given situation or theme (Miller 1995). Other devices that are used include a compelling plot, realistic naturalistic conversation, memorable and recognisable characters, scenes or situations, emotionality, evocative writing that engages and moves the reader, and authenticity that enables connection with insight into understandings of the self (Bullough & Pinnegar 2001).

Another feature of the discourse of narrative is the framing of the subject of the coming out journal within the four heroic genres of the narrative tradition (Fry in Bullough & Pinnegar 2001). All these positions are to some extent utilised by the subject of the coming out journal. The romantic hero is the story of a person who is more capable than others in his society and who resolves the conflicts of that society by going on a quest. The tragic hero is constituted around the theme of isolation from their society and the way in which the dynamics of something greater and more powerful than the hero lead her/him to their isolation and demise. The ironic hero is often depicted as a common person, overwhelmed by society. In their story we hear of societies' difficulties; however, the hero never manages to escape from the woes and troubles of society. The comedic hero is a tale

of transformation and their story involves plot lines where the forces of society are used to transform, reunite and integrate society (Fry in Bullough & Pinnegar 2001).

5.5.3 The central theme – finding the true self

The coming out journal text establishes the central character and protagonist of its narrative as a young man who is on the verge of coming out. The narrative establishes at the beginning that the young man lives a ‘secret life’ as a gay man. ‘Only a few people know’ that he is gay. He is ‘not out’. He does not identify ‘openly’ as gay although this is something that he ‘wants to achieve’. He is also involved in the subterranean world of homosexual beats. Immersion in this world, together with his invisibility as gay man casts him as ‘misunderstood, isolated’ and a pariah. So begins his quest to discover his ‘true identity’. This true identity is tied up with the overcoming of his oppression. His true self has been oppressed and wounded by the heterosexual order. This self must be ‘recovered’, ‘discovered’, ‘nurtured’ and healed. This quest also involves coming to terms with his masculinity. The subject wants to embrace being a ‘true man’. Being a ‘true man’ involves throwing off the shackles of hegemonic masculinity. Feminism provides the key to this aspect of the quest. There is a commitment to coming out and dealing with the obstacles that stand in the way of the self becoming ‘whole, balanced and fulfilled’. The other main device that will bring the self to its fruition is ‘finding love’. Situations and events within the coming out journal are contextualised in such a way that they contribute to the development of these themes. Characters are constructed in such a way that they support or hinder the actioning of these thematic interests (Miller 1995).

5.5.4 Repetition of tropes

The coming out journal, when read through the lens of the discourse of narrative, contains metaphors and tropes that are continually repeated. These include the concept of ‘truth’, ‘depth’, resolution, or ‘foundation’ and the location of ‘causes’ to problems. These become markers and indicators that locate and centre the journey of self discovery. They are anchor points that remind the subject of the intention of his quest. These concepts situate and contextualise the ongoing scenarios and situations that the subject finds experiences.

5.5.5 The antagonist and witness

Society plays the role of the antagonist, always at the ready to ‘constrain and prevent’ the subject from achieving the goals of his quest. Society is a ‘powerful’ force that causes the ‘oppression’ and ‘anguish’ that the subject experiences. Society is what the subject must

pit himself against in order to 'discover' his self's truth. Society is constructed as a Goliath and the subject as a David standing to oppose its might and power.

The journal becomes a vehicle for the alter ego of the subject to witness and respond to the actions of society as antagonist. The journal is where the subject who is 'not yet free', not 'liberated', not yet 'desirable' or 'lovable' can express his truth. The journal is the space in which the 'undiscovered' and 'oppressed' self can 'nurture' and 'find itself'. This alter ego also harbours the 'dirty' and 'secret' 'unclean' aspects of the self which must be expelled in order for purity and 'wholeness' of the self to be revealed.

5.5.6 Linear structuring

The narrative of the coming out journal establishes the process of coming out as a 'transition', where certain 'steps' have to be completed, such as 'letting a few people' know, then letting 'family and friends know', then 'letting people that you don't know so well know'. The goal as living 'visibly and proudly' is considered to be the sign of a healthy and integrated sexuality and gay identity. This experience is constructed as a process where one can 'never turn back'. This process of transition involves 'dreams, hopes destroyed – never fulfilled'. Obstacles that the subject encounters on his quest are depicted as tests. If the subject wins, or 'overcomes' these he is rightfully, deservedly able to move onto the next stage of the journey. 'Goals' and 'achievements' set a linear trajectory that the subject has to head towards. If these goals are not achieved, there is a sense of failure and not being up to the challenge.

5.5.7 Facing obstacles

The journal text as a narrative positions a range of obstacles that need to be confronted and challenged by the protagonist, or subject of the coming out journal, within his quest to find his true self. The first one is coming out as a gay man. This is the initial situation that faces the subject. The reversal of the subjects sexuality from 'closeted' to 'out as a gay man' provides the revelation that secures the journey to find his 'true identity' and 'reveal' and 'find' those aspects of himself that have been subjugated by the oppressiveness of the 'heterosexism' and the 'patriarchy'. A second major obstacle is 'becoming free' from his immersion within homosexual beat culture. This aspect of the subject's life is something that he needs to 'escape from'. It is constructed as an 'addiction' and a 'habit that must be broken'. It is an 'obstacle to finding love'. The subject's next obstacle is that of finding romance and finding a partner. The subject lists all the 'positive and valuable' qualities that he possesses such as being 'loyal, honest, trusting, caring and passionate'. He believes

these would make him a good and loving partner; however, it is the confusion of 'not knowing who he is' that prevents him from using these qualities to secure a partner, or from a potential partner seeing that these aspects make him 'who he really is'. If the subject can find his true self, by rejecting his patriarchal privilege, integrating his gayness into his identity, overcoming his addictions and other health issues, such as being overweight and being 'fucked up', then he will be in a position to love and be loved. Another obstacle that significantly contributes to the action of the plot of the quest is the subject's admission to a mental health facility following an attempted suicide. This is another obstacle that has been put in his way where he must 'search further and deeper' for the answers. This part of the quest, however, provides 'solitude' where he can 'rest and restore' himself. It gives him time to focus on 're-emerging' into the world to 'continue the fight, the struggle'. This stage of the quest includes working on the obstacles of the subject's family needing to 're-learn to communicate' and 'heal' the wounds of the past.

5.5.8 The construction of the hero

Throughout this quest the subject is positioned within the various traditions of the hero. As a tragic/ironic hero he is isolated from heteronormative society because he is gay and non-traditionally masculine. He is also isolated from homonormative society because his body shape does not subscribe to dominant images within gay-subculture. He describes himself as an 'outcast', as 'misunderstood', as the 'lone wolf'. Social factors and pressures are seen as powerful forces that lead to his isolation and demise. These are the things that cause his 'oppression'. They are often insurmountable obstacles that he never seems to be able to escape from. Within the romantic and comic traditions the inner 'determination and spirit' means that he is a person with special abilities to understand the world around him. His quest highlights that although 'separated' from the world and different, he is located in a 'special' and privileged place where others 'can learn' from him. The integration and search for his 'true self' and idea of becoming a 'real man', where hegemonic versions of masculinity are 'cast off', is evidence of the subject's quest being about attempting to transform the limiting and constraining structures of society, albeit in a personal and internal manner.

5.5.9 Compelling plot lines and evocative situations

Events and situations within the coming out journal, as constructed by the discourse of narrative, contribute to the thematic context of the narrative and/or assist with creating dramatic tension and emotional significance. The quest, with its triumph over obstacles leads to emotional maturity. 'Strength, perseverance' and diligence are part of the

subject's armoury. They will assist him to overcome his 'demons'. The subject engages in documenting his thoughts and feelings in a rigorous fashion. Connecting the head with the heart is vital for effective critical reflexivity. The obstacles produce great emotions, such as 'angry, bitter, frustrated, confused, helpless', and 'trapped, about to explode' to describe being on the verge of coming out. 'Great joy and freedom' is coupled with 'fear' to denote his emerging visibility as a gay man. The journal text is littered with many love poems where 'pain', 'loneliness', 'jealousy' and revenge are all expressed in response to instances of unrequited love. 'Lust and passion' when in the throws of casual and anonymous sex at beats is followed by 'self-loathing and hate' for being so 'trapped' within this 'vile and filthy' habit that is an addiction and sign of his weakness. At the point of the subject's admission to a mental health facility the tragedy of his life is given full attention. The reflective stance of the journal in its capacity as antagonist implores the subject to 'search further and deeper for the answers', to 'keep going' in order that he 'will succeed'.

5.5.10 Characters along the way

Characters feature through the quest and play different roles in either supporting or preventing the subject from reaching his goal. Some characters are cast as supportive, 'confidants' who become 'mentors' and advisors to the quest. Other characters are positioned as people who actively stand in the way of the subject meeting his goals. These people contribute to his desolation. Interestingly, these characters are all women. It is the women characters that play a dual role of friend who then become the enemy. Women are often constructed as harridans. They take on an evil and witch-like role, manipulating and causing the subject to stray from his course.

5.6 Effects of the discourse of narrative

The quest of the discourse of narrative establishes a claim for objectivism or an external explanatory matrix. It foregrounds foundationalism, a spatial or temporal initiating point and universalism. In locating commonality of customs and traditions experience is essentialised. The quest narrative solidifies the individuation (Foucault 1998) of experience. The individual is the cornerstone of reaching, or failing to reach goals and aspirations. Life is structured within a process of moving successfully from one goal to another goal, one stage to the next stage. Life is explained within a framework of cause and effect that effaces the complexity and contrariness of life (Stone 1995).

5.6.1 Discovering the origin

The discourse of narrative is positioned within a philosophical quest for knowledge about one's own life and is grounded within the possibility that to understand something is to discover its origin (Colne 2000). The narrative structure of linearity is an attempt to recreate this genesis. Narrative offers a resolution to any tensions and contradictions in one's life by patterning and sequencing events in a seamless way. Through the discovery and realisation of the quest's goal, one can achieve a greater sense of harmony and balance. Only by encountering and coping with the various harms, dangers, temptations and distractions that form the basis of any quest's episodes and incidents, can the subject finally understand and realise the goal. The goal is seen as freedom as opposed to a gaol (Conle 2000; Foucault 2002b).

5.6.2 Achieving the real

The discourse of narrative outlines the quest for a unified subject and the completeness of knowledge as a factual representation of empirical reality, rather than a fictional construct (Clough 1998). The quest narrative as an experience of self-development moves to authorise such development of self as real and achievable in a final or foundational form. The repetition of the invocation that the self can be 'found', 'discovered', reclaimed and 'searched for' creates a position for these ideas as natural. Within the discourse of narrative, melodrama is used to heighten the emotional significance of the journey of self-discovery for the subject. The creation of dramatic events and situations is framed through expressing great and 'deep' emotions. This also contributes to the construction of an atmosphere of reality. The events are seen as real because they evoke strong, deep, corporeal responses. In detailing the common, every day aspects of the subject's affective life, the authenticity of his experience is foregrounded. This has the effect of drawing the reader of the text into the richness of the experience. Richness and depth is equated with realness and authenticity (Ellis 1997; Denzin 1999). The repetition of these tropes within the narrative discourse contributes to hiding its own constructedness. The essentiality of the self that can be found is claimed by the discourse as a factual reality. This hides and subjugates the non-linear construction of subjectivity that the journal also constructs (Belsey 1980, p.51; Butler 1999, 1997a; Clough 1998; Ellis 1997; Denzin 1999).

5.6.3 Detecting the authentic

The pursuit of truth is constructed in a dialectical tension with deception within the discourse of narrative. One aim for the subject within his quest is to uncover his authentic self. The authentic self stands in opposition to deceptive aspects of the self. Examples of

the deceptive self include the closeted self, the irrational self, the vanquished and forlorn self that is not in a stable and monogamous relationship, and the non-enlightened self. The subject acts as a detective on a search to reveal the mystery and authenticity of the self by revealing its true identity and origin. The subject's predicament and stage in life, as a 'troubled, closeted, beat user', occludes the authentic and self-actualised self from being realised. Authenticity is searched for through appealing to rationality and logic; by analysing his own experience within the binaries of true/false, right/wrong, and by logically tracking a linear pathway to self-improvement. The positioning of sexuality as a 'secret' that the subject has chosen to share with others, structures this aspect of the self as discrete and integral to self-identity. It is a pre-existing given, 'harboured deep within' that has been subjugated 'trapped, about to explode' and oppressed through the heterosexual order. Its naturalness, its essential nature is strengthened through its disclosure. It is made more real through the close examination of its hidden substrate (Foucault 1998).

5.6.4 Integrating an essential identity

The initial equilibrium or beginning for the quest narrative is structured as heterosexual identity. This is questioned through the subject's homosexuality disturbing this equilibrium or normativity. The quest or journey that is structured for the subject is to find a resting place or another state of equilibrium that is the stable and integrated gay identity. This journeying to an imagined community is fraught with danger and risk. Risks of setting out, exposure and loss are considered as necessary parts of the goal to arrive at a stage of integrated identity and belongingness within a community. This narrative frame of journey and quest naturalises and solidifies the Enlightenment and modernist ideals of reaching wholeness, foundation and actualisation. The narrative frame also encompasses a stage model where change and progress occurs in developmental sequences that occur in linear fashion. The stages of coming out gay that occur are an awareness of sexual feelings, exploration of these feelings, acceptance of these feelings and integration of these feelings. Coming out is also constructed within ideas of 'bravery', 'risk' and 'courage'. All these are necessary steps to the generation and achievement of a healthy self concept where the subject can be true to himself. The healthy self is evidenced in the subject's goal to heal his 'fractured and irrational' mentally ill self. By retaining its essentialist economy the narrative preserves the regulation of practices that construct identity and inhere aspects of the character as natural and essential as opposed to constructed (Butler 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Munt et al. 2002).

5.6.5 Locating causes

A logic of causality also works to establish and arrange events in meaningful patterns (Cranny-Francis 1994; Miller 1995). The naturalisation of the temporal linearity of sequencing aspect's of the subject's quest also assists to solidify a logic of causal linearity. Just as events are seen to occur in developmental stages or a natural progression from one step to another, certain events are seen to naturally and unequivocally cause other events and outcomes (Kress 1985).

By establishing the causes of the oppressed self the subject identifies those who are guilty in reproducing society's structural inequalities. By identifying those aspects of his self that have been influenced by these inequalities, the subject is in a better position to be able to refuse participating in perpetuating these inequalities (Gough 2002). The local and particular become generalised, extrapolated to claiming a universality or generalisability with respect to the subject's life. The similarity can be asserted as law-like and natural. Alternatively a conservative romanticisation of the particular can occur where one's own story is privileged over someone else's. Neither of these approaches focuses on attending to the ways in which a narrative frame imbues the story of a life with particular meaning (Stone 1995).

