



**The British
Psychological Society**
Promoting excellence in psychology

Psychology of Women Section Review

Volume 15 Number 2
Autumn 2013



Aims and scope

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN SECTION REVIEW has been established to provide a forum for discussion of issues and debates around all aspects of the psychology of women in research, teaching and professional practice. It aims to promote and support academic research and debate on issues related to the psychology of women and encourage the development of theory and practice concerning gender and other social inequalities. In particular, it also seeks to encourage contributions from individuals at all stages of their careers – including undergraduate and postgraduate students – as an appropriate forum to provide feedback on new ideas and first publications. It promotes a reviewing process where positive and constructive feedback is provided to authors.

The *Psychology of Women Section Review* aims to publish:

- theoretical and empirical papers;
- reviews of relevant research and books;
- special issues and features;
- observations, commentaries, interviews, short papers and original or non-traditional submissions in the 'Agora' section;
- correspondence.

It is produced by the Psychology of Women Section of the British Psychological Society, and mailed free of charge to all members of the Section. It is available on subscription to non-members of the Section. **Libraries, organisations and individuals can subscribe at a rate of £15 per year (£5 for students) – please send cheques payable to The Psychology of Women Section care of the Editor at the address inside the back cover.** Issues can be purchased individually at a cost of £5 (back copies may also be available). For details on charges for advertising space, please contact the Editor.

Editorial Group

Jane Callaghan, Editor

Division of Psychology, Boughton Green Road,
Northampton NN2 7AL

Email: editor.powsr@gmail.com OR

jane.callaghan@northampton.ac.uk

Jemma Tosh, Assistant Editor (Agora)

Manchester Metropolitan University,
Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care,
Gaskell Campus, Hathersage Road,
Manchester M13 0JA.

Email: jemma.tosh@googlemail.com

Helen Owton, Assistant Editor (Book Reviews)

Washington Singer Laboratories, Psychology,
College of Life and Environmental Sciences,
University of Exeter, Exeter EX4 4QG.

Email: ho223@exeter.ac.uk

Advisory Group

Betty Bayer	Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York, USA.
Erica Burman	Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.
Virginia Braun	University of Auckland, New Zealand.
Rose Capdevila	Open University, UK.
Karen Ciclitera	Middlesex University, UK.
Pippa Dell	University of East London, UK.
Kathy Doherty	Sheffield Hallam University, UK.
Hannah Frith	University of Brighton, UK.
Nicola Gavey	University of Auckland, New Zealand.
Alexa Hepburn	Nottingham Trent University, UK.
Sue Jackson	Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.
Helen Malson	University of the West of England, UK.
Anastasia Maw	University of Cape Town, South Africa.
Paula Nicolson	Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.
Lindsay O'Dell	Open University, UK.
Ann Phoenix	Open University, UK.
Wendy	Open University, UK.
Stainton Rogers	
Janet M. Stoppard	University of New Brunswick, Canada.
Jane Usher	University of Western Sydney, Australia.
Valerie Walkerdine	University of Cardiff, UK.
Sam Warner	Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.
Ann Weatherall	Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.
Margaret Wetherell	Open University, UK.
Sue Wilkinson	Loughborough University, UK.
Marcia Worrell	Roehampton College, University of Surrey, UK.
Suzanne Zeedyk	University of Dundee, UK

Editorial

Jane Callaghan

WELCOME to the Autumn edition of the *Psychology of Women Section Review*. We on the Editorial Team are feeling refreshed and enthused by the fantastic POWS Annual Conference which was held at Cumberland Lodge in July this year. We are delighted to include in this edition a collection of papers from both the 2012 and the 2013 annual conference.

Important news from the POWS Committee is that, in 2014, in addition to our wonderful POWS Annual Conference, we will also be hosting a one-day student conference at the University of Northampton on 25 July 2014. Please do encourage undergraduate and postgraduate students to attend and to present their work in a supportive and encouraging environment. Further details will appear in the Spring edition of *POWS-R*, and will also appear soon on the POWS website.

Many of the papers in this edition focus on the exclusionary and inclusionary potentials of language and discursively constituted social practices. Drawing on both interview data, and a documentary analysis, 2012 POWS Postgraduate Prize Winner, Rebecca Swenson, explores how gender neutral labels like 'queer' and 'gay' function for lesbian women. She explores how the term 'lesbian' has become highly stigmatised, and acknowledges how more gender neutral terms might enable women to position themselves in creative ways in relation to these constructions, but also warns of the risk of an obfuscation of women as lesbians. Natacha Kennedy focuses on the difficulties a cisgenderist culture produces for young transgender people. She argues that the weakly saturated discursive nature of cisgendered culture renders its assumptions taken for granted and often poorly articulated. Drawing a distinction between transphobia

and cisgenderism, Natacha suggests that transexclusionary practices (including transexclusionary feminist practices) effectively function in a transphobic manner. She goes on to outline how psychological research on transgender often reproduces and entrenches transphobic attitudes by failing to take into account the culture of cisgenderism within which psychological difficulties are constituted. In her paper reflecting on her keynote address to the 2013 POWS Annual Conference, Meg Barker blends academic biography and theory to explore the development of her thinking around gender and kink, arriving at a sex-critical position. Ruth Cross explores how young women construct the 'risky behaviour'. Using a Q-methodological approach, she highlights how women might consider risk taking as positive, and the construction of risk taking as agentic in women's representations of risk and healthy behaviours. 2013 POWS Postgraduate Prize Winner Helen Winter explores the implications of the adult diagnosis of ADHD for women. Stephen Symons, 2013 POWS Undergraduate Prize Winner presents a discursive analysis of the accounts of UK swingers, exploring notions of free choice and the construction of gender in their stories.

In the first of our focus pieces on feminist methodology, Megan Chawansky explores the significance of intersectionality in feminist methodology in sports studies, illustrating her argument with an example from sport for development and peace research.

In the 'Commentary' and 'Event Reviews' sections, Zowie Davy gives an informative and challenging account of her reflections on the 'Classifying Sex: Debating *DSM-5*' conference in Cambridge, UK, 4–5 July 2013. Helen Owton reports on her attendance at 'Interfacing with older LGBT

citizens Two-day Masterclass: Challenging discrimination', at Bournemouth University, 17–18 April 2013.

In the 'Book Reviews' section, Iona Tanguay review's Svend Brinkman's *The Self at the Centre of a Reflective Approach: A Qualitative Inquiry into Everyday Life*, and Chloe Law reviews *Fat*, by Deborah Lupton. *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods* is reviewed by Emma Rich, Jayanthiny Kangatharan reviews *The Psychology of Women* by Margaret Matlin, and Nollaig Frost reviews Rutherford et al.'s *Handbook of International Feminisms: Perspectives on Psychology, Women, Culture and Rights*.

We are still interested to receive pieces on feminism and methodology, for our special focus. If you would be interested in writing either a full article or a commentary on any methodological area, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Jane E.M. Callaghan

Editor

Autumn's the time for Harvest Festivals!



Cultural cisgenderism: Consequences of the imperceptible

Natacha Kennedy

At the 2012 POWS Annual Conference, Natacha Kennedy delivered a powerful and challenging keynote on cultural cisgenderism. Her talk is reproduced here.

Introduction: An inadequate metaphor

THE FILM COMEDY *I Was A Male War Bride* (Hawks, 1949) depicted a newly-married Frenchman played by Cary Grant attempting to accompany his American wife to the US at the end of World War Two. However, the US congress had only foreseen that American soldiers would be men and would be likely to marry European women. When an American servicewoman falls in love with a French soldier her efforts to ensure he can accompany her to America result in a huge, and in this instance, quite comic struggle with both bureaucracy and cultural expectations. As an illustration of the nature of cultural cisgenderism, it illustrates a similar kind of problem but in terms of extent is not nearly an adequate metaphor, but it does represent an illustration of the difficulties faced by transgender people in a culture simply not constituted to account for our existence. The consequences of the War Brides Act 1945 are not, however, even remotely comparable with the very serious, and sometimes deadly, consequences of cultural cisgenderism. Nonetheless, as a metaphor it is probably the closest available, a point that in itself suggests that cisgenderism is a concept that will not be easy for many to understand.

Situating cultural cisgenderism

This paper intends to draw on and develop the research by Ansara and Hegarty (2012), which demonstrated how a group of psychology researchers have developed a

culture of cisgenderism in what they identify as an 'invisible college'. They characterised this type of cisgenderism as:

'...a prejudicial ideology, rather than an individual attitude, that is systemic, multi-level and reflected in authoritative cultural discourses. [...] Cisgenderism problematises the categorical distinction itself between classes of people as either 'trans-gender' or 'cisgender' (or as 'gender variant' or unmarked) [...] We consider cisgenderism to be a form of 'othering' that takes people categorised as 'transgender' as 'the effect to be explained.' (p.5)

The distinction this paper intends to draw is between the type of cisgenderism Ansara and Hegarty describe, which appears to function within a particular esoteric domain, and cisgenderism within society as a whole. To do this I will need to refer to two sociological concepts, that of *institutionalisation* and that of *discursive saturation* (Dowling, 2009).

In essence institutionalisation refers to the extent to which a practice is regular and widespread; a highly institutionalised practice is one that occurs in a similar way each time, whereas a weakly institutionalised practice occurs differently each time or is less regular in the way it is manifested. It is this that serves to distinguish cisgenderism from transphobia, since transphobia represents an individual attitude rather than a cultural process or ideology and as such can be characterised as weakly institutionalised. This will be explored in a little more detail below.

Figure 1: Anti-trans processes.