5.6.6 Closing down contradictions

The discourse of narrative effects the negation of the contradictions and inconsistencies that the subject faces. It works to 'other', that is make abnormal, different and therefore less than, the contradictory elements of the subject's constitution. In othering or delineating those parts of the self that don't make sense, that don't appear to be contributing to a sense of wholeness, they are constructed as not whole and therefore made into a problem. The wholeness that is constructed through the searching and quest component of the narrative subjugates these other aspects of subjectivity. The possibility of these other aspects becoming counter-narratives is subjugated. Rather than multiple selves being celebrated they are seen as evidence of a troubled soul. Through journeying and facing the obstacles that stand in the subject's way he will become 'complete'. It is this completeness that leads to truth. There are as many absences as presences in the way that the subject is formed. There are more instances of the non-location of the subject, its loss, its non-coherence, its unfoundedness, yet these are subsumed within the overall quest for presence (Stone 1995).

5.6.7 Valorising the autonomous, masculine self

Within the discourse of narrative, a particular construction of masculinity that valorises independence, competition, individualism, success and achievement is fashioned. This occurs within the contexts of career, but also in relation to the body and personal relationships. Autonomy is valorised, 'A journey or quest that only I can take'. What is absent from this discourse is interdependence. Learning can occur from others but not with others. The self is 'solitary and isolated', involving a 'search for perfection' where the self is not able 'to make mistakes'.

The masculine hero of the quest narrative, who is the active principle of his destiny, overshadows that which is feminine and not susceptible to transformation. The masculine conqueror, founder is privileged and admonishes those other-than-male aspects of the self which foreground uncertainty, instability and tentativeness. The way that the masculine sutures the idea that finding, questing the solid and coherent self as the substance of agency, disallows or makes it difficult to access an other, more partial and contradictory knowledge (Davies 1991; Clough 1998; Butler 1997b, 1999).

5.6.8 Locating the problem within the individual

The linear structuring of the quest, coming out and the resolution of obstacles that the subject faces have the effect of locating the trajectory of change within the individual. The individual is the site where change has to occur. The focus of responsibility being laid upon the subject's shoulders means that the potential for any lapses in focus and determination also become contextualised within the individual. The discourse of narrative as a quest solidifies the individuation of the change process. The achievement of change is equated with individual capacity and resource, as is the non-achievement of change. The individual is causally involved in progression and change. The site of change is located within the individual as an entity as opposed to the confluence between subjectivity, discourse and language (Davies 1991, 1997; Kress 1985).

5.7 Resisting the discourse of narrative

The dominant framing of the discourse of narrative is to construct a subject position of wholeness, foundation, essential identity, consistency, authenticity and temporal/casual linearity for the subject of the coming out journal. The discursive analysis of the coming out text also highlights examples of how the subject does not participate within the regimes and normalisations of this discourse. The subject stands outside of the discursive

parameters, refusing to participate within its principles of government through valorising different and contradictory subject positions, rejecting foundational premises and standing in a space of uncertainty (Foucault 1988, 1990).

5.7.1 Rejecting wholeness and foundation

The subject is constantly engaged in a process of negotiating a range of different subject positions. The subject exists in different worlds and states that are partial, fragmentary and contradictory. The subject's subjectivity is never settled. It is always in motion, never fixed (Probyn 1995).

The coming out journal as a narrative can be read for the way in which it establishes a story of uncertainty, tentativeness and ambiguity. This irrational and uncertain positionality stands counter to the humanist androcentric individual who practices their agency through the certainty of their action. The rational mind exercising choices in an independent and autonomous way is decentred. This multifarious subject acts in concert with others and does not stand alone. He accepts the ambiguity and fluidity of life and values receptivity, listening, tolerance and humility, recognising one's own limitations, seeing them as strengths and resources (Stone 1995).

Subjectivity within the space of beat subculture exists in a range of positions that contradict and challenge each other. The subject takes up subject positions of 'fear', 'loathing', 'lust', 'passion', 'danger', 'excitement', 'intimacy', 'love', 'friendship', 'immorality', 'politics', 'solitariness', 'community', 'pleasure and pain'. The subject also encounters instances when life and his actions don't 'make sense'. His responses to his environment are 'irrational'. The mentally ill, 'fucked up' subject that 'takes time out' from the world when admitted to a psychiatric ward of a hospital sanctions this 'irrationality' as a space to 'nuture' himself, 'grow and recharge'. Other people in the hospital are not seen as 'sick' but as people with great 'insight', that non-mad and sick people can 'learn from'.

The significance of this openness and fragmentation is that it provides the opportunity for subjectivity to be fluid, to be in a constant state of play, traversing different boundaries. This messiness provides the subject with the ability to acknowledge that there is not something essential and fixed about subjectivity. Subjectivity is partial and fragmented and therefore always open to change and transformation (Butler 1997b).

5.7.2 The hupomnematic narrative

The quest narrative, while seeking a trajectory for the self of wholeness and solidity, unity, with respect to masculinity and sexuality, is countered within a narrative that foregrounds disunity and precariousness. The narrative also provides a space where reigning assumptions about cultures can be criticised. The subject actively seeks to offer alternatives and inquire into other ways of knowing. The journal text can be read as a narrative that both reinforces some aspects of the hegemonic culture but also questions it. The subject questions, albeit nascently, what a man 'is supposed to be', that gay men have to fuck 'long and hard', and that a 'successful' gay body is 'young and thin'. Sexuality, or being gay, is defined within a broader definition of human relationships that includes reciprocity and non-conjugal intimacy between and among men and women, straights and gays. Being gay is more than 'who one fucks'. The subject begins to position sexuality within a queer (Jagose 1998) perspective, which acknowledges the importance of resisting the normal within heterosexual and homosexual cultures and discourses. A subjugated reality for the subject of the coming out journal is one in which fears, fragilities and vulnerabilities are safely expressed and worked through. The narrative can be read as hupomnematical (Foucault 2000a), valorising the multiplicity of conflicting subject positions. The narrative becomes a documentation of a cyclical and non-linear pathway of critical reflection and action where the subject resists aspects of heteronormativity, homonormativity and androcentrism on a daily basis.

This counter-narrative does not seek to resolve and find answers. The subject is not obligated to examine his desires, thoughts and actions within a wider framework and context of centrality and foundation (McLaren 2002, p.150). The heterogeneous and disparate aspects of the subject's life are left open, defying explanation and unification. Multiple aspects of subjectivity come into conflict and co-exist within the narrative. They are constructed as multifaceted, complex and dynamic. Rather than being an exercise in subjection, or producing the required truth about oneself, the coming out journal can be read as a document in which the subject critically examines the processes of subjectification (McLaren 2002) or how the self is tied to and resists processes of normalising discourses. Rather than the quest for knowledge about the subject being about pursuing the unspeakable, revealing the hidden or saying the unsayable (Foucault 2000a), the quest becomes about capturing the already said. In capturing the already said the potential is established to disperse the centrality of a discourse as it works to fix an origin or truth. The collection of life fragments that are disparate, random and illogical act to unsettle and unfix certainty (Kamler 2001; Foucault 2000a; McLaren 2002).

5.8 The discourse of liberation

5.8.1 Defining the discourse of liberation

The discourse of liberation is constructed from the categories the loveless self, the self against the world, the socialised self, being proactive – making a difference, the application of power and resisting subjugation. Within this discourse the subject has been interpellated (Althusser 1984) within the hegemonies of patriarchy and heterosexuality. These dominant systems of thought have led to the oppression of the subject. Drawing from structuralism (Althusser 1984; Levi-Strauss 1969; Piaget 1971), social structures, such as patriarchy and heterosexuality, produce fundamental relationships that do not immediately present themselves in social life. Instead they lie underneath ‘the surface complexity of interactions and institutions’ (Connell 1987, p.93). These social structures, through a complex interplay of power and social institutions, are imbued within social relationships and produce constraints. This gives the experience of being up against something that limits freedom. The discourse of liberation is located within the goal of modernism’s epistemology to emancipate truth from every system of power (Connell 1987; Foucault 1980a).

5.8.2 The features of the discourse of liberation

The hegemonic order has created a self that is simultaneously privileged and oppressed. The patriarchal, heterosexual and capitalist order filters down through societal institutions and systems and influences the subject’s ‘character and make up’. These social processes endorse and support certain privileges. These privileges include for the subject of the coming out journal being ‘white, male, middle class and Anglo Saxon’. Within the discourse of liberation these privileges of ‘caste’ have to be given up if the subject is to become liberated. These processes of socialisation have also taught the subject that his gay and non-hegemonic male self are abnormal and therefore wrong.

Representative of the hegemonic order, false consciousness keeps people in an oppressed state. People falsely internalise the ways in which they fall outside the hegemonic order as personal inadequacies, or do not realise how certain privileges can lead to oppressive and limiting behaviours. Drawing from Frankfurt School critical theory, Gramscian (1971) counter-hegemonic practice and Freirean (1973, 1990, 1993) conscientisation, critical awareness lays the pathway for the subject to free himself from his sense of false

consciousness. Overcoming false consciousness leads to freedom. Freedom is a tangible state which the subject can occupy (Connell 1987; Giroux 1988a).

5.8.3 Ideological systems of thought

Ideology is seen by the subject of the coming out journal as a system of representation that 'hides the true relationships' between people in society, by constructing imaginary relations between them and the social world they inhabit. There is a distorted view by the majority of people in society of the way things 'actually are'. Ideology dupes people, 'people don't really understand the way the world is'. The imposition of ideologies such as 'patriarchy', 'heterosexism' and 'capitalism' lead to 'repression and oppression'. Ideological beliefs are therefore seen to be constraining and 'limiting', and the process of liberation involves getting 'free' of these ideas. The social world of the subject and other individuals is controlled by these ideologies. They function through state apparatuses such as the police, government and media. Ideology constructs 'media lies'. These ideologies protect and serve the 'privileged and powerful' in society by ensuring that their interests are seen by the majority as the natural order of society. Individuals are invested with a 'consciousness' that reflects the main ideas of a particular ideology. The subject has had his consciousness 'raised', meaning that he sees through the 'lies and deception'. His work as a social worker and activist is about assisting others to see the 'falseness and oppressiveness' of these systems of thought (Mills 2003; Phillips & Jorgensen 2002).

5.8.4 Hegemonic relations

Within the discourse of liberation, ideologies act in hegemonic ways (Gramsci 1971). They extend into the 'private life' of individuals. Ideologies are hegemonic in that they achieve an ascendancy that produces a relation of domination of sets of ideas over other ideas. Those who are 'dominated' by others take on board the 'values' and ideologies of those in power, accepting them as their own. This hierarchy of ideas is seen as natural and for the good of most people in society. Traditional ideas of masculinity such as 'strength, independence, autonomy' and 'heterosexuality' are constructed as being dominant and naturalised ideas that circulate in society. The subject's experience as a gay man and a non-traditionally masculine man, that is a man who is 'gentle, passive, sensitive', not 'into sport' and has a 'fat body', has provided experiences that position him outside of the hegemonic order. Even though the subject 'realises' that these ideas are not necessarily 'true and valid', most people in society do not question these ideas (Connell 1995; Mills 2003, p.75).

5.8.5 False consciousness

Ideologies inculcate their hegemonic ideas into people's minds and bodies. People believe that these ideas are 'right' and good and normal; however, they are mistaken. This leads to people possessing a 'false consciousness'. The aim of 'liberation' is to free the consciousness from its distorted state of knowing and reality. The aim of liberation is to uncover the 'mask' of ideology and provide the truth of 'how things really are'. To critically refute and work against hegemonic relations the subject must be able to 'recognise' these relations of dominance. The subject must critically reflect on how these ideologies affect the way people act. Practices such as 'sexism' and 'homophobia' are products of this distorted thinking and oppressive ideas. The subject is committed to 'opposing' these false states of knowing through education 'politicisation' and 'activism'. This involves teaching people about how ideologies exclude and 'intimidate and exploit'. Reflection and analysis is something that the subject continually 'searches' for as it leads to 'intelligence and insight'. Locating himself within wider community-based projects that acknowledge other marginalised and oppressed groups is also another strategy. The subject of the coming out journal works within the disability sector, aiming to assist with changing the oppression faced by people with disabilities. There is also a commitment to pledge support to Aboriginal rights issues.

5.8.6 Socialisation

The subject of the coming out journal within this discourse views society as providing a series of prescriptions and models that influence the development of appropriate behaviour and action. Society is made up of agents of socialisation. These agents of socialisation provide the site of appropriation by individuals of ideological expectations and norms. These agents of socialisation assist in the fixing of ideological beliefs within a person's make up. Processes such as conditioning, instruction, modelling, identification and rule-learning assist in the 'internalisation' of social expectations. These agents of socialisation work on behalf of the dominant members of society and produce powerful effects such as the belief that because he is gay the subject is therefore 'unfit for parenthood' (Connell 1987).

The subject delineates between 'social institutions' and 'social structures'. Social structures are those aspects of society that are concerned with ideologies and ideas. The subject has been 'moulded' and 'conditioned' by the social structures of 'gender, race, class, sexuality, age, physical ability and ethnicity'. Social institutions are the material systems or physical institutions that promulgate the ideologies of social structures through

to individuals' consciousness. The subject has been influenced by a range of social institutions and systems, including 'the family, education, work, the media, the law, government and one's peer group'.

Understanding processes of socialisation is important for the process of liberation. The social contextualising of the subject's situation assists him to understand how he has 'become' who he is. It assists with dispelling false consciousness. Aspects of an individual's character and the problems that she or he is facing need to be located within a critical analysis of these agents of socialisation. Expectations and norms are seen as being involved in the production of certain ideologies. Understanding the processes of 'stereotyping' and 'stigmatisation' that occur for people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS and people with a mental illness also assist to alert people to the ways in which ideologies work (Bottomore & Nisbet 1978).

5.8.7 Casting off privileges

The subject's version of an 'emancipated' self is one where his sexuality is freed from the oppression of being gay, and he is free from the dominating effects that result from him being white, male and middle class. The subject does not view social systems, institutions or structures in a positive light. They are seen as having 'corrupted' the subject in some way. The goal of liberation is to develop an 'astute awareness' of how these processes have impacted on his self. An important strategy is recognising how the subject has been granted certain 'privileges', for example 'being born male, white, middle class', and having been granted 'access to a good education', relatively 'easy entry' to tertiary study; and access to the 'finer things in life' such as an 'appreciation of art, culture and literature'. These privileges have to be 'cast off'. The subject is involved in a process of redemption where he needs to vigilantly release himself from these positions of privilege and 'wipe out old patterns and habits'. The subject needs to understand how these privileges have led him to act in dominating and oppressive ways. Examples of this include his 'sexism' where he is continually engaged in 'ogling of other men' and consumes sex in a 'voracious' way, only seeking 'physical gratification'. Other examples of traditionally masculine behaviour that have to be given up include 'competitiveness', 'aggression', 'internal rage' and 'acting autonomously'. Through adopting 'feminist' thought the subject can become a 'real man', ensuring that he doesn't 'dominate women in conversations' and that he 'celebrates' the non-traditional aspects of his masculinity such as 'gentleness, compassion and sensitivity'. As these are the marginalised aspects of his identity he often falls back into a situation where he endures a sense of 'isolation and

hardship'. In committing himself to a political struggle of social change the 'battle' for liberation is couched in terms of right and wrong, or good versus evil.