Discursive Saturation	Institutionalisation	
	Strong institutionalisation (I+)	Weak Institutionalisation (I-)
High discursive saturation (DS+)	<i>Professional cisgenderism</i>	<i>Organised transphobia</i>
Low discursive saturation (DS-)	<i>Cultural cisgenderism</i>	<i>Reactive transphobia</i>

Discursive saturation basically refers to the extent to which the principles of an activity may be expressed in language. A highly discursively saturated practice is dependent primarily, if not almost exclusively, on language for its functioning; an example of this would be mathematics. A weakly discursively saturated practice requires little or no language for it to function, for example, street football. It is this distinction that is crucial to the way cultural cisgenderism functions.

As is shown in the relational space in Figure 1 above, the main differences between professional cisgenderism and cultural cisgenderism are the relative levels of discursive saturation. Professional cisgenderism, in Ansara and Hegarty’s analysis, is relatively highly discursively saturated; the discourse of the invisible college was revealed, by detailed textual analysis, to represent an ‘authoritative cultural discourse’. So how is that different from the culture of cisgenderism outside the practice of psychology?

In this case cultural cisgenderism represents a practice which has a similar level of institutionalisation but which has a relatively low level of discursive saturation. This is a culture or ideology (Geertz, 1973) which is predominantly tacitly held and communicated. It represents a systemic erasure and problematising of trans people, an essentialising of gender as binary, biologically determined, fixed at birth, immutable, natural and externally imposed on the individual.

Of course, something characterised as a tacit ideology or culture is difficult to describe or analyse, but occasionally examples can be found where circumstances result

in people having to explain their actions and as such put them into words. There follows one such example. In Denmark in 2010, the Danish Red Cross was running, as it still does at the time of writing, temporary accommodation for asylum-seekers in Denmark for the Danish government at the Sandholm refugee camp, near Copenhagen. They received a new asylum seeker from Latin America who was a transgender woman. However, despite presenting as female and declaring a female identity they accommodated her in a single room in a mens’ dormitory. As a result she was repeatedly raped and eventually fled the camp after being gang-raped. When later questioned about this the head of the Danish Red Cross asylum services told reporters the following;

‘Basically a transgender woman is likely to be placed in a male dormitory but in a single room. But we would not place her in a women’s dormitory because that is definitely for women, where we cannot permit ourselves to place a man.’

Modkraft, Denmark. August 2012.

My own translation.

Here there is no evidence that the head of asylum services intended deliberately to harm the victim by placing her in a dangerous situation where she would be raped. However, it does represent an example of cultural cisgenderism. It represents a confusion about gender resulting from the erasure of trans people in European culture. The Danish Red Cross, because it is an organisation existing in Western Europe, is affected by this cisgenderist culture. The above quotation reveals many of the features of cultural cisgenderism described above:

- the systemic erasure and problematising of trans people;
- the essentialising of gender;
- the gender binary;
- the immutability of gender;
- the external imposition of gender.

The problem for the victim is that, in this case the result would almost certainly have been the same if the head of asylum services at the Danish Red Cross had been transphobic. It is likely that in many cases, transphobia and cisgenderism have the same results.

In particular it would appear that one of the most central elements of cultural cisgenderism is the way it places the responsibility for determining gender on the observer rather than the individual. In other words, in the culture of cisgenderism, gender is something we do to other people, not something people do for themselves. This external imposition of gender can be characterised as a lifelong process, one which, in most cases, begins at birth with gender *assignment*, and continues throughout life with gender *attributions*.

This external imposition of gender can now be regarded as extended to transgender people with a bureaucratisation of gender transition, as transgender and transsexual people are referred to a psychologist or psychiatrist to have their new gender externally confirmed. It is worth comparing this with the culture in which two-spirits were accommodated in native American culture (Williams 1992) where children who may identify as a gender other than the one assigned at birth had access to a symbolic ritual in which they were in effect, able to decide their own gender.

Transphobia vs. Cisgenderism

As I mentioned above it is necessary to distinguish cisgenderism from transphobia. The relational space situates transphobia in relation to cisgenderism. Since it represents an individual attitude rather than a culture, it cannot be regarded as strongly institutionalised, although some transphobes have

become organised and share a highly institutionalised internal culture of hatred, fear and hostility, these groups are relatively small in number. By way of example, within some religious groups and Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs) transphobic cultures exist which represent internally highly institutionalised transphobic cultures. In these cases there exists a discourse of transphobia, which, in some cases, is required for the maintenance of their internal cohesion and in order to attempt to provide a rationalisation (Stone, 1991; Kaveney, 1979) for what appears to be little more than an emotional and irrational fear and hatred of trans people. This contrasts with what may be regarded as reactive transphobia, which exhibits low discursive saturation, which represents individuals whose fear, and consequently hatred, of trans people is openly based on the emotional and the irrational without drawing on the veneer of rationalisations. It is likely that this is a result of the exclusionary nature of cisgenderism and may often be attributed to portrayals of trans people in the media. However, in both these cases transphobia represents an individual attitude that stems from a fear and hatred of trans people.

It should be made clear that this is not cisgenderism, indeed TERF transphobia largely represents a culture which mythologises a disguised essentialisation of gender, but only as far as trans people are concerned, presenting members of this group with rationalisations for what, in principle can only be described as shared emotional responses. As such a self-perpetuating culture of hatred based on self-deception is maintained.

So cisgenderism is different from transphobia, in that transphobia represents an individual irrational hatred and fear (which in some circumstances may develop into its own micro culture as a means of justifying itself) whereas cisgenderism represents a much wider cultural process which in most cases is tacitly communicated. It is important to make this distinction.

Interaction of professional and cultural cisgenderism

By way of an illustration of how cisgenderism can function on a variety of levels, I would now like to present an analysis of one instance in which cultural cisgenderism results in unwarranted data and problematic assumptions, and to suggest that most research in psychology or neurology relating to trans people, cannot be reliable unless it takes account of cultural cisgenderism.

Kraemer et al. (2005) and Landen and Rasmussen (1997) have suggested that there is a comorbidity between being transgender and being on the Autistic Spectrum (AS). Further studies have noted a higher instance of AS people who are trans (De Vries et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2011; Strang et al., 2012) but have gone no further than noting that a larger percentage of trans people are also AS. Although these articles clearly indicate a correlation, one might read into these studies an inference that there may be a causal link.

There are two (related) problems with these studies and the first of these is that they fail to account for the effects of cultural cisgenderism. As a highly institutionalised culture, cisgenderism's effects are relatively constant and uniform in most areas of society. However, as a culture that exhibits low discursive saturation cisgenderism is also tacitly communicated. This means that in most cases people come to internalise it without realising they are doing so. It is a set of beliefs which are usually picked up by children as a result of their finely tuned and sensitive social radar.

The work of economist H.A. Simon (1976) is relevant here; he argued that, contrary to orthodox characterisations of human behaviour most people are not in the position to make objectively rational decisions about their lives and usually people make decisions on the basis of inadequate and incomplete information. Trans children, like other children, understand that it is usually likely to be socially unacceptable to adopt certain behaviour, preferences or

appearance, particularly those that are outside the social norms of their gendered community of practice (Paechter, 2007). The restricted nature of social groupings in primary and most secondary schools, and the lack of alternative social groupings available to those excluded from the school or class group, means that social exclusion is a very real threat to them if they fail to conform to group norms. As such the decision by the majority of trans children to conceal their gender non-conformity represents a rational one given the information available to them at the time. The tendency of trans children to conceal or suppress their gender identities (Kennedy, 2012) appears to arise, to a significant extent, from their perception of this tacitly expressed culture.

However, there is one group of children for whom this tacit culture is either undetectable or unimportant: AS children. In most cases AS children would probably be unable to detect this tacit ideology; a process that results in most trans children concealing or suppressing their gender identities. Yet it is also probable that even if they did realise that it was socially unacceptable, most would be unlikely to be able to conceal it or to perceive the need to conceal. This presents us with an apparent paradox in which cultural cisgenderism is either not perceived or not perceived as important by AS children who are trans, whereas it affects non-AS children who are trans to a far more significant extent. This results in those trans children who are AS becoming apparent much more readily than non-AS children because of the differential effects of cultural processes and social relations, in this case caused by cisgenderism. In effect cultural cisgenderism, because of its low discursive saturation, does not affect most AS children in the same way as it affects non-AS children.

The second problem would appear to be that the effects of professional cisgenderism have functioned in the instances cited above, to exclude from consideration by those carrying out the research the possibility that this cultural process might have an effect on

their data, with the result that a comorbidity between being trans and being AS is argued or inferred. In effect cisgenderism has preempted the researchers from asking the most elementary question most researchers need to ask when a particular effect is observed; 'What is this an instance of?' (Dowling, 2009). By situating trans people as inherently problematic, and through its function of essentialising gender as immutable, fixed at birth and binary, cisgenderism appears to preclude researchers from perceiving the need even to ask this question or consider that there might be other causal links. So we can see how cisgenderism operates on two levels; within the group of people who are subjects of study, and by excluding important variables from consideration by part of the academic community studying them.

The apparent attribution of a comorbidity between gender non-conformity and autism/Asperger's can be thus be attributed to a function of cisgenderism on two levels; professional cisgenderism and cultural cisgenderism. Of course, it is also likely that this also represents the effect of the restricted gaze of mainstream or quantitative psychological research and neurological research failing to account for social and cultural influences either on their research participants or on their own epistemological assumptions as researchers.