5.8.8 Power as a tangible entity

Power within this discourse of liberation is constructed in modernist terms and is understood as the capacity of individuals to realise their will or interest over and against the will or interest of another. It is therefore constructed as a property that is possessed by individuals, which they exert over others. Power is seen as a possession that is held by the powerful in society and which the powerless attempt to wrest from their control (Mills 2003, p.35). Power is also constructed as an effect of structures and systems and is located within Parsonian notions of power as a generalised resource that disseminates itself through the political system – Marxist notions of power being rooted in economic structures of society and feminist notions of power being rooted within the structure of patriarchy. As such, power is something that is tangible, static, and possessable, located within a binary of powerful/disempowered, enfranchised/disenfranchised, ruling/ruled class. Power can be acquired or seized and is disseminated from the apex of a social hierarchy (Smart 2002, p.122).

5.9 Effects of the discourse of liberation

The effects of this discourse include: seeing the agential self as a resolution of the antagonistic relationship between self and society; seeing rational thought as the key to uniqueness and autonomy; accepting social change as a slow and gradual process; regarding identity as a vessel filled and determined by language; acknowledging the importance of connecting the macro and the micro; seeing power as a tangible entity that can be possessed; and constructing maleness and femaleness as natural.

5.9.1 Dialectical struggle and rational thought

The discourse of liberation situates issues of the self and the social within a dialectical struggle. The self and the social are positioned as standing in opposition to one another. Individuals, according to this discourse stand externally to society, which acts forcefully upon them and against which they pit themselves (Davies 1991). The resolution of this struggle of opposing forces is resolved by the emergence of a new synthesis that has its basis in the emergence of a true and known self, free from oppression, standing outside itself and working against its privileges.

Choices that an individual makes are based on rational thought and such rationality signifies a coherence of the self. People who don't make choices accordingly are deemed to be lacking in some essential aspect of humanness. Even though the individual is socialised through society's norms and values, the individual is understood through an individual/collective dualism. The essence of the individual is in how they break away from the collective. A 'successful' and 'empowered' individual is one who successfully negotiates to stand apart from the collective and establishes a sense of 'uniqueness' (Danaher et al. 2000; Davies 1991).

5.9.2 Processes of social change

This discourse of liberation constructs a view of social change coming about through changes to social role expectations and norms. Norms are constructed as social facts. These social facts exist within a binary of true/false. Language can and does reflect a truth. Social change is a process where truth is freed from distortion. Social processes can change these expectations and distortions. The locus for social change is through changing social systems and institutions such as legislation and government policy. Changes to legislation and social policy are key avenues for assisting with changes to norms and expectations. Education and the raising of personal consciousness are also key strategies for bringing about changes in ideas, which will lead to changes in power. Social change comes into effect at a slow rate. It is unlikely that significant structural change can occur within the daily life of people within short periods of time. While 'real and significant change' comes about through changes to laws and government policy, personal problems are managed and maintained through adapting to and coping with the current status quo (Connell 1995).

5.9.3 Identity as vessel

The subject of the coming out journal has an identity (after Erikson 1965) that is seen as 'a coherent core to personality or sexual character' (Connell 1987, p.194). As such, the self is constructed as something that stands *a priori* to its position within language. The subject is an individual, a vessel that is filled and determined through the appropriation of ideological structures, promulgated through socialisation processes. The self is made up of core features that need to be delineated and categorised. Certain aspects are valorised, such as subjugated gayness, and other aspects need to be vanquished, such as hegemonic masculine traits.

The subject's coming out experience is a harsh coming into awareness of his own unchosen minority identity of gayness. This status is an externally imposed identity. It is imprinted from birth and has been given little voice and encouragement through the practices of discrimination by wider society. The subject is required within the discourse of liberation to determine what is and what is not gay, to discover an authenticity to his sexuality. This sexuality, just like his wider identity can become known as a truth and substance. Sexuality and identity are objects that have a foundation (Ang 1998).

5.9.4 Connecting the micro and the macro

The process of liberation involves the individual subject being awakened to the ways in which agents of socialisation have coerced him into participating within certain social practices. Liberation involves valorising the moves the subject has made to decline society's expectations and norms. It involves understanding how certain behaviours and actions correlate with the subject succumbing to hegemonic ideas. Making connections between the macro level of ideas and thinking and the micro elements of experience is a first step to liberation. This assists the subject to realise how ideologies have oppressed other ways of being, acting and existing. The process of liberation involves constructing positive alternatives. There is a strong belief in the capacity for change, fuelled by hope and possibility.

5.9.5 The centrality and sovereignty of power

The discourse of liberation views the transformation and change of the subject within the binary of free will versus determinism. The subject is an autonomous, acting and therefore agential subject who has control over his life, or, a subject who is the object of hegemonic discourse and therefore determined and without agency. Systems and institutions are seen as robbing the subject of their autonomy because either they have power and impose it upon the subject making them powerless, or because the systems ideology creates a false illusion or consciousness about how things really are. The language of such a discourse uses words like 'caused', 'robbed', 'forced' to explain the process by which autonomy is taken away from the subject. Power is seen within a sovereign model of possession and centrality. Liberation is the state of gaining freedom from power. Power is seen as a negative force that constrains and limits. There is a belief that people can stand outside of power relations. Power is a tangible force that can be controlled. This view of power leads the subject into a trajectory where he has to overcome the might of ideologies ability to instil a false consciousness through summoning the strength of his individual will (Foucault 1998, 2000b; Graham 1994).

5.9.6 The naturalness of maleness and femaleness

The subject is spoken of in terms of being a man that has masculine attributes, but also a man that has feminine attributes. Even though these feminine attributes are in tension with the masculine there is still a maintaining of the integrity of the gender. The feminine attributes are seen as ‘secondary and accidental characteristics of a gender ontology that is fundamentally intact’ (Butler 1999, p.32). The subject of the coming out journal, within this discourse of liberation, fashions the feminised, othered values as having to conquer or achieve supremacy over the masculine. The feminine must replace the masculine. This is influenced by radical and liberal feminist theory, which sees that the reclaiming of an essential feminine is part of the process of achieving freedom (Butler 1997b; Eagleton 1996; Irigaray 1985).

Maleness and femaleness are constructed within discourse as natural, albeit that the feminine is subjugated and needs to be reclaimed and authorised in some way. A truer and more liberated masculinity comes about through incorporating and accepting the feminine aspects of the subject’s self. The binary logic of the male/female dualism is ensnared within a dialectic that orders a control, mastery and resolution of the tension. This dialectic struggle focuses attention away from the constructedness of the male and female, the masculine and feminine. The constructedness is not examined for its effects. There is a teleology that suggests the aim of freedom is to reach some end point that combines the worth of both. In a similar way gayness is presented as a natural, yet oppressed expression of sexuality. The gay self is an essential part of the subject which needs to be liberated.

The discourse of liberation establishes a binary of the masculine mind and the feminine body. The mind often subjugates the body. The mind and its fantasy of fleeing any notion of embodiment is constructed as a parable for freedom. The response is for the mind to gain control of the body, or for the body to be liberated in some way. The very dualism of mind/masculine and body/feminine enforces the idea that gender and sexuality are essential and natural states (Butler 1992, 1997a, 1999).

5.10 Resisting the discourse of liberation

Even though within the discourse of liberation subjectivity is constructed within a natural order of the binaries of male/female, masculine/feminine, mind/body, natural/unanatural,

whole/part, rational/irrational, there are many examples of transgression and movement outside of such binary divisions.

The subject constructs positions of subjectivity that are contested, multiple, often in conflict and continually troubling the boundaries of its own definition. The subject is therefore always looking at creating new possibilities. He is located within positions in which he refuses to be governed. Power works back against itself providing opportunities for moments of resistance at the same time as it is involved in relations of domination (Foucault 1998, 2002c).

5.10.1 Dissonance of critical thinking

Critical thinking by the subject is not always consistent with action. Thinking and action do not always cohere, leaving a space of tension. This provides an opportunity to disrupt the way things 'are supposed to be'. The solidity, coherence and naturalness of the subject and his subjectivity are questioned. By asking the question 'What is a real man?' the subject begins to locate masculinity within a cultural and discursive frame. The subject has a critical awareness that gay subculture may limit available subject positions, yet he also possesses a desire to 'belong and fit into' the gay scene. The tension between his critical awareness of the gay scene, where dominant images and body types are questioned, and wanting to belong and fit, exemplifies the subject existing within a contested space, not fixed, forever shifting and struggling to understand itself. This subject position stands against the idea that to be liberated one has to be 'integrated and whole' and things have to 'make sense'. The tension provides a nascent potential to question what appears as the 'right', successful, or healthy way to be gay.

The subject believes that it is vital to challenge heterosexual sexism as part of overthrowing patriarchal relations, yet his sexist behavior towards other gay men is constructed as a curious contradiction. 'I abhor ogling and sexism of men towards women yet I spend half the day checking out balls and cocks.' Critical thinking does not translate into action. The subject constructs this as a curiosity. The discourse of liberation impels him to carry out action in politically and theoretically consistent ways; however, his body does not always follow. The discourse of liberation impels him to resolve this contradiction, suggesting that gay men are 'no better than their heterosexual male peers'. However, the subject's action stands against and outside of this relation of power. The subject is involved in negotiating the boundaries of a discourse and questioning the discourse. The idea that heterosexual men's sexism is the same as gay men's sexism is a

product of a particular discursive conception of power that sees all men as essentially the same. The contradiction between what one is supposed to do and what one actually does is linked with a range of variables, including time, history, cultural location and space. The liberation of an essential, whole self prevents these from being acknowledged.

5.10.2 Crossing boundaries

The discourse of liberation constructs a binary that posits an individual as in control of what is happening to his or her life and therefore an autonomous agent, or, an object of other people's power, subsumed and determined by the ideologies that they impose. The subject refuses such a binary construction of the self and its formation. Subjectivity is seen to exist outside the dichotomised world of either subject or object. This foregrounds the contradictory and incoherent aspects of subjectivity that stem from the position of being on/in the boundary between men's and women's domains. There is a 'restless multiplicity' (Graham 1994, p.626) of selves that 'buttress the boundaries' (Graham 1994, p.638) of binary divisions. The subject crosses the boundaries of being within dominant or privileged subject positions such as white, Anglo and middle class, but he is also gay. He views himself as a man and yet not a man, he defines masculine and feminine 'aspects of his character'. He reads himself as wanting to be like other gay men, but then he takes 'pride' in rejecting, or at least questioning standards and codes of the subculture. He stands within and against positions of mad/sane, healthy/sick. This boundary crossing acts to problematise and trouble the discourse of liberation's trajectory to find a whole and healthy self and sexuality.

5.10.3 Standing against regimes of truth

The subject is actively involved in the construction of an 'alternative identity project' (White 2002) which celebrates the inability of traditional systems of power to completely seduce people into constructing their lives in harmony with the socially constructed norms of personhood. These 'acts of refusal' (White 2002) contribute to other ways of being and knowing that provide options for living against and outside of normalised expectations. This involves acknowledging that the subject questions the norms that society expects of him in terms of being a man, a gay, a gay man, a healthy gay man. Even though subjectivity grapples with its failure to meet the norms and expectations, there is a conscious appraisal that the norms are fictions or fabrications. They are constructions of reality, shaping the way that one should be. The motivation to act according to 'I should', or 'I must' is questioned.

5.10.4 Unique outcomes

The subject constructs unique outcomes that exist outside of normalised ways of thinking and acting. These unique experiences provide a knowledge that can be used to counter dominant practices, legitimating other ways of knowing. When the subject writes about his admission to a mental health facility, he frames this as a space of privileged knowing where one is able to see things ‘differently’. He does not view this space and time as a sickness or an illness, even though he acknowledges that the majority of society would constitute it in this way. He validates the knowledge and experience of the other people around him to provide a different take on the world. This knowledge is something that wider society can ‘learn a lot from’ (White 2002).

5.10.5 Contextualisation of subjectivity

The dissonance between critical thinking and action, crossing boundaries, standing against regimes of truth and identifying unique outcomes leads to a potential understanding of gayness and masculinity as discursive constructs. This does not mean that these aspects of subjectivity do not exist as a reality with corporeal effects, for the subject. It does, however, locate them as categories that operate within historical, political, geographical and cultural contexts. They are open to contestation and change. Their meanings are open to renegotiation and rearticulation. The subject does not always define gayness as an innocent reflection of an innate and natural reality waiting to be unlocked and discovered. The quest for knowledge by the subject is understood as bringing into life ‘slices of reality’ (Ang 1998, p.226) that he calls and classifies as gay. These layered and contested categories of meaning are therefore open to new possibilities and inquiry. It is being located on the periphery of gay subculture and alternative masculinities that enables the transcendental push, of the subject, to find a centre and core, to be potentially seen as an illusion. The impossibility of never fully identifying the self with any centre is valorised. Meaning-making is relational and partial. Boundaries are fuzzy and meaning-making is uncertain. Subjectivity is located within the bounds of a process that is continuously shaped through engagements within multiple, complex and contradictory social relations. Such a construction of subjectivity occurs within a diasporic paradigm where being a gay man can be performed in decentred ways that do not have to live up to the expectations of the norm of an essential gayness (Ang 1998). Subjectivity is positioned as a multiplicity of selves that are enmeshed in games of power for supremacy. Contradiction and not knowing, unease, uncertainty, non-stability, non-coherence and confusion are foregrounded and employed as strategies for transformation and change.

5.11 A discourse of governmentality

5.11.1 Defining the discourse of governmentality

This discourse is constructed from the categories of the loveless self, the socialised self, the pathological individualised self, compliance, the application of power and surveillance of the self. This discourse constructs a complex play of visibility and invisibility where the subject of the coming out journal is constructed as a unique individual but within the confines and dictates of disciplinary forces. These disciplinary forces efficiently and effectively govern and dictate action. Power works efficiently, needing no reliance on external forces of authority to enforce and sanction its demands. Relations of power are enforced economically through the subject's self-monitoring and self survey of action (Edwards 2003; Foucault 1995).

Power quietly coerces, working at the level of the subject's body, shaping its behaviour and how it sees the world. The subject of the coming out journal within this discourse monitors himself and others in relation to the appropriateness of types of behaviour and body shape. He is involved in constructing processes of normativity where expectations and standards are employed to qualify, judge and assess actions and behaviour. These normative constructions reify certain types of bodies and subject positions and consider other bodies and subject positions as abnormal. Specific disciplinary techniques are involved in maintaining these dominant normalised constructions (Danaher et al. 2000; Edwards 2003; Foucault 1995).

5.11.2 Features of the discourse of governmentality

Knowledge/power works to position the subject within spatial environments and rank him in relation to social settings and systems (Danaher et al. 2000). Ideas of what is constituted as normal and right, or successful and good, distinguishes, classifies and constructs 'dividing practices' (Foucault 1995). Power works upon the body, through multiplying the ways that time, space and activity is regulated on a daily basis. Docile bodies are constructed through disciplinary practices (Foucault 1995). Discipline operates through four categories: the art of distribution, concerned with space; the control of activity, concerned with time; the organisation of genesis, concerned with efficiency; and the composition of forces, concerned with organising individuals within a larger whole (McLaren 2002, pp.88-89; Foucault 1995, 1998).

The following techniques of knowledge/power produce relations that force the subject to govern and control his action and non-action. Techniques of surveillance involve supervising, closely observing, watching and avoiding being watched. Techniques of normalisation are invoked standards that lead to the construction of behaviour into a binary classification of normal/abnormal, right/wrong. Techniques of exclusion work to enforce limits and boundaries around behaviour, defining and containing difference. Anything outside of this difference is pathologised. Techniques of classification involve groups and individuals being differentiated from one another. Techniques of individualisation construct behaviour within processes that diminish the social and historical context of action. Techniques of totalisation define behaviour within a collective character or collective will to conform. Techniques of regulation subject behaviour to rules, sanctions, punishments and rewards (Gore 2002; Foucault 1995, 2002c; Tamboukou 2003).

5.11.3 Techniques of surveillance

The subject of the coming out journal is constructed in such a way that he is subjected to his own gaze, involved in a constant monitoring of bodies, actions and feelings. In the coming out journal the subject regularly monitors and supervises his body in terms of having to reach and/or maintain a certain weight and physical appearance. If the body is not meeting these criteria, then great care is taken in 'covering up' or 'hiding' the body, limiting its exposure to the view of others. The subject is also expected to adhere to particular dietary and physical regimes, recording his intake of food and amount of exercise. Another example of close observation occurs when the subject regularly observes and monitors himself in mirrors and shop windows.

Sexual acts in beat subculture and within the gay club scene are initiated after a close and detailed watching of other bodies and gestures and movements. This communication involves avoiding 'direct eye contact' and open verbal communication. More time and discipline is therefore needed to interpret the signals. The subject also reflects on how others may be 'watching him' and the possible interpretations being made. Interpretations such as 'they think I am ugly' occur in isolation from other bodies. These interpretations are never confirmed or qualified through dialogue and verbal exchange.

The journal itself becomes a conduit for close scrutiny of the subject, by the subject. It details thoughts, emotions, reasons, hunches and ideas. The journal becomes an artefact

and process in self-monitoring and self-surveying on a daily basis. This process occurs in an isolated fashion. It is 'secret' and 'private'. Its contents are never 'shared'.

5.11.4 Techniques of normalisation

The fat body is constructed as abnormal. The standard that is set as being the right body to inhabit is one that is trim, muscularly defined and able to be exhibited with a bare amount of clothing. This convention is constructed as a measure of having a 'successfully gay' body. The fat body is 'not visible' in the popular gay press that the subject reads. The absence of such fat gay bodies affirms for the subject that he has the 'wrong body'. Having a fat body is constructed by the subject as evidence that he is not a 'healthy and successful' gay man.

Part of the 'successful' gay body constructed by the subject of the coming out journal text entails his involvement in regular and sustained genital sexual activity. The focus is on penetrative anal or oral sex. Vanilla sex, that is, sex that is not penetrative or non-genital, is positioned as a sign of not being appropriately masculine and not being 'properly' gay. Also genital size, that is a larger penis, is valorised as contributing to a more satisfying sexual experience. The normalisation of 'getting fucked' is most powerfully depicted when the subject reflects on an early sexual experience at the age of fifteen of 'not wanting to be fucked', yet proceeding with the sexual experience because 'well isn't this what being gay is about'. Being anally penetrated, regardless of pleasure or consent was viewed by the subject as a necessary requisite for claiming a subject position of gay.

Other examples of invoked standards that lead to the classification of behaviour into binary categories include the reifying of monogamous and couple relationships over single casual and anonymous sexual activity; the pursuit of a whole and integrated self as being better than a fractured and disparate identity; the liberation of an essential gay sexuality and pro-feminist masculinity that can be known as opposed to an unknown and oppressed individual.

5.11.5 Techniques of exclusion

Fatness is constructed by the subject as akin to having a sick body. The fat body is therefore pathologised. Its difference is not valorised or acknowledged as being valuable. This difference from the normalised standard of thin, muscular and tanned body endorsed within gay popular culture is contained and limited by the subject within ideas of sickness and non-health. The subject regards his fatness as a sign of not accepting his gay

sexuality. If he had accepted his sexuality, then he would take 'pride' in the way he looked. Fatness is the cause of his exclusion from mainstream gay subculture.

The sexual behaviour that the subject participates in at homosexual beats is constructed in the journal text as an addiction and therefore pathologised as an illness. Such behaviour is considered as abnormal and wrong because it has to be carried out in covert and hidden ways. Silence about this behaviour has to be maintained both within general society but also within the gay community. The ability to establish relationships (both sexual and emotional) that have permanency, longevity and are monogamous is naturalised and normalised by the subject. Sexual acts that occur at beats demonstrate how the subject is 'not right' and needs to be 'fixed' in order that he can 'achieve the right way' of 'having relationships with other men'. The subject believes that if as a gay man 'you have to use beats, then there is something wrong about you'. The subject does not regard his use of beats as a sign of sexual freedom as evidenced by the statement, 'If your sexuality was liberated then you wouldn't need to use beats'. A liberated body would 'visibly and proudly' exist within the gay community/ghetto. These ideas constrain and limit notions of difference. They classify acts within normalised conventions of what is considered as right/wrong, normal/abnormal sexual behaviour. This pathologising of using beats further solidifies the sense of difference and exclusion experienced by the subject.

5.11.6 Techniques of classification

Bodies are ranked within the journal text according to their capacity to perform certain sexual acts. The subject and the bodies that he interacts with sexually are classified and divided in terms of body parts: penis, testicles, mouth, anus and what these parts of the body can or cannot do. Words such as 'hardness', 'large', 'fast', 'open', 'horny' exist as the privileged terms in a binary that marginalises soft, small, slow, and frigid.

Actions relating to anonymous and casual sex at homosexual beats are explicitly and regularly recorded in the coming out journal. Indicators of measurement include duration, frequency, volume, intensity and multiplicity. The protagonist's different sexual partners and experiences, as well as his own performance, are judged and measured around these criteria, that regulate and control behaviour. The subject is rewarded when he meets these criteria, which is a signal for celebration or endorsement of self.

The subject's gay body is divided and separated within gay male dance subculture. His body is relegated to the margins of the room's wall, hidden away and obscured from the

valorised muscular and bare bodies that are visibly displayed in the middle of the room on the dance floor. As such, the protagonist's body is classified and differentiated from other gay bodies.

Binary classifications also feature prominently within the subject's construction of a moral framework by which to live. These binary classifications invoke normalised standards, which produce a particular kind of truth, which the subject believes he needs to aspire to. Prominent binary classifications that order and privilege the relations of the first term over the second include healthy/non-healthy; sane/mad; thin/fat; loved/unloved; included/isolated; whole/fractured; partnered/single; monogamous/casual; purpose/no purpose; liberated/oppressed; aware/unaware; out/hidden.

5.11.7 Techniques of individualisation

The subject rigorously attunes to the recording of his feelings as he reflects on his experiences. There is a sense of urgency and depth in the need to express emotion and feeling. Feeling is often valorised over thinking. Feelings are not socially located or historically situated. Feelings give a privileged access to knowing.

Being overweight is constructed as an interior or inner problem of the subject that relates to 'a need for protection'. The need for regular partners carried out in a casual and anonymous fashion is defined as 'a need for self-esteem'. This interiorising of problems and issues dislocates them from a social platform. The problem is seen to exist within some faulty aspect of the subject and his psyche.

Even though the subject locates mental illness within a social framework of 'society not understanding' and people with mental illness as 'stigmatised', the 'sanctuary' that the hospital provides becomes an interior space of 'time out' where the subject has to work on his inner being. The process of dealing with his 'illness' is internalised. 'Healing' has to occur if he is to 'fit back' into the world. His admission as a result of surviving 20 years of living within a heteronormative world is diminished in favour of fixing a 'fucked up' internal world.

5.11.8 Techniques of totalisation

The journal constructs the notion of a gay body that needs to be discovered and liberated. There is a definitive need to identify with a group of people that has suffered similar oppression. This oppression is not interrogated in its difference. This oppression is

assumed to have a collective character. There is a strong need for the subject to be a part of a community of other like bodies that have experienced similar oppression. This totalisation is also extended to the essential character of gayness. Bi-sexuality is never considered, nor the idea that sexuality can be fluid, or experimented with. The only way for the subject to explore a potential sexual relationship with a woman is if she 'grows a penis' for him.

The discovery of the liberated and whole self is also totalised. Surveying himself against politically correct lines of thought forms a moral frame. Living up to the ideals of casting off privileges and adopting feminist principles is a necessary aspect of having value and worth. If the subject does not live up to these ideals, then there is something morally suspect about his commitment to social change and social justice. If he is really committed to the cause, then he has to become politically and theoretically pure. All contradictions have to be effaced. The discourse of governmentality establishes a rigid world where the subject follows the following maxims 'I must', 'I should', 'I ought to', 'I have to', 'I need to' and 'It is better to'.

5.11.9 Techniques of regulation

Within the discourse of governmentality the subject is involved in acts of self-hate and vitriol when he doesn't adhere to meeting the standards he sets for himself. When the subject's body fails at losing weight, when it fails to perform properly in a sexual act; the body is punished in some way. It is forced to go without pleasure in relation to food or sex. There are rarely instances where the body of the journal text rewards itself. The subject's body is also regulated through a need to establish and meet goals it sets for itself. If these goals aren't met, then some sanction or punishment is put into operation. Goals become goals.

The subject also constructs an environment of supervision through the body's mastery over emotions. Emotions are constructed as needing to be purged, recorded and then analysed. This analysis involves a commitment to make sense of what the emotions actually mean and how they should be best interpreted. The discourse constructs a body where it is important to feel, but the body must achieve a sense of control over these emotions and above all 'work them out', 'make sense of them'.

5.12 Effects of the discourse of governmentality

The effects of this discourse are that it constructs a panoptic effect where the subject is engaged in monitoring himself according to normalised standards and rules. This process hides how these standards and rules are linked to relations of power. They make it more difficult for the subject to understand these normalised conventions as disciplining or subjugating. The discourse acts to solidify the naturalness of the individual as a transcendental and ubiquitous aspect of humanness. The art of health and success is the uncovering and appreciation of this individual. The techniques of governmentality make it difficult for other ways of knowing and being, for other subject positions, to be considered as legitimate and worthwhile.

5.12.1 Constructing a panopticon

One of the effects of this discourse is that it constructs a panopticon (Foucault 1995) within the subject's mind. The subject is engaged in constant self-surveillance. He continually monitors his actions, thoughts and emotions against sets of standards and rules.

In other words, once our bodies and minds have been formed and formulated in particular ways, we then take it upon ourselves to make sure that we function in these ways, and remain good, healthy subjects (Danaheer et al. 2000, p.75).

There is no need for an external force to ensure the subject adheres to standards of normativity. The subject enforces his own rule upon himself through intense and frequent surveillance, monitoring, classification, assessment and diagnosis. There are no people or institutions directly imposing these normative judgments. Although the normative judgments may be promulgated and endorsed through social institutions and systems, these material structures are not needed to enforce, impose or maintain the vigilance of their effects. Power has no need to be imposed from above or disseminated through a hierarchy. The subject becomes his own warder, monitoring his application to the rules and norms that have been established. This type of power does not need or even exist as some outside authority imposing the force of the normative judgment. It produces self-regulating subjects (Foucault 1995).

5.12.2 An economy of punishment

As an instrument of power, the normalising gaze 'imposes homogeneity' (Foucault 1995, p.184). The process of self-surveillance and regulation makes efficient and effective qualification, classification and punishment. Economy arises through not having to rely on

any external force. The subject acts upon himself in order to maintain the circulation of particular types of knowledge. The subject never knows who is observing him, his behaviour or his actions at any moment in time. This acting of the subject on himself increases the imperative to maintain the current state of power relations.

Forms of regulation establish control. Penalties are imposed if the technologies are not performed as required. The subject is expected to manage time in such a way that it is useful. There is an attention to tasks and detail. A propensity to obedience and to do what is considered good establishes a need for decency, rightness and correctness. The techniques of governmentality establish rhythms, impose occupations and regulate the cycles of repetition. Power effectively and insidiously works at the level of the micro, the daily routines and practices establishing a pervasive force suturing the fabric of the subject's experience and being (Foucault 1995, p.149; Meadmore 1993).

5.12.3 Contemporary forms of individuality

The discourse of governmentality produces the primacy of the individual as a core for understanding humanness. Uniqueness is valorised. A significant goal for the subject is to recognise his responsibility for understanding himself. Responsibility for social issues is internalised and individualised. The order of individual before, and over, community is established. The separation of inner from outer being maintains a status of truth (Edwards 2003).

Whereas traditional systems of power use institutionalised moral judgement to limit, restrict and prohibit action, modern forms of power actively engage people in participating in the judgment of their own and other people's actions according to socially constructed norms.

Normalising judgment constitutes life – that is to form lives, to fashion lives, to shape lives, or to manufacture lives that reproduce the constructed norms of contemporary culture (White 2002, p.43).

People become involved in policing their own and other's lives and therefore are implicated in processes of social control. Power produces contemporary forms of individuality. The judging, measuring and comparing of the subject against others and within certain ideas, takes the status of the truth as opposed to a version of the truth. The constitution of subjectivity, that is the individual, is seen as an effect and object of power and knowledge (Foucault 1995, p.192; Meadmore 1993).

5.12.4 The ruse of modern power

The vigilance of the subject's self-examination is assisted through the detailed written record of the coming out journal. This solidifies the basis of knowledge that comes to be known about the self. A meta-narrative is established that 'others', or excludes, alternative versions of the subject and his subjectivity. Inducing fear, he is reminded of his social and moral obligations. By knowing himself he can be better positioned to train and change himself. This ensures he can become what he wants to be, or, discover who he really is. This is the ruse of modern power. The search to truly know oneself, to find oneself, is the way that power works to control and restrict certain versions of the self. The call to know oneself is bound up within normalising practices that hide their origins within societal expectations and conventions about what is right or good. This can be in terms of being a man, being gay, or being desirable. Their effect is to construct subjects of a certain form. The moulding and shaping of the self produces particular forms of subjectivity patterned within particular desires and aspirations (Edwards 2003).

5.12.5 Body fascism

These practices of governmentality construct an economy of body fascism excluding and othering imperfect bodies and constructing other versions of discrimination and segregation (Padva 2002, p.281). The liberation of the gay body from heteronormative oppression does not necessarily guarantee the liberation of the gay body from other normalising and dividing practices. The subject of the coming out journal, after having come out and rejected conformity, is faced with another immense pressure to conform, albeit in a different way. Sexual liberation may have liberated forms of sexual behaviour, but it does not liberate individuals from their sexuality, if anything it enslaves them more profoundly, through a series of disciplinary regimes and techniques of normalisation (Halperin 1995, p.20; Padva 2002).

The fat body is constructed as weak, not in control, unshaped, undisciplined and insubordinate. The fat body is positioned as other to both gay and non gay constructions of masculinity and therefore doubly feminised. The discourse of governmentality prevents the fat body from being positioned as an 'uncontrolled, undisciplined, unshaped insubordinate body that transgresses the hormonormative codes of visibility' (Padva 2002, p.285). The fat body is positioned against what a gay body is supposed to be. The subject, however, views the gay fat body as a misnomer, an anathema to the gay ideal. He does not see it as a powerful discursive site that challenges homonormativity. The gay fat body

could be reconstructed as a body divested of exercise, work and shape, celebratory in its defeat of penetrability (Connell 1987; Padva 2002).