Of course, there are other instances of the effects of cisgenderism resulting in researchers obtaining results that are probably unwarranted. Once again cisgenderism's function has precluded asking the question 'What is this effect an instance of?' with the possibility at least acknowledged that there may be additional causal influences on the data. This is significant in the case of the substantial volume of research suggesting that the majority of trans or gender-non-conforming children do not grow up to be trans adults (e.g. Drescher & Byne, 2012; Drummond et al., 2008; Zucker,

1985). Repeated studies have asserted that anything between 70 per cent and 98 per cent of trans children do not become trans adults. However, this is difficult to argue when the effects of cultural cisgenderism are considered. Kennedy (2012) argues that the overwhelming majority of trans children conceal or suppress their gender non-conforming natures. Furthermore Sedgwick's (1990) essay 'Epistemology of the Closet' demonstrated how difficult it is to come out as lesbian, gay or bisexual, yet applying the same epistemology of the closet to trans children the effects of cisgenderism probably represent a much more significant hurdle for trans children than heteronormativity. For the majority of trans children not only is the fear of social exclusion evident, but cisgenderism also results in a lack of vocabulary being available for them to understand and communicate their experiences. This means that those children who do become apparent and available to researchers, are very unlikely to be representative of trans children as a group. It can be speculated that they may be subject to selection by at least three filters; becoming apparent to their parents, their parents not being happy to give their child the unconditional love they need to seek 'treatment' and subsequently being sufficiently determined to have a cisgender or heterosexual child to wish to subject them to psychologically coercive pressure to conform to the gender originally assigned to them at birth.

Of course, cultural cisgenderism should be regarded as part of society's perception of gender as largely essential. Messner's (2000) observations of the way socially constructed gender differences in young children were attributed as essential by adults suggests that the majority perception of gender as essential persists quite strongly, indeed even trans people who campaign for trans human rights appear to consider essentialism as one of the core reasons for the existence of trans people:

‘There are probably many reasons for the increase in prevalence, including the increased dumping of environmental pollutants known as *endocrine disruptors*...’¹

Dana Beyer, Executive Director of Gender Rights Maryland, 7 July 2013.

The effects of cisgenderism, and in particular one of its constituent elements, essentialism, represent one of the many further hurdles for trans children and young trans people to overcome in addition to the problems that Sedgwick argues LGB people are likely to face in coming out. Of course, the above quotation suggests that trans people are also affected by cisgenderism, even as adults, and so, as children, it is likely to be much more difficult to become intelligible to oneself given the veiled nature of this process.

However, it is also important to consider the effects of the cultural feedback loop created by the influence of professional cisgenderism on cultural cisgenderism. The perception given by this research, that, in most cases gender non-conforming behaviour in children is considered a ‘phase’ suggests that the misconceptions propagated by some psychologists and neurologists are likely to form part of the wider cisgenderist culture and as such could be argued to represent a threat to the well-being of most trans children through its contribution to the maintenance of cultural cisgenderist ideology in wider society.

It is also particularly important to reiterate that cisgenderism is a culture/ideology that affects everyone. It affects the perceptions of trans people by others, and it disproportionately appears to affect trans children and young trans people. However, Butler’s characterisation of femininity as ‘the forcible citation of a norm.’ (Butler 1990) represents an indication that cisgenderism also affects those who do not identify as transgender, but which also acts to introduce a systemic element of coercion into the way women have to behave. Cisgenderism takes this

further by arguing that this element of ‘forcibility’ is present for all genders not merely for feminine ones. Furthermore cisgenderism’s binary gendered coercive functioning results in those whose gender is different from that assigned at birth becoming delegitimised, unintelligible to others and to themselves and often systematically prevented from expressing their genders in any way at all. It is important to recognise that cultural cisgenderism is something that affects everyone both in terms of coercive restrictions on their own behaviour and appearance, and coercive misgendering and delegitimation of those whose genders are not conventionally consistent with those attributed at birth.

It is imperative, therefore, that professional communities, whether teachers, psychologists, doctors or others, acknowledge professional cisgenderism within their communities of practice and start to challenge its negative influence. The culture of cisgenderism within the wider community represents a more profound issue, and one, which cannot be so easily addressed. However, identifying cultural cisgenderism as a weakly discursively saturated culture/ideology may represent a means by which to resolve this issue. Weak discursive saturation represents one of its most significant characteristics so the obvious question to raise would be whether or not it can exist as a relatively strongly discursively saturated practice. In other words if cisgenderism becomes an issue that is talked about more widely, will that in itself result in it becoming less of a problem? In any case the concept of cisgenderism and how it affects both transgender people and cisgender people needs to be more widely discussed, and instances of cisgenderism more clearly identified, in particular where they result in specific problems or disadvantages for individual trans people or groups of trans people. In a school context for example it is not sufficient for teachers to act to prevent transphobic bullying; one of the

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dana-beyer/gender-transition-in-children_b_3530335.html

issues that is starting to be considered more, schools need to consider how cisgenderism affects their treatment of trans children.

Recent examples of cisgenderism in schools in the UK have included the following:

- Lining up children in separate girl-boy lines.
- Refusing to allow trans girls to use the toilets of their choice or forcing them to use a toilet adapted for people with disabilities.
- Teachers refusing to address transgender children by the name of their acquired gender, even when it is their legal name.
- Headteachers refusing to discuss, with the legal representatives of the parents, allowing transgender children the right to express their gender in school.
- Trans children who are bullied not being supported adequately by the school.
- Trans children who come out as trans being regarded as the problem.
- Schools refusing to recognise trans children's human rights under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.
- Parents of other children abusing trans children and the issue not being taken up by the school.
- Separate school uniforms for girls and boys preventing trans children from dressing in their real gender.
- Schools trying to remove from the school roll trans children who no longer come to school because of bullying.
- Schools treating trans children significantly differently from other children of their gender.
- Schools attempting to force trans children to present and behave in the manner of a different gender.
- Schools not adhering to the spirit and/or the letter of the Equality Act 2010.
- Schools not having equality and diversity policies that include gender reassignment.

- Schools providing staff training on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues but not trans issues.²

All of the above examples of trans children being treated less favourably represent examples of discrimination against trans children that have occurred in primary or secondary schools in the UK. Of course, it is possible that some of this represents direct transphobia on the part of senior staff in schools. However, it would appear that trans children occupy one of two default positions in relation to school. Firstly, the circumstances of the majority of trans children is that they are non-apparent, and no-one in the school is aware that they are trans. Because they are unable to be themselves and feel a strong sense of guilt and possibly self-hatred because they are trans this is unlikely to be a good situation to be in from an educational perspective and is likely to result in their underperformance in school. Secondly, the circumstances of those who are openly trans is that they are likely to be unable to remain in school because of a combination of cisgenderism and transphobia. Either way the UK education system would seem to be failing trans children on a huge scale. This failure is compounded by a lack of recognition that this failure is occurring, and that action needs to be taken to remedy it.

Trans children, as with all children, are supposedly protected by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989), to which the UK is a signatory, yet their human rights are routinely denied, in particular Principles, 1, 2, 9 and 10. As an indirect result of these breaches, principle 7 (the right to an education) would also appear to be regularly breached. If this were occurring to any other groups there would be a huge outcry.

² Unfortunately it is not possible to reveal the exact details of these occurrences without breaching the individual children's rights to privacy, however, they have all occurred between 2008 and 2013 in schools in the UK.

Conclusion

The weakly discursively saturated nature of cultural cisgenderism results in it being a culture or ideology that is difficult to recognise. This in turn renders it hard to understand its effects. However, it would seem that cisgenderism affects young trans people and trans children to a greater extent than most others in that it prevents the majority of them from becoming intelligible to themselves and to those around them. The strongly institutionalised nature of cisgenderism combines with this to make it difficult for most people to understand that things they have considered to be taken from granted and to be naturally occurring are in fact socially constructed and harmful or exclusionary for trans people, even though there is no direct or overt intention to be

transphobic or to harm trans people. Just as Cary Grant had to struggle against a system not designed for his individual circumstances, but which clearly was not intended to discriminate against heterosexual couples and prevent them from getting married, so cisgenderism represents a system against which trans people, especially trans children, have to struggle. The difference is that the sexist nature of the War Brides Act is easily exposed and relatively harmless. This is not the case for cisgenderism. It's influence is very widespread, difficult to identify and its consequences can, and very often do, blight the entire lives of trans people, or worse.

Correspondence

Natacha Kennedy

Goldsmiths, University of London.



References

- Ansara, G. & Hegarty, P. (2011). Cisgenderism in psychology: Pathologising and misgendering children from 1999 to 2008. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 3(2), 137–160.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble*. New York: Routledge.
- Drescher, J. & Byne, W. (2012). Gender Dysphoric/Gender Variant (GD/GV) children and adolescents: Summarising what we know and what we have yet to learn. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 59(3), 501–510.
- De Vries, A., Noens, I., Cohen-Kettenis, P., Van Berckelaer-Onnes, I. & Dorelijers, T. (2010). Autism spectrum disorders in gender dysphoric children and adolescents. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 40(8), 930–936.
- Drummond, K., Bradley, S., Peterson-Badali, M. & Zucker, K. (2008). A follow-up study of girls with gender identity disorder. *Developmental Psychology*, 44, 34–45.
- Dowling, P. (2009). *Sociology as method: Beyond the forensics of culture, text and knowledge*. Rotterdam: Sense.
- Geertz, C. (1973). Ideology as a cultural system. In C. Geertz, *Interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Hawks, H. (1949). *I Was A Male War Bride*.
- Jones, R., Wheelwright, S., Farrell, K., Martin, E., Green, R., Di Ceglie, D. & Baron-Cohen, S. (2011). Brief report: Female-to-Male transsexual people and autistic traits. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 42, 301–306.
- Kaveney, R. (1979). *Janice Raymond: The transsexual empire*. Originally published in *Gay News*. <http://rozk.livejournal.com/173751.html>
- Kennedy, N (2012). Transgender children: More than a theoretical challenge. Updated version 2012 – originally published in *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, 7(2). [http://transkids.synthasite.com/resources/NatachaKennedy%20\(2010\)%20-%20updated%20version.pdf](http://transkids.synthasite.com/resources/NatachaKennedy%20(2010)%20-%20updated%20version.pdf)
- Messner, M. (2000). Barbie girls versus sea monsters: Children constructing gender. *Gender and Society*, 14(6).
- Paechter, C. (2007). *Being boys, being girls: Learning masculinities and femininities*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Sedgwick, E. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Simon, H. (1976). From substantive to procedural rationality. In S. Latsis (Ed.), *Method and appraisal in economics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stone, S. (1991). The empire strikes back: A post-transsexual manifesto. In K. Straub & J. Epstein (Eds.) (1992), *Body guards: The cultural politics of gender ambiguity*. New York: Routledge.
- Strang, J. et al. (2012). *Increased rates of gender identity issues among children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders*. International Society for Autism Research. <https://imfar.confex.com/imfar/2012/webprogram/Paper10934.html>
- United Nations (1989). *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>
- Williams, W. (1992). *The spirit and the flesh: Sexual diversity in American Indian culture*. New York: Beacon.
- Zucker, K. (1985). Cross-gender identified children. In B.W. Steiner (Ed.), *Gender dysphoria: Development, research, management* (pp.75–174). New York: Plenum Press.