5.12.6 Maintaining the solidity of maleness

Maleness and femaleness are not challenged as discursive categories. The otherness of the subject's masculinity is essentialised within the female side of the male/female dichotomy. The subject's identification of existing outside of hegemonic ideals of masculinity, not being fit, tanned, lean and strong; having a 'stronger feminine side', being passive, being silent and waiting for Mr Right all confirm his maleness as being 'more like a woman'. The oppositional stance of being gay and other to heterosexual maleness, not naturally male, is reinscribed into the limiting binary of male/female. The appearance of the natural order of this binary is maintained. The category of sex establishes a regulatory ideal. Sex is part of a regulatory practice that has a productive power to produce, demarcate, and differentiate the bodies it controls and governs. The materialisation of the body is compelled to occur through the repetition, or failing of this repetition of highly regulated practices (Foucault in Butler 1993, p.1).

5.13 Resisting the discourse of governmentality

Even though made difficult by this discourse, the production of truth is put under scrutiny by the subject of the coming out journal text. What is taken as common sense, normal or natural is interrogated and problematised by the subject. The subject engages in parrhesiastic (McLaren 2002; O'Leary 2002, pp.147-150) acts. These acts erupt and challenge regimes of truth and normative standards.

5.13.1 The social contextualising of individual problems

The subject shapes subjectivity within a framework that socially and politically locates itself. This establishes a discursive environment that challenges the individualising and pathologising of personal problems. The subject's difficulty with accepting his gayness is located within the boundaries of living within a 'heterosexist' world. The difficulty in finding a place of belonging within gay subculture is nascently constructed within ideas of homonormativity. His mental health challenges are located within 'a world that fucks me up and doesn't understand'. Illness is socially located, rather than as a sign of the individual not coping and needing to be fixed. The subject is committed to projects that seek to redress structural inequities in society that lead to individuals and communities experiencing distress and hardship. The subject's own battles with the 'correctness and

rightness' of sexuality, masculinity and notions of health are allied to the difficulties faced by other peoples and communities that are marginalised, for example people with disabilities, women and Indigenous communities.

5.13.2 Challenging normativity

The subject challenges the homonormative nature of the gay subculture that he participates in. This gay subculture includes both the visible bar and club scene of Oxford Street, Sydney and the invisible covert sexual activity at homosexual beats. He challenges the phallogentric nature of gay subculture and hegemonic masculinity. The normalised idea of gay men (and heterosexual men) needing to like penetrative sex, and lots of it, is challenged. The idea that a successful and desirable gay body is one that is tanned, muscularly defined, young and virile is also challenged. Dominant ideas around what constitutes being gay and being a man are interrogated. The boundaries around which these social categories are constructed are contested.

Feminist theory is employed to comment on the way in which patriarchal ideas have circumscribed the possibilities for women's bodies to exist. The subject questions whether there is some kind of connection between capitalism and patriarchy and the dominant constructions of women's bodies and gay bodies in society. Subjectivity is therefore involved in acknowledging that the valorised gay body and how it performs is a constructed entity, tied to wider social and political forces. The subject draws from his own experience in existing outside of these constructions (having a fat body and not liking penetrative sex) to interrogate the production of the dominant constructions. He is therefore involved in a discursive space of struggle over the production of truth. In this way these moments or acts are parrhesiastic. They speak to the contingency of truth from a marginal, insecure and dangerous position. It is, however, a significant position because it provokes the limits to how power seeks to circumscribe the production of knowledge (Edwards 2003).

5.13.3 Challenging the masculine autonomous agential self

A version of subjectivity of the journal text challenges hegemonic versions of masculinity. The notion that to be a man one has to be strong, independent, resourceful, autonomous and rational is challenged. The protagonist locates these aspects of his subjectivity within processes of socialisation. Again feminist theory is used to locate these aspects of masculine behaviour as having originated within socialisation processes into patriarchal and middle-class discourses. The subject seeks to valorise and foreground his ability to

express emotion and ‘build friendships’ and relationships with people that have an affective focus. The subject constructs an environment that reframes the way that he doesn’t act like ‘other traditional’ men. His dislike of sport, his pacifist stance on the world, his ‘gentleness’, ‘compassion’ and ‘sensitivity’ are constructed within an environment as not being indicators of being ‘gay’ but of doing his masculinity differently. The subject acknowledges that although these aspects of non-traditional masculinity are shared by many gay men, there are gay men that are misogynistic. Therefore these non-traditional aspects of masculinity are constructed not within the confines of ideas of an essential sexuality, but as social constructions of gender.

5.13.4 Other subjugated knowledges

The subject of the coming out journal also challenges, albeit less strongly, the pathologising of beat sexual behaviour. He questions beat behaviour as an illness or addiction that needs to be overcome. Beat subculture is also seen as a place of friendship, community and pleasure. Beats are constructed (although nascently within the journal text itself) as places that challenge heteronormative notions of appropriate, healthy and stable relationships. Beats are constructed as places and sites where fantasies are played out within mutually consensual spaces. They are constructed as queer spaces (Jagose 1998; Pinar 1998) that subvert the ideas of permanency, stability, intimacy and monogamy that suture the notions of natural and normal relationships. Frequent, casual consensual anonymous sex is reframed as providing a valuable position to challenge the need to be a part of a couple that structures much heteronormative and homonormative discourse around relationships.

It is these subjugated knowledges that construct other spaces and subject positions that provide points of resistance. They contribute to a subjectivity that breaks the rules and refuses to obey normalised conventions. Such acts are examples of a subjectivity refusing to be governed and provide valuable insights and techniques into contesting the limits in which relations of power seek to constrain and dominate ways of existing in the world. Such subjugated knowledges assist the subject of the coming out journal to challenge the natural and the normal.

5.14 A discourse of confession

5.14.1 Defining the discourse of confession

This discourse is fashioned through the categories the self against the world, the pathological individualised self, compliance, the application of power, surveillance of the self, hermeneutic searching and purging the soul – seeking truth through redemption. Within this discourse the subject of the coming out journal is embedded underneath layers of misunderstanding and mis-recognition. The coming out journal provides a confessional space for the subject. This space is similar to the therapist/client relationship or priest/parishioner relationship. Confession becomes part of the vehicle to self-discovery. The subject's main aim is to figure out who he actually is. An essential and true self can be revealed through a rigorous and constant searching of the various aspects of the subject's character. This involves stripping away the layers of mis-recognition and purging desires and dark thoughts. In doing this, a purer soul is revealed. The journal as confessional assumes an authority over the subject. The subject believes that the journal listens to his secrets and sins within an environment free from judgment and condemnation. This supposedly free space hides the normalising conventions that influence the judgments that the subject is making about himself (Foucault 1998, McLaren 2002).

5.14.2 The features of the discourse of confession

The internal world of the subject is privileged but exists as a world of secrets. These secrets are not able to be shared or voiced outside of the internal world of the coming out journal. Through confession the subject engages in a continual process of trying to get to know himself and reveal his truth. Self-confession of secrets is an important part of the discovery of this truth. Subjectivity, including an essential gay sexuality and liberated masculinity, is constructed by this discourse as something real that can be known through rigorous and 'deep searching' of the self. The subject purges the 'uncontrollable strength' of his emotions and confesses taboo thinking like suicide and death. He is caught between submitting to their power and overcoming their force. In purging these emotions the subject is alleviated from, redeemed from their darkness. In confessing and purging guilty and sinful thoughts the subject can gain access to some purer and 'higher form' of self knowledge. Another feature of this discourse is that the subject is impelled to follow a series of moral commandments that drive him to makes things 'better and right' (Foucault 1998, McLaren 2002).

5.14.3 Containing secrets

Within this discourse the journal provides a vehicle to contain a series of secrets before they are revealed. The first secret is that the subject is not heterosexual. The journal is the first space in which he tells and ‘records this secret’. In the phrases, ‘My secret, One person knows’, and ‘No one suspects, no one knows, held deep within’, the subject’s gay self is a secret contained within the core of his being. The subject’s gay sexuality is ‘held deep within, encased, lid on tight’. The journal also becomes a place where the subject ‘reveals’ his ‘innermost desires’. These take the form of romantic longings for male friends that ‘are never expressed’. Within this discourse sexual activity at homosexual beats is secretive and ‘sinful’. Sex with other men is conducted in ‘silent worlds’. Another secret is the subject’s depression that leads him to ‘often sit contemplating suicide’. No one can know about these inner feelings. All these secrets lead the subject to be living life as a ‘façade’. Such a façade prevents ‘fulfillment, satisfaction and freedom’. Keeping such secrets leads the subject to be ‘angry, bitter, confused and helpless’.

5.14.4 Expelling secrets

Certain secrets need to be ‘revealed’ and, in doing so, the subject will gain access to his ‘truth’. This truth is an ‘enlightened path’. The subject needs to travel this journey, always reminding himself that such a path is the ‘reason for my existence’. However, he is unsure of whether he ‘will ever reach the end’. Within this discourse the subject is impelled to come out. Coming out as gay means an end of ‘repression’ and assists to overcome ‘twenty yrs of oppression’. Owning up to his depression and feelings of suicide mean that these feelings can be dealt with; ‘healing’ can begin.

There are certain secrets that the subject believes he cannot share with the outside world. Confessing these secrets within the ‘safety’ of the coming out journal will achieve atonement for these desires, feelings and thoughts. Feelings of anger against friends and family and the world are confessed, as are the subject’s fantasies and desires played out within the subculture of homosexual beats. These feelings are judged by the subject as morally reprehensible. They are indicators of his needing to establish a better way of acting and behaving. These are feelings that should not be expressed in public, but need to be ‘purged’. Such feelings exhibit a dark and dangerous aspect of the subject’s character that needs to be expelled if he is to consider himself a virtuous and ‘just’ person.

5.14.5 The hidden self

The true self of the subject remains hidden, located deep within some part of the subject. Truth lies at this essential core. The subject is involved in a quest always asking the question ‘where is my identity?’ The consequence of not asking this question is that people ‘don’t find themselves at all’. In the phrase, ‘Was it destiny, was it fate’, the subject of the coming out journal is constructed as being bound by a larger force that controls and guides its trajectory of knowing itself. In phrases like, ‘Trapped can’t get out, imprisoned, solitary’, the subject is engaged in a struggle against the oppressive forces that subjugate his true self. The subject’s mission is to free himself from these forces by getting to know his ‘realness’, ‘authenticity’ and hence, truth. Confessing secrets is an important aspect of this mission. These secrets stand in the way of accessing this truth.

5.14.6 The essential self

In the phrase, ‘I didn’t choose homosexuality, homosexuality chose me’, sexuality is constructed as an essential part of the subject’s makeup. The objective for subjectivity is to come out and express its gay sexuality. In the phrase, ‘Out, more and more is revealed. I will arrive. I will be fulfilled’, the process of coming out is constructed as an important part of subjectivity coming to know itself and its truth. Through continually questioning the way he carries out his masculinity the subject strips away the layers of mis-recognition that growing up within the ‘patriarchal heterosexual order’ has produced. This will lead to the subject being able to take up a subject position of a ‘real man’.

5.14.7 Locating causes will solve problems

The subject asks many questions of himself. These questions seek the causes to the problems that prevent the subject from being able to know himself. If the cause of a problem can be discovered, there is more likelihood that a solution can be found. This solution will lead the subject to a situation of knowing himself in a deeper and more truthful way. These questions appeal to reason and logic. All answers can be found. Not knowing, or there being no reason for a problem, is not acceptable to the subject’s quest for truth. Questions such as, ‘Why won’t you love me? What holds me back? Why can’t I be more open? What stops me? What does it mean? Why do I feel the way I do? Why do I? Must I look a it?’, are examples of how, within this discourse, the subject continually searches for answers to dilemmas and contradictions. Confession is a key tool to assist this process. Such questions lead the subject to become clearer about his ‘purpose’, ensuring that he does not ‘stagnate’. The subject’s goal is to continually move towards its truth. As

such, 'every event or experience, task and chore has a purpose. I attach some meaning to it or ask, question, what it is supposed to mean; people are being placed in front of me for a reason.'

5.14.8 Moral commandments

Additionally this discourse positions the subject of the coming out journal within a sphere of moral commandments. Examples of these include expressions such as 'Should I?', 'I have to work towards', 'Can it lead to', 'I should', 'Will I be able?', 'You/I have to', 'What I must face'. The ideas that influence these maxims are not often clear. What is clear is that the subject is compelled to act within certain ways, or question the way he is currently acting as being wrong or not good enough. These calls to act in different ways are necessary to achieve success within his quest to discover who he really is. They serve as part of his armory to overthrow those aspects that prevent the authentic expression of his 'character'.

5.14.9 Confessing taboos

Within this discourse the subject is engaged in a process of recording secrets and fears. He confesses deep and forbidden taboos. These include such things as death, plans to suicide, imagining his funeral and writing his eulogy. As these topics are excluded from wider, more public social forms of discourse they are considered as taboo. They also further the subject's view that he is 'different' and not like other people. In phrases like, 'Yet I wonder what my funeral would be like?' and 'I want people to be hurt, I want them to be angry', the subject purges his suicidal ideation and imagining of his funeral. This discourse constructs these confessions as deeply-held secrets and although harbored deep within the soul of the subject, their expression, through confession will lead to an advanced form of knowledge.

5.15 Effects of the discourse of confession

The effects of the discourse of confession include invalidating current knowledge and experience as being a vital resource for fuelling transformation and change. Current experience and action is internalised. This creates an environment where thinking and action is divorced from its social and historical location. Confession is constructed as being a vital avenue for finding truth. Ideas of what constitutes subjectivity are maintained within the binaries of inner/outer, interior/exterior. Access and understanding of the inner ensures that the subject can present a coherent and vital, healthy exterior person. This

discourse reinforces the dominant idea that there is an essential core to subjectivity that can be known and realised. Another effect of this discourse is that truth is seen to exist independently of power. Within this discourse the subject believes that he can gain freedom from power. Power is maintained as an external and tangible force. Confession is a vital tool to assist with this process (Foucault 1998, 2002c; McLaren 2002).

5.15.1 Discounting current experience

The moral commandments of 'I should' and 'I must' construct a space which invalidates the current experience of the subject. These imperatives to act differently imply that how he is currently acting needs to change. The subject is ensnared within a dynamic that questions the worth of current knowledge. There is no space or time allowed to examine the advantages and benefits of how current action contributes to change. There is a continual drive to change and be more like something else. This something else, or other way of acting is not investigated for its epistemological foundations. Action is guided by the ideas that impel the use of 'should' or 'must'. The expectations and standards, that influence and construct their necessity is not questioned. The subject does not engage with the ideas that underpin the 'I should' and 'I must'. The link between these maxims and normative thinking such as 'correct', 'healthy' and 'liberated' ways of living, escape interrogation.