2012 Postgraduate Prize Winner

Assimilation or invisibility: Lesbian identity, representation and the use of gender-neutral terms

Rebecca Swenson

This paper examines what currency the term 'lesbian' has in a contemporary cultural context, and how the use of different terms, and their perceived meanings, impact on the sense of self of women who define as lesbian. It also explores whether assimilation through the use of gender-neutral terms, such as 'gay', 'homosexual' and 'queer', represents an inclusion of lesbian identity with gay male identity, or whether it signifies a 'non-seeing' of lesbian identity.

A mixed methodological approach was used; semi-structured interviews were conducted with six women who defined as having a same-sex attraction, alongside a content analysis of The Guardian and The Times over a 12-week period to explore representation of lesbians and the use of gender-neutral terms. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach was used to analyse the interviews. Across the two newspapers, there were 23 per cent explicit references to lesbians, 31 per cent to gay men and 46 per cent gender-neutral references. However, a closer examination of the articles revealed that 41 per cent of the gender-neutral terms referred solely to men. The five master themes revealed a complex negotiation and policing of the term 'lesbian' and that while gender-neutral terms can represent a way for lesbians to assimilate into heteronormative environments, they can render lesbian specificity invisible.

Whilst gender-neutral terms such as 'queer' and 'gay' can deflect focus from the stereotypes and sexualisation of lesbian identity, it is vital that consideration should be given to what the consequences are for lesbian representation and visibility and whether there is a need for strategic essentialism of lesbianism to ensure political efficacy.

DISCOURSES, including those of pathology, politics and desire, have all been employed to explain and represent the essence of lesbian identity. Yet it has been argued that lesbian sexuality is signified not through its visibility but through the multiple forms of silence that exist around it (Halberstam, 1998). Indeed, the absence of lesbianism from historical criminal codes pertaining to homosexuality exemplifies how the discursive representation of lesbianism has been more regulated than its actual practice (Ussher, 1997). Such inconspicuousness is also apparent in cultural representations; a study of almost 40 hours of BBC 1 programmes noted 29 seconds of programming referencing lesbians, which

accounted for only 21 per cent of the total portrayal of gay people (Guasp, 2010).

In the 1970s, lesbian feminists advocated for a move away from the gender-neutral term 'gay' to the gender-inclusive term 'lesbian' to ensure that lesbian specificity was not ignored (Marinucci, 2010). However, this has not necessarily resulted in a parity of representation, for example, a study of the *New York Times* revealed that gay men received twice as much coverage as lesbians (Ragusa, 2005). Gender-neutral terms appear to prevail, more recently with the employment of 'queer' as an umbrella term for marginalised sexualities (Jagose, 1996). Queer, as a term and as a theory, arguably further complicates and problematises

lesbian visibility by critiquing the very notion of identity itself. In arguing that gender, like sexuality, is socially constructed, the queer theorist Butler (1990) questioned the very notion of lesbian identity as being a stable identity that can be subscribed to.

For some women, 'queer' provided liberation from the essentialist view that a lesbian identity was fixed and furthermore, in critiquing the notion of gender, it provided a non-gender specific identity category (Halberstam, 1998). Ironically, such an emphasis on gender-based politics has called into question whether 'lesbian' as an identity category is 'queer' enough to qualify for admission within the collective of marginalised sexualities that 'queer' represents (Humphrey, 1993). Yet Grosz (1995, p.250) argues that 'queer' should acknowledge the specificity of gender, and to ignore it is to do so at its 'own peril'. However, rather than ignoring gender, it has been purported that 'queer', like the gender-neutral 'gay', actually conceals a generic masculinity (Castle, 1993). Walker (2009) argues that the 'queer utopian project' has not yet rendered the need for separate identity groups obsolete and calls for more research into lesbian communities given that how they are currently envisioned will be shaping the future constitution of lesbianism. Given the precarious position of lesbian identity in terms of its visibility and acceptance within 'queer', therefore, the question is posed of whether gender-neutral terms such as 'gay' and 'queer' mark an assimilation of female sexuality or an erasure of it. Furthermore, attention needs to be paid to how lesbians negotiate their identity within such complex parameters (Farquhar, 2000).

Method

A mixed methodological approach was used to explore how lesbians negotiate their sexuality and the level of visibility afforded to lesbians.

Newspaper analysis

The Guardian, *The Observer*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* were analysed over a

12-week period (14 June 2010 to 5 September 2010) using content analysis. Articles were coded by section and the terms used to represent sexual orientation, such as 'lesbian' and 'gay man' and gender-neutral terms including 'gay' and 'homosexual'. If gender-neutral terms referred only to men, this was also recorded.

Inter-rater reliability was obtained by using a second coder; using Holsti's formula (Neuendorf, 2002), reliability was .96 (35 per cent of sample).

Interviews

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analytical (IPA) approach was used to enable an in-depth understanding of how women who have a same-sex sexual orientation perceive their sexuality and how this impacts on their sense of self, specifically within the context of gender-neutral terms such as 'queer' and 'gay'. Women were recruited through opportunistic sampling and through an advert sent to volunteers at a lesbian and gay charity. The only inclusion criteria was that women identified as having same-sex sexual desire and lived in the south-east of England. All six participants were Caucasian, aged between 32 and 63 years, and represented a sufficiently homogenous sample for the purposes of IPA (Smith et al., 2009). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore perceptions of self and identity, terminology used and their views on how their sexuality is described culturally, alongside a sentence completion task (Padesty, 1994) to obtain an overview of cognitions concerning self, others and the world in relation to their sexual orientation. Interviews lasted 45 to 60 minutes and were tape-recorded for verbatim transcription and analysis. Emergent themes were listed and clustered according to commonalities. The study received ethical approval from the university and informed consent was obtained from participants, who have been given pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

My identity as a lesbian, as well as my feminist beliefs, shaped not just my interpretation

of the participants' accounts but also the questions asked during the interviews. To support the themes identified an independent researcher reviewed the themes extracted. I knew of some of the participants prior to interview and am mindful that this could have tempered participants' responses.

Analysis

Analysis of interviews

The master themes identified from the interviews were: (1) lesbian identity; (2) wider lesbian stereotypes and self; (3) sexuality and identity formation; (4) self in relation to gender-neutral terms; and (5) representation in the media. For the purpose of this paper, selected examples have been used from the data.

Lesbian identity

This theme captures the participants' relationship to the term 'lesbian'. To different extents, the participants felt that their sexuality was a significant part of their identity, and responses to the completion task, 'Lesbians are...', suggested a positive sense of self-identity. Responses included 'wonderful' (Sarah), 'fantastic [...] interesting' (Sue) and 'happy, strong [...] funny [...] really powerful' (Emma). Kate had a more critical response of 'difficult'.

Wider lesbian stereotypes and self

This theme captures the participants' relationship to the term 'lesbian' and the way in which they appropriate it to describe their sexuality. Whilst most participants positively self-identified as a lesbian, their feelings around the use of the term appears more complex in that it has a potential to disrupt in a way 'gay' would not. Emma suggested that it was the reaction of others that deterred her from describing herself as a lesbian to others:

E: I think it's quite a hard word to go in and it's a word I love and I use it all the time but I think sometime one has to work your way to acceptance and acceptance is not like slapping people in the face with something.

Like Emma, Vicky and Sue also described how they changed their terminology depending on who they were with. Some felt a sense of responsibility for the impact coming out has on others. For example, Kate stated she did not use the term 'lesbian' with straight friends as 'I know that I might make them feel a bit awkward'. In contrast, Sarah saw it as a political necessity to come out as a lesbian, though felt that she was in a minority of women who use the term:

S: [...] whatever happened to lesbians – I am a lesbian [...] Why is the word 'lesbian' so unacceptable? [...] I don't understand it at all.

There was a sharp incongruity between the confidence that the participants had in describing their sexuality and how they believed it would be negatively construed by others. This was consistent with previous research that has highlighted a schism between how lesbians perceived themselves and how heterosexuals perceived lesbians (Markowe, 1996). The stigmatised stereotypes employed by participants when describing how 'the world' perceived lesbians ('sexless', 'unattractive', 'dull', 'boring') influenced how all but one of them negotiated their sexuality with others.

Four of the women interviewed stated that when describing their sexuality to others they would use the term 'gay' rather than 'lesbian'. The term 'gay' was unanimously viewed by all but one of the participants as a 'softer' term than lesbian (Sarah, Emma and Vicky) and Kate described it as 'sexier' and elaborated that 'lesbian' has 'too much political stuff behind it'. Farquhar (2000) has contested that the term 'gay' is embraced by lesbians as it is perceived to erase gender. This study suggests, however, that it was not so much that 'gay' was believed to represent a gender-neutral way of describing lesbianism, rather, it was seen to counter the masculinity associated with the stereotype of the lesbian. The butch lesbian tended to be perceived as 'other' and significantly, a