5.15.2 Confession escapes interrogation as a relation of power

The subject does not question how the need to confess produces particular demands to reach a certain type of body, or mind, or state of health. While the subject is busily engaged in confessing, he has no time to question the validity of the search for the truth of his essential sexuality and a real masculinity. Confession leads to a dislocation of the social, political and historical construction of nature. Everything is internalised. Normative conventions are jettisoned from their social and historical moorings. Through acts of confession the subject assumes that he will articulate the truth about himself. Truth is synonymous with positive transformation. The boundaries of what this truth means, where it derives from, even its feasibility are never questioned. Truth is equated with liberation and betterment. Truth escapes investigation as a relation of power that may not necessarily lead to better ways of living. The subject believes that through confession he will arrive at some form of truth about his sexuality, about his gender, about his sex. Through confessing secrets and hidden desires, he will peel away the layers of misrecognition that ideologies of heterosexism and patriarchy have built. Confession will allow access to a liberated form of the self. Confession will assist to remove the

debilitating effects of these forms of power. Confession therefore escapes an interrogation as a technique of power itself (Foucault 1998).

5.15.3 The omniscient confessor as expert of experience

The journal as confession reads as the story of a sinner written to an omniscient confessor who sits in a position of power being able to forgive or punish. Within the discourse of confession the subject is subjugated to this sovereign force and through this subjugation there is the expectation of redemption. Although this speaking out, this confessing of the truth in all its natures and guises is intended to have the liberatory effect of redefining the self and transforming power relations, paradoxically it has the effect of producing a docile (Foucault 1995), self-monitoring self who submits, and thereby creates a legitimacy in the authority of the expert of normalcy. The confessional discourse diminishes the possibilities for transgression or intervention, even though the act of confessing is assumed to assist the subject to exert agency as a subject that speaks the truth. The omniscient confessor is placed and normalised within the position of the expert of experience (Lockford 2002).

5.15.4 Gaining freedom from power

Within this discourse the subject is involved in establishing the facts of himself and uncovering the source of personal identity. The journal as a confessional device/tool requires the self to explore feelings and thereby keep faith with them. It is an avenue for desires to be liberated, personal properties cultivated, individual resources to be accessed, needs to be identified and goals established. This ensures that goals are achieved, intrinsic attributes expressed, innate drives controlled and unconscious desires revealed. If all of this is carried out, then the true self can become known, the true self can be liberated (Lowe 1989; White 2002).

The subject confesses his sins, his thoughts, desires, illnesses and troubles with great precision. It is a record of things that would be impossible to tell other people. Truth is seen as being lodged within his most secret nature, demanding to surface. If it is unable to surface, it is because it is constrained in some way, prevented from release due to some power holding it back. Confession is the method for achieving freedom from this power. Confession allows the hidden, that which lies underneath to be freed. With this freedom comes truth because truth is seen to exist independently of power. Truth and freedom share an affinity (Foucault 1998). Confession as an avenue to truth assists to maintain a picture of power as something that is external, a possession. Power is maintained as a

tangible entity that is seen as external to the subject. Power is a force that the subject has limited opportunities to relate with. He can either submit to it, or struggle to overcome it. Power is therefore a negative and constraining force. Power is something that the subject has to free himself from (Foucault 1998).

5.15.5 Bondage to identity

The subject is maintained and produced within power relations that categorise events and experiences within the binary of true/false, real/unreal. The individual tests and judges his worth and value against these binaries. The differentiation between inner and outer institutes an illusion that there is an interior and organising core of the subject. This illusion is discursively maintained and naturalised. Its capacity to order and regulate sexuality and gender is never questioned. By locating the cause of desire within the internal core self of the subject, the political regulations and disciplinary practices that produce these notions of coherency and solidity are hidden from view (Butler 1999, p.173).

The idea of an internal core or substance is the organising principle for the appearance of coherence. This is seen as a cause rather than as an effect. This displaces anything that is not coherent, that is contradictory and valueless. It has to be resolved. It cannot become useful information with which to fuel action. It is relegated from appropriate knowledge. It is defiled and made redundant (Butler 1999). Confession again escapes being seen as an 'effect of power that constrains us' (Foucault 1998, p.60). Confession escapes being acknowledged as a technique that the subject uses to participate in his own self constitution. The demand of power to speak the truth about himself ties him to a certain construction of identity that entails an essential sexuality and a knowable unified, coherent self (McLaren 2002).

5.16. Resisting the discourse of confession

The subject is involved in resisting, or refusing the boundaries of the discourse of confession by existing within irrational and emotional spaces. These spaces stand outside of and against the dominant masculine idea that autonomy and agency comes about through acting from the rational, that reason is a means to achieving freedom. The subject decentres depth, experiencing subjectivity as a liminal, illusive experience of surfaces. He resists the desire to locate subjectivity as a stable entity. Identity, however defined, is messy and incomplete, involving performative aspects and influenced by choosing to

stand within certain discursive positions. The subject resists the temptation to confess and seek his truth by constructing a testimony to his surviving the effects of normative power (Deleuze 1988; Probyn 1996).

5.16.1 Refusing the rational

The subject resists the discourse of confession through existing with a constant state of unknowing or not knowing. The coming out journal can be read through a lens of normalising the subject's decentering of the ability to know. Irrationality and heightened emotion are examples of how the subject resists the compulsion to achieve coherence and unity. The subject constructs ambivalence in his admission to a mental health facility. The subject is pathologised in the journal text and seen as 'sick' and needing 'solitude to acquire inner peace and tranquility'. The admission to the mental health facility is also constructed as a sign of strength, not weakness. The subject acknowledges society as a difficult and challenging place to stand, particularly as a space of being other to the dominant subject positions of hegemonically male. The 'irrational' and the 'not coping' and the being 'too emotional' are constructed by the subject as valuable and legitimate subject positions that provide useful knowledge about how to stand, act in the world (Soja 1989).

The emotional, sensuous and imaginative are not separated out. They do count as valid knowledge with which to assess experience. The subject in the coming out journal records the emotional effects of his oppression, growing up with a non-normative sexuality and masculinity. The emotional content of the journal offers a solid and resounding counter-narrative against rationality and reason. This challenges the traditional notions of what it means to be male. These feelings contained in the journal are a way of ensuring these experiences do not remain invisible. They stand in defiance of being constructed as moral deficiencies. They challenge that reason is a natural disposition of the human and knowing mind that, when controlled and governed, can find truth (Kohli 1995).

5.16.2 Decentering depth

The subject negotiates subject positions that privilege living on the surface as opposed to existing within a space of depth. The interiority of experience and a search for its innate meaning are jettisoned in favour of a reckless abandon of fleetingness and spontaneity. The subject's involvement in beat sex is the best example of this. The subject engages in sexual acts that exist in a liminal space of not making sense. The experience is short-lived, momentary, passing and ephemeral. It has no deep resonance or meaning. It just happens.

There is no purpose to the act. It does not have to make sense. It is a transitory act, defying the need for capture, solidity and permanence (Probyn 1996).

5.16.3 A messy identity project

The subject exists in spaces that are messy, incoherent, mixed up, transitional, and non-foundational. He traverses multiple and conflicting subject positions within a single experience. The quest for identity is therefore not caught up in transcendence or permanence but is in a constant state of flux. His identity project is then about existing in a constant state of unease, never resting. The subject celebrates his tentativeness, lack of assurance, incompleteness. He offers a record of the feelings associated with the contradictory set of socially constructed identities and experiences of living on the margins. It is a counter-narrative that constructs a testimony to how the subject has continually fought against believing that his oppression is deserved, that his existence is his lot in life, that it is natural and right (Gergen 1988; Taylor & Vintages 2004).

5.16.4 Gender as a performance

While maleness and gayness are locked within ideas of an essential truth, masculinity exists within ideas of performativity (Butler 1997a) where it is regarded as gaining its solidity and appearance of truth through the sustained repetition of certain acts, gestures and behaviours. Masculinity is constructed by the subject as something that is malleable, open to change and contestation. It has varying and often opposing aspects to its constitution. The subject refuses, or resists the normative expectations of what a man is supposed to be. There is a social location of masculinity as something that is achieved as an act or series of repeated and stylised conventions and codes that are endorsed within social and political systems. Sexuality is nascently constructed within a similar environment due to his inhabiting a body that falls outside reified and normalised conventions within gay subculture (Butler 1993, 1999).

5.16.5 Choosing discursive positions

The subject acknowledges, when in a mental health facility, that he has control over how he plays out his mental illness. There is an acknowledgement that he can construct versions of his illness and decide how he wants to construct his persona. He is acutely aware of how his self is not only produced by stories but is producing them. The personal is tied to the social and the cultural. His mental health, his illness becomes negotiated within a

... performative struggle over personal and social identity rather than an act of a self with fixed, unified, stable or final essence which serves as the origin or accomplishment of experience (Langellier 1998, p.208 in Lockford 2002, p.626).

The subject is involved in negotiating power relations and subjectivities. The contextual layering of how the subject is involved with discursive constructions is foregrounded (Lockford 2002, p.626).

5.16.6 A testimony to survival

The subject also resists the discourse of confession by engaging his writing as an act of testimony. The confession is a narrative of a sinner, offered up to someone who judges through punishment or forgiveness. Testimony is more a narrative of survival that is offered to another who listens. Confession subjugates the subject to an external sovereign force, which tacitly imposes a series of normalised conventions. Even though the aim of confession is to assist with redefining the subject, it has the paradoxical effect of producing a docile subject that actively self-monitors himself according to the panoptic processes of some invisible, external authority figure. Testimony is a means of gaining some greater insight into how the subject has escaped, alluding these normative conventions. Testimony becomes a record of how the subject has survived the objective assessments of others.

The subject does participate in a range of strategies that resist the power of normative conventions. He participates in abandoning adequacy, through a continual 'striving to make things better'. There is a motivation and persistence in continually striving for 'social change' and resisting the subjugation of oppressive ideas, systems and institutions. There is an obstreperous resistance to the classification of people's lives. The subject is astutely aware of the negative impact of society to make people other than the norm, whether this be people living with AIDS, people with mental illnesses, or disabled people.

5.17 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the five dominant discourses that have framed the construction of sex, gender and sexuality of the subject of the coming out journal. These five discourses have produced powerful discursive frames, producing subject positions that contain a simulacrum of verity suturing truth. The five discourses have been analysed for their simultaneous play of constraint and production, domination and resistance (Foucault

1998; McLaren 2002). Techniques of power are enacted at the locus of the interpersonal field of daily living, contributing to the power of the discourses to appear immutable. The discourses construct panoptic processes that regulate and control and induce self-regulation according to their parameters, seducing the subject to believe such self-regulation is in his own best interests. While the discourses constrain and limit the potential for the subject to inhabit and act according to alternative knowledges, they also contain the seeds for their reversal. These counter-knowledges provide gaps and ruptures, undermining the solidity of the dominant meaning-making frames of the discourses. Such resistances become important in establishing the grounds for transformation and change (Butler 1999; Foucault 1995).

The trajectory of this chapter has not been the discovery of the authentic voice of the self or the liberation of the oppressed voice of the self. As a critical, autoethnographic study of coming out gay, the analysis has engaged in a deconstruction and reconstruction, dislocation and relocation of a period of a life story as a textual narrative. In doing this it has foregrounded the fluidity, multiplicity and illusiveness of subjectivity and its construction as opposed to the stability, wholeness and solidity of humanist ideas of the self (Kamler 2001, pp.7-9).

The final chapter concludes the analysis by examining the interconnectedness of the five dominant discourses and their impact on patterning subjectivity. The chapter also considers the findings of the discursive analysis for poststructural explanations of agency, before turning to outline the relevance of the research to its critical educational agenda of maximising transformation and change; minimising domination and violence.

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the findings of the discourse analysis conducted within the previous two chapters. The discursive analysis has produced an account of the ways in which modes of being, thinking and doing were constructed through a range of power/knowledge/self practices (O’Leary 2002, p.108). These modes of subjectivity, suffused through a social-cultural and historical milieu have included forms of subjectivity, both marginal and dominant. The chapter also argues for an educational agenda that promotes the discursive analysis of the nexus between the interpersonal and the social through analysing three layers of constitution of subjectivities within relations of power. The first is an archaeological layer that investigates knowledge systems and their frames and boundaries for meaning-making. The second is a genealogical layer that explores the connection between meaning-making systems and normalising ideas and relations of power. The third, or ethical layer, explores the ways in which the self complies with and resists the practices of self-surveillance and self-government invoked within the first and second layers. This third ethical layer is vital to promoting agency, transformation and change, as it maximises the connections between the personal and the social. Without this third ethical layer the critical analysis remains external to the self, divorcing the ways in which power and knowledge are transmuted through the construction of particular individualised subject positions (Davidson 1986; Foucault 2000a; Gore 2002; McLaren 2002, p.152; O’Leary 2002; Tamboukou 2003).

The findings of the analysis show the discourses tied the subject to particular versions and patterns of reality and truth. They explain how the five discourses of the coming out journal induced the subject to participate in a schemata, an ethics (Foucault 2000a), of moral obligations. These obligations sanctioned certain constructions of knowledge and excluded others. They created normative ideas and relations of power that sustained and regulated versions of identity. The subject was compelled to live his life according to these rules, even though they may not have been in his best interests. The discourses had regulatory effects; however, these regulatory effects were also refused. These points of refusal became important in dislocating the knowledge/power/self nexus. Points of

resistance were located everywhere in networks of power. There was no one single locus of refusal, no single source of revolt and change. Power was a product of the necessary expression of language within discursive frameworks (Foucault 1998, pp.95-96, 2000a, 2002c; Mcquillan 2000, p.26).

The chapter also outlines how having access to multiple and competing discourses is an important aspect for constructing the generative grounds of the critical, as it assists the capacity to stand within a polyvocal space. This conclusion illustrates the value of the discursive analysis in provoking a process of disassociation from one's available repertoire of explanatory subject positions and discourses. Agency was facilitated through the denaturalisation of the normative, through making the familiar strange, and involved foregrounding the other, alternative and subjugated constructions of subjectivity and self. The Foucauldian discursive analysis produced a critical ontology of the self de-centering the naturalisation of experience and problematising the production of a coherent and inner essential truth of subjectivity. The process became one of 'out-of-body watching oneself watch oneself as an object of power and naming oneself as such' (Dreyfuss & Rabinow 1983; Luke 2002, p.12; White 2002).

6.2 The discourses' ethical regime

All of the discourses impelled the subject to work towards locating the inner, undiscovered parts of the self. The pathway for empowerment involved reaching an essential inner core of sexuality, a truer, more pro-feminist masculinity and a self that was free of its problem parts – for example, the unloved self, the fat self, the mentally unwell self. The mode of subjection (Foucault 2000a) or rationale for engaging in such work was the liberation of the self from oppression. This included liberating the subject from the oppressive systems and ideologies that he had been socialised within. It also involved ridding himself of oppressive practices that had resulted from being raised within these systems and ideas. The tools that were available to the subject, the techniques of the self, or forms of elaboration of the self, included confessing mis-understanding and mis-recognition, raising consciousness, together with purging the darker, more troubled parts of the self. This ensured that a visible and truer substance of self could be realised and become known. The way in which the subject answered his telos or mode of subjectivity, that is, the kind of person the subject wanted to be, the kind of life that he wanted to lead, was a life free from power and a life free of secrecy and hiding. Power was something that

the subject believed he could exist outside of (Foucault 2000a; O’Leary 2002; Tamboukou 2003).

6.2.1 Maintenance of binaries

The subject’s gender was established within the terms of hegemonic discourse, based on binary structures (Butler 1999, pp.12-13). These binary structures conveyed a universality and rationality that was reflected in language. They were not seen as social constructions that placed limits on the discursively conditioned experience that was gender (Butler 1999, pp.12-13). The discourses asserted the rightness of the dichotomies impelling the subject to reconnect dichotomised worlds. Reconciling the contradictions of the dichotomies presented a way for the subject to reach fulfilment and escape the difficulty of an othered and marginalised subjectivity (Butler 1999; Connell 1987, p.248).

The binary thought of the discourses was found to be fundamental to the maintenance of the male/female dualism. The masculine sides of the dichotomies were all played out and endorsed within the dominant discourses of the coming out journal. The masculine was often privileged, valued, the feminine devalued (Davies 1994, p.8). The masculine, and therefore reified, sides of the dichotomies included the pursuit of knowledge as opposed to ignorance. The achievement of rationality was cast by the discourses in opposition to emotion. The mind was valorised over the body and flesh. Achieving control as opposed to letting be and allowing things to happen spontaneously was also a dominant idea that ran through all the discourses. Other dichotomies include attempting to be objective and not subjective; achieving an external as opposed to an internal view of things; having and achieving goals in opposition to attending to the contrariness of the process; light and illumination over darkness and uncertainty; the written text achieving supremacy over oral traditions of interpreting experience; the public sphere having more value than the private sphere; events being structured within a linear temporal logic as opposed to a cyclical logic; permanence and fixity rather than change and fluctuation; hardness against softness and independence, individuality and isolation rather than dependence, sociality, interconnectedness and sharing (Davies 1994, p.10).

The discourses, individually and collectively impelled the subject to work towards achieving the masculine side of the binaries, subsuming the feminine within the masculine, or justifying their reversal, that is, achieving a supremacy for the feminine over the masculine. All these strategies were aimed at resolving contradictions and prevented subjectivity from being constructed outside of a binary framework. These representations

disallowed the messiness and complication of the subject's lived experience from being validated. A purification process was established that involved excluding items that did not fit within the binary structure. The discourses restrained the subject from enabling action within an environment of fluidity. The subject was restrained from moving across, between, in and out of the binary structures. This limited the potential for the subject to construct subjectivity outside of binary logic (Davies 1994, p.10; Connell 1987; Lather 1991).

6.2.2 A linear essentialism to produce a coherent self

The discourses produced an epistemology of a coherent, essential self, sexuality and gender. The need for an individualised and unique identity, established a linear trajectory as the dominant way in which one moved through life as an agential actor. The discourses work in concert to establish the coming out journal as a space of autobiographical confession and scientific investigation that constructed sexuality as problematic and therefore in need of interpretation, therapy and normalisation. The objective was to uncover the truth of sex, revealing its secrets, and in so doing, construct a knowledge of the subject that illuminated his individuality, causality, unconsciousness and truth (Smart, 2002, p.98).

The resolution of any contradictions and inconsistencies was an important aspect of this linear trajectory. In searching for one's identity, inconsistencies were pathologised and made into problems that needed to be fixed and solved. This created an environment which dislocated the personal from the social, the individual from the collective.

Conscious, rational, linguistic processes are used by the individual to dominate those irrational, emotional aspects of self that might otherwise disrupt claims to coherent adult identity (Davies 1991, p.43).

The discourses promoted and positioned the subject within humanist notions of the self as an essentialised subject with authentic needs and a real identity that could be realised through a process of discovery. Assessing and expressing experience was bound up within a process of the conscious individual being a conduit for the realisation of truth. Through critical self-reflection, the rational subject believed he could achieve a state of coherence and unification where truth could be uncovered (Levett 2000, p.13). Confession of everything about the self was another significant way for the subject to gain access to his truth. The goal of knowing one's identity was achieved through a state of continuity, rationality, coherence and unification. Language would make this reality transparent

Language was an important tool to describe, analyse and eventually access the reality of the world (Davies 1991, 1992; Gilbert 1989a, 1989b; Foucault 1998, 2002c).

6.2.3 Disciplinary power

Within the discourses the subject disciplined himself, and was disciplined by, certain ideas and practices. These disciplinary techniques were not simply imposed from above. The subject was actively involved in constituting his own subjection within relations of power (Smart 2002, p.98).

The discourses established their own pervasive conditions involving the subject in establishing the boundaries and conditions of his own existence.

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault 1995, pp.202-203)

The discourses compelled the subject to tell the truth about himself as a gay man, as a non-traditionally masculine man, as a pro-feminist man, as a person who had mental health issues, as a fat person. These truths were established according to the institutionalised norms that compelled speech. At the same time the subject constituted himself through such articulations. The confessional truth-telling of the discourses was therefore about the subject's participation in his own self-construction. The discourses constructed a frame of reference where the subject became tied to his own identity (McLaren 2002, pp.146-147). In confessing the truth about himself the subject was entrapped within the 'production of truth, the production of self, and relations of power' (McLaren 2002, p.58). Contrary to greater self-knowledge and freedom from repression, the process further enmeshed the subject within networks of power relations. These power relations become more invisible as the focus turned to accessing the truth that was lodged in his secret nature, only demanding to surface (Foucault 1998, p.60).

The discourses established a panoptic process where the threat of being observed and judged was effective in gaining compliant behaviour. As a powerful tool of subjectification the panoptic mechanism used an invisible gaze to ensue compliance to normalising behaviour. There was no need for material or external constraints. The subject's own gaze established the fulcrum for ensuring that he was his own overseer exercising 'surveillance over, and against himself' (Foucault 1995, p.155). Direct repression was not necessary. Control was achieved more effectively through the subtle

and covert strategies of normalisation. Through engaging in a constant and rigorous approach in searching for a hidden truth, held within the core of his identity, the subject of the coming out journal self-regulated his actions. Sexual identity and a stable coherent gender became the primary focus of normalising strategies due to their association with the most intimate and secret aspects of the subject's life. This search for a hidden essence restrained the subject from acknowledging the constructed nature of sexuality and gender. This made it more difficult to enact change and transformation (Foucault 1995, 1998; McNay 1994, pp.97, 98).

6.2.4 Meeting normalised expectations

The subject was propelled into self-regulating behaviour to meet normalised expectations that were considered beneficent. The discourses collectively maintained the dominance of heteronormative and homonormative fictions. These included the couple unit being the authentic expression of love and binary gender roles that naturalised masculine and feminine behaviour and certain forms of pleasure and self-presentation over others (Pitts 2000, p.446).

The community where the subject believed he would find a sense of belonging was the gay community. This was often perceived as a homogenous and harmonious space. When the subject negotiated entry or participated in its visible subculture he did not find the embracing acceptance that this imagined community was expected to deliver. The questioning of the normative standards within the community in relation to body size, appearance, age, dress and sexual prowess assisted the subject to question the legitimacy and normativity of this community. The subject developed a critical awareness of how normative standards could act powerfully to divide and exclude within the gay community itself. However, this critical examination of normativity was overshadowed by the power of the narrative quest to achieve an integrated and (masculine) autonomous identity. The power of the narrative quest to achieve integration assisted to enforce the need to become like them, lose weight, change his body to fit a cultural ideal, stop participating in beats and find a partner. The inability to do this was constructed as an indication of an inner weakness or incapacity to get it right. The subject was not fully able to cast the resistance to losing weight, forming his body into a cultural ideal and not being part of a couple as a refusal of normativity and therefore queer; queer being acts which defy normativity (Chang 2005; Munt et al. 2002; Pinar 1998; Yates 2005).

6.2.5 Naturalising the narrative of the discourse

The discourses were particularly powerful in effacing their own narrativity and existence as discursive constructions (Barthes 1977, 1986). The discourses naturalised the meaning-making conventions of their narratives, making it difficult for the subject to see the frames that mediated knowledge building. Working to determine a position for the subject to inhabit the narrative frames of the discourses seduced the subject to 'submit to the contingencies of that determination' (Singer in Mcquillan 2000, p.8). Versions of reality were constructed in an apparently seamless way and suggested themselves as reflections of the real world rather than constructed versions of it (Barthes 1974). The opportunity to reflect on the story of the discourse and on life itself as a historic, social and liminal construction was restricted (Gilbert & Taylor 1991, p.103). This ensured that the subject maintained a quest for a higher and more enlightened form of humanity.

The constructedness of the discourses became subjugated to ideas of real life or common sense (Cranny-Francis 1994, p.13). The subject accepted the events and experiences in ways that seemed 'natural and plausible, uncontentious' (Kress 1985, p.40). This naturalisation became a dominant and powerful way in which to construct experience (Cranny-Francis 1992). The familiarity of events and patterns also added to them being experienced as real (Belsey 1980, p.51). The discourses constructed a voice of authenticity that implied a guarantee of truth and a fixity of meaning (Weedon 1987, p.162). The authorial voice had a legitimating function that informed other textual constructions, including theories, ideologies and social and institutional practices. This ensured that power maintained a grasp on certain versions of truth. Alternative and subjugated versions of truth battled to achieve prominence within the overall conventions of the discursive frames. The inter-connectedness of the discourses therefore powerfully hid their effects and demands as relations of power. Power was maintained as an independent entity that the subject's self could exist outside of (Belsey 1980, p.51; Connell 1987, p.246; Gilbert 1994, p.58; McLaren 1995a, p.91).

6.2.6 The power of the rational

The discourses join in substantiating hegemonic notions of power, assuming a right and wrong way of reasoning. The subject was driven to establish his capacity to make sense of the world through his ability to carry out rational thought. Mistaken views of the world, or false consciousness, could be exposed through showing the truth about how things really were. The discourses strengthened the meaning-making system of a true state of existence

that could become known. This lessened the ability of the subject to understand his life as shaped by and through the inter-relationship between discourses and institutions in society and his own ethical interpretation of their practices (Danaher et al. 2000, p.48). The discourses circumscribe the body as a natural entity. The body was not considered as a discursive construction in itself. The body existed within a philosophical polarity of free will versus determinism. The body was either a passive medium on which cultural meanings were inscribed, or it was the instrument through which an autonomous will interpreted a meaning for itself (Butler 1997b, 1999).

6.2.7 Refusals – an ethic of aesthetic self-styling

The subject protested the effects of the dominant discursive frames of the journal. Refusing to obey and adhere to the rules, which sought to normalise certain subject positions and subjugate others, the subject was constantly involved in standing against ideas of hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity and homonormativity. Actively involved in processes that refused to circumscribe who he was in terms of these dominant ideas of gender and sexuality, the subject was involved in constructing a subjectivity that refused to be governed. Subjugated knowledges were valorised, actively involved in the process of resistance to dominant ways of knowing, constructing alternative ways of being. The discourses provided opportunities for the subject to look beyond the problem, challenging normativity and creating new possibilities, actively challenging the perceptions that constrained his subjection (Mills 2003; Padva 2002).

Containing contradictions and disruptions, the discourses presented disorganised and messy subject positions that did not neatly fit into the normalised conventions of the dominant discursive frames. These ruptures in the naturalised order of the discourses assisted in exposing the regulatory fictions of coherence. Regulatory ideals were exposed as fictional norms. The subject was compelled within the discourse to construct certain subject positions, but his refusals, his action, also provided moments that disrupted the solidity of the discourses' capacity to suture truth (Butler 1999).

Constructing an environment where subjectivity was situated as more performative (Butler 1999), the discourses drew attention to the constructed environment of subjectivity. The discourses encoded and presented a set of possibilities for the subject of the coming out journal. The essentialised nature of sexuality and masculinity, and the linear trajectory of identity were problematised, albeit nascently. Subjectivity was seen to be constructed within a complex web of constraining and enabling relations of normativity, thereby

deconstructing identity as a pre-existing social relation. The subject was a compliant reader of the discourses, accepting their conventions. He was also a resistant reader, subverting their conventions (Belsey 1980, p.51; Butler 1999, 1997a, 1997b; Cranny-Francis 1994; Davies 1989, p.20; Kress 1985, p.40).

The discourses advanced a subject that was involved in a stylising of his self/selves, constantly working outside moral conventions. The subject actively fashioned his different selves, seeking to mediate an ethical position in how he lived in relation to himself and others within a range of power relations. A goal of these deliberations was to think outside of what he already knew, refusing dominant constructions and ideas.

There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all. ... the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known (Foucault 1984, pp.8-9).

The subject was critically engaged in a project of continual refashioning. He was engaged in parrhesiastic (Mc Laren 2002; O'Leary 2002, pp.147-150) acts, disrupting ideas of truth. Critical reflexivity involved working on the relationship between ideas, their truth/power effects and their impact on constituting subjectivity. The subject possessed an attuned capacity to alert himself to the ways in which his activities were influenced and affected through his hegemonic subjectivities of being male, white, middle class and of Anglo Saxon descent. These subjectivities in their visibility and visceralness, countered the invisibility and pleasantness of privilege (Kimmel in Davies 1994, p.16).

6.3 Agency

The discursive analysis has shown that there is no substantial self, or centre of free will, that guides and grounds agency. Subjectivity takes shape and acts through the ways in which it emerges in the nexus of the power/truth/self triangle of discourse, the way

that an individual is formed (and forms itself) by being subjected to (and subjecting itself to) a true discourse which entails effects of power (and a form of power which mobilizes truth) (O'Leary 2002, p.111).

It is these three fields, or three axes, power/knowledge/self, that are all equally important in investigating the historical and social contexts involved in the formation of subjectivities (Davidson 1986; O'Leary 2002).

The research has shown that agency was constrained by the fixed or foundational ideas within the discourses that constructed identity, about what it meant to be gay, what it meant to be a man, and what it meant to be a healthy and successful gay man/person. Through the discursive analysis it was discovered that agency came about through negotiating discursive clashes and contending with the flux, the contrariness, contradictions, paradoxes and fluidity of daily life; refusing the modernist/masculinist zeal to resolve any tension and establish certainty. The clash of discursive meanings provided the most potential to interrupt the invocation of the naturalised conventions of discourse and their consolidation of unity. The inter-connectedness of the discourses' meta narratives did make this difficult for the subject. Within the context of the research's analysis, agency came about through reading the effects of the duplicity of power, deconstructing and reconstructing the boundaries of certainty and truth (Butler 1992, 1999; Falk 1994).

Even though the meta narrative of the discourses defined freedom from oppression as a state that existed outside of power, subjectivity was in a constant state of moving, perpetually in motion, always creative and ever changing. The meta narrative of the discourses within the journal – that enlightened subjectivity was a transcendental state that would eventually be found, discovered and deliver finality – prevented the subject of the coming out journal from witnessing that he was very much working within practices of transformation and change. Multiple selves were constantly involved in negotiating power relations on a daily basis. Power was continually being turned against itself, questioning the validity of the norms that sutured how truth constructed a moral framework for living (O'Leary 2002; Taylor & Vintges 2004).

6.4 Multiple truth telling

The analysis has shown that consciousness and liberation is not a single, sequential story but a 'simultaneous possibility of multiple drafts' (Couzens-Hoy 2004, p.54). There was no single, correct and true account of overcoming oppression. There was no single account that unified the knowledge of the self. There were multiple drafts that struggled with each other for interpretation and validity. Each bore truth, but each version of truth was only one particular way to tell the story. The discursive analysis demonstrated the importance of cultivating a critical attitude that engages with questioning the world and the self while in the process of living, instead of following particular rules and being in possession of the right knowledge. Rather than use truth in a polemical fashion to arm

oneself in the war over which interpretation is right, critical inquiry into truth telling and its effects on the construction of subjectivity becomes the most effective way to promote transformation and change (Valverde 2004, pp.84, 87).

Opening up the terrain of the multiple and competing truths of the discourses ensured that their telling was not collapsed into one all-consuming version of what was supposed to be liberation, or overcoming oppression. Locating the discourses within a social, cultural and historical context allowed for a disruption to the insistence that their truth must be true forever. The multiple ways of resisting power became more visible, opening up the analysis to identify strengths, resources and capacities. Decentering the telling of events allowed for an attuned scrutiny of beliefs and habits, how they were constructed and contested and the effects of these on choices and ways of acting. Discursively and historically locating action also allowed for an increased capacity to theoretically investigate how the subject resisted attachment to social identities and ideals. Realising that we don't have to feel tied and fixed to these locations is crucial to transformation and change (Couzens-Hoy 2004, pp.15, 54, 231).

6.5 Effecting change – disturbing the foundational

The application of a Foucauldian (1972, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000a, 2002c) discursive analysis to the forces that constituted subjectivity has demonstrated the relevance of not needing to inquire into the foundations of subjectivity. The discursive analysis of the construction of gender and sexuality has shown that critical analysis is more effective when it avoids telling people who they really are and what they ought to do (Couzens-Hoy 2004). Critique is more effective when it challenges the understanding of who people are, leading them to resist particular attachments to social identities and ideals. Spaces for freedom, transformation and change, are opened up through defining alternative ways of knowing and being. This counters the modernist trajectory of social change as striving to exist outside of, and therefore free of, relations of power. Agency is best fuelled through practices that assist one to dissolve the sense of who you are, who you are supposed to be and disrupt the sense of what the right thing is to do. There is more room for choice and change when the acts, gestures, discourses that appear to be natural and solid, become difficult, problematic and dangerous. Ethics becomes the process of facilitating people to examine the impact and consequences of the discourses that they position themselves within (Couzens-Hoy 2004, pp.14, 89-90; McLaren 2002; Tamboukou & Ball 2003a).

The research has revealed the significance of avoiding examining the subject in terms of its role as originator, being able to penetrate the substance of things and thereby give it meaning. A more effective account of agency has been advanced through the analysis, disturbing what was thought to be foundational,

How under what conditions and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse? What place can it occupy in each type of discourse, what function can it assume, and by obeying what rules? (Schrift, 1995, p. 29).

The ruptures in what appeared to be consistent and stable became the object of study. The process of becoming and being made subject within relations of power constituted the principal axis for rewriting the self. Through focusing on the production of power relations there was a greater capacity to examine both the productive and regressive nature of power (Foucault 2002c).

Asking how power is resisted is integral to any critical analysis. Individuals participate on a daily basis in both endorsing and resisting relations of power, often simultaneously. The social world of subjectivity involves a multiplicity of unstable and diverse relations of power that involve possibilities for both domination and resistance. 'Freedom comes from the ways in which individuals negotiate power relations, rather than evading them altogether' (O'Leary 2002, p.92). Analysing the historical conditions and limits of self-understanding allows for a greater intervention into relations of power and truth that influence how identity is fashioned. It increases the capacity to invent new experiences, pleasures and forms of life that expand the realm of human possibility (O'Leary 2002, p.93; Sawicki 2004, p.170).

The processes at work in crafting the self, identity, subjectivity were complexly intertwined with those involved in policing it (Ferguson 2004, p.35). This self-policing involved frequently harsh, unforgiving ways of relating to the self that kept particular identities in circulation. The discursive analysis has shown that the subject's life was lived under constant observation, according to the expectations of others and himself in relation to normative frameworks. Increasing the level of awareness of these self-policing techniques contributes to the capacity for change. Maximising the possibility for opening up alternative knowledges and exposing the way a discourse establishes itself as a regime of truth is an important aspect of critical analysis. This does not preclude taking up a subject position within a discourse. However, there always needs to be an uneasy and suspicious relationship, maintaining an ability to be open to dismantle the limits of the

knowledge that any discourse constructs. This process assists to maximise uncovering the invisibility of power (Couzens-Hoy 2004, p.15; O’Leary 2002).

Discursively interrogating how we come to know what we know contributes to the fashioning of poststructural agency as a process that unveils the simulacrum of the self. It brings attention to the relationship between discursive systems in society and how they are taken up within interpersonal contexts. Attention is placed upon how we act on ourselves,

As moral agents, we have constituted ourselves primarily in relation to the ways in which we act on others rather than in relation to the ways in which we act on ourselves. Attention to the regimes of truth within which we operate, and which we perpetuate, would help identify the current ways in which we act on ourselves and hence, point the way toward acting differently (Gore 1993, p.131).

Other knowledges are present to the self, however they may be subjugated, hidden from view because of the power of other more normative discourses. Stepping into these other knowledges allows people to examine their possibilities. It also creates a parrhesiastic (McLaren 2002; O’Leary 2002, pp.147-150) moment which challenges the truth of more regular, usual and dominant ways of knowing and being in the world. Investigating the epistemological underpinnings of the moral commandments of dominant discourse is important in shaking the foundations of the regimes of truth that normative discourse construct. Other and subjugated knowledges are vital for interrogating the effects of governing discourses (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983).

6.6 The three layers of a critical ontology of the self

The research has been concerned with the activity of the constitution of the self within discourse. The idea that subjectivity occurs within discourse reframes the individual as an active textual agent, involved in understanding his own intelligibility as a shifting, historical construct. The poststructural subject, as an agent of change, stands against liberal notions of the citizen subject as an autonomous and rational entity, wary of its rights in relation to other individuals. The individual has been re-theorised as a process where contradictory selves are constituted through the mediation of discourse. The individual is not the unified, centre of knowledge, not the passive bearer of knowledge (Poster 1989).

In conducting a critical ontology of the self, the research has demonstrated that the best way to promote transformation and change – agency – is through an examination of the

archaeological, genealogical and ethical layers of subjectivity's construction. The archaeological layer responds to frames and boundaries of knowledge and meaning-making. What knowledges direct and govern a person's life? How do they work? How do they come to exist? Who do they benefit? What are their effects and how are they promulgated through societies social institutions and structures? The genealogical layer investigates the frames and boundaries of knowledge, making for more specific power effects. The examination focuses on how knowledges limit, constrain and empower an individual subject. The third ethical layer turns more to the particularities of the individual's identities, subjectivities, or lived realities. It focuses on the individualised effects of the knowledges examined within the first two layers. What is the ethical framework that grounds action and impels an individual to comply with normative discourse? What are the process of self-surveillance and self-government? This layer also includes looking at how the individual positions themselves outside these normative frameworks, resisting government and acting from counter-knowledges. Subjugated knowledges provide alternative ways of acting and being vital for resourcing strategies for change and transformation (Dreyfuss & Rabinow 1983; Foucault 2002c; Gore 1993, 2002).

6.7 Resisting government as an educational principle

The implications of this research for promoting educational practice that maximises agency, transformation and change is that the art of pedagogy requires facilitating people 'not being governed so much' (Foucault in O'Leary 2002, p.151). Educational praxis, committed to poststructural underpinnings, calls for processes that uncover the techniques and mechanisms of power which individuals, communities and groups are subjected to and subject themselves to in the name of truth. Such an agenda involves investigating the conditions under which knowledge becomes possible, the criteria used to establish narratives of truth within this knowledge and the effects of this knowledge on practices and action (Foucault 2000a; McLaren 2002; O'Leary 2002). As power is both repressive and productive, power is analysed for how it both constrains and enables multiple subject positions. Ethical educative practice is not prescribed within moral conventions of what we should and shouldn't do. Ethics practice refers to an examination of the way in which we act upon our selves and the effects of this acting, which includes the effects on other people. The implication of this for empowering education moves the aim of transformative praxis away from raising people's consciousness in order that they see the correct, or a more moral, ethical and right way of thinking and acting towards a pedagogy

that examines the discursive location of people's actions and their truth effects. The aim of the educational practitioner is to facilitate an environment where truth and its connection to the personal through discourse and power are put under scrutiny. The fulcrum for engaging with transformation and change is through establishing parrhesiastic moments. These moments are where truth and power and their normative hold on the perception of self are erupted (Gore 2002).

6.8 Discursive critical praxis as an educational strategy

Focusing on the interconnections between the social and the personal maximises the capacity for transformation and change to practices that are not always in the best interests of individuals. Within poststructural pedagogies focused on transformation and change and creating parrhesiastic environments, language is considered as a productive and alive force that is constitutive. It contains the traces of ideas. As an activity it brings with it a history and carries a relationship to a range of other ideas, thinking and discourses. Because of its temporality, language can never be known. It contains the seeds of what it is not. Tracing and uncovering the cartography of ideas within discourse and their connection to language ensures an engagement with a politics of charting the mechanics of how language is used as power (Freire 1973, 1990; Shor 1992, 1993, p.32). As a teaching strategy this is defined as critical discursive praxis and is a key goal to establishing a parrhesiastic pedagogy.

Critically discursive praxis involves four qualities. The first quality involves examining how power is organised and used in society through the establishment of dominant or hegemonic discourses. It also involves the development of an attuned analysis to the ways in which individuals, groups, systems and institutions circulate and maintain these discourses, through their practices.

The second quality of discursive critical praxis involves the development of critical literacy where analytic habits of thinking, reading, writing and speaking are understood within the context of discourse and its production of relations of power. These relations of power legitimate certain knowledges and construct them as versions of the truth and reality as opposed to one of many truths and realities. These relations of power also include subjugated or alternative knowledges that contain the possibility of other ways of knowing and acting in the world. Through the inquiry into how discourse constructs

regimes of truth, these other knowledges are foregrounded and considered for their potential to contribute to transformative practices.

The third quality of discursive critical praxis involves the devalorisation of social norms. This strategy involves challenging the processes of normalisation that construct certain values and moral conditions. This process of devalorisation is also extended to include a fourth aspect that examines how normalising practices have been internalised. The internalisation process investigates the moral and ethical rules that people live by in relation to the nexus with wider societal discourses. This involves an analysis of how people live out the conventions of dominant discourse on a daily basis. Examining how and when these practices are resisted is also crucial. These resistances are foregrounded as counter-knowledges that challenge the myths, values and regimes of truth, of dominant discourse. They provided for moments of parrhesia (Foucault 2000a, 2002c; Freire 1990; Gore 1993; Kincheloe 1993; Shor 1992; McLaren 2002; O'Leary 2002, pp.147-150).

6.9 Freedom as an everyday practical capacity – an educational agenda for change

This thesis has researched how relations of power work through the construction of subjectivity. It has investigated the way that contemporary power acts as a form of governmentality (Foucault 2002c) through intensifying the moral regulation that subjects bring to bear on the construction of their identities. The five discourses of the coming out journal produced an autobiographical confessional narrative that sat perilously between being an exercise in subjection (Butler 1997b), producing the requirement to tell the truth about oneself, and an exercise in subjectification (McNay 1992), involving the critical examination of how the subject came to be in reference to normalising discourses. The inter-connectedness of the discourses produced processes of ordering and reordering aspects of experience, time and space, dominant narratives and counter narratives that worked in contest with each other (Miller 1995, p.68).

Through analysis of the workings of power and discourse on subjectivity within a genealogical study of my coming out journal, the thesis has developed a definition of poststructural agency that defines the significance of working with three layers of the construction of subjectivity. The three layers being: an archaeological layer that explores the boundaries of meaning-making systems within discourse; a genealogical layer that examines these meaning-making systems for their power effects and construction of

relations of normativity; and a third ethical layer that charts the nexus of the previous two layers and the way they are maintained and resisted within the lived reality of the interpersonal realm (Foucault 1972, 1998, 2000a, 2002c; McLaren 2002; O’Leary 2002; Tamboukou 2003).

One of the challenges to a Foucauldian-based parrhesiastic pedagogy with its notions that power is everywhere (Foucault 1998), is that there is no ‘escape from power into freedom’ (Taylor in O’Leary 2002, p.157). The pervasive influence of power does not negate the possibilities of change. The idea that power is everywhere (Foucault 1998) is not interpreted as meaning nothing is possible. Rather it means that everything is possible. Relations of power are located throughout all social fields, and therefore freedom and empowerment are everywhere (Foucault 2000a).

Within a parrhesiastic pedagogy, freedom, transformation and change, are not universal historical constants. Their possibility is dependant on historical conditions and arises only within the context of given power relations. Freedom does not position itself in opposition to power. Freedom is not a substance that one strives to head towards and inhabit or possess. ‘Freedom is not a universal norm or a final realisable state’ (McLaren 2002, p.36). The effect of thinking of freedom as a universal norm is that it prevents the agent of change from seeing how new institutions and practices may lead to new forms of domination. Freedom, like power, is relational and is as malleable as subjectivity. In existing only within relations of force, freedom exists within the capacity of individuals to refuse to be governed in certain ways or to refuse governing themselves in particular ways. In this way freedom is not some ideal waiting to be realised. It has an everyday, practical capacity grounded within a refusal to comply. Freedom, as positioned within this thesis, stands outside ideas of essential autonomy. Freedom involves changing our present, our selves, our modes of behaviours and ways of thinking. Freedom is the effect of an individual’s capacity to challenge the effects of power and domination. People can be involved in micro, daily practices that focus on subverting the practices of domination. This led to the coming out journal being considered as a rich source of data as it provided a daily account how power was negotiated in multifarious, complex and contradictory ways, where the conditions of possibility for subjectivity were simultaneously constraining and enabling (Foucault 2000; O’Leary 2002, pp.160-161; McLaren 2002).

The outcome of this thesis has achieved a position that reframes critical pedagogy’s emancipatory potential within poststructural thinking. This poststructural reframing moves the liberal focus of much pedagogic intervention away from determining how best to free

individuals in order that they may govern themselves as responsible and capable agents or citizens. The aim of poststructural pedagogies is to increase the ability for people to become attuned to the ways in which their selves are implicated in processes of government, regulation, disciplining and normalisation. This enables people to maximise their opportunities for refusing the processes of government and refusing constructions of the self that may not serve their best interests (McLaren 2002).

Transformative pedagogy, when located within a poststructural context, foregrounds the shifting, contradictory and multiple contexts of people's lives. This stands in opposition to modernism's quest for certainty and foundation. An ability to live provisionally within a world where knowledge is partial and incomplete, without a certainty about the truth, enables students to reject what they experience as given. Poststructural educational practice is constructed as a practice that assists students to critically engage the politics of discourses that impinge upon their understanding as both a 'product and producer of meaning' (McLaren 1995a, p.15). It is a strategic response to the historical conditions, which have produced people as subjects, and the ways in which their subjectivity is inserted, on a daily basis, into relations of power. The major strategy through which this can be achieved is in establishing parrhesiastic moments. These moments of parrhesia are those that disrupt the solidity, normalcy and naturalness of discursive frames and the way they are played out at the level of the interpersonal (McLaren 1995a; Gore 1992). Agency comes about through an attunement to the interstices between action, discourse and critique (Foucault 1990, 1992; McNay 1994, p.9; McLaren 2002, p.67).

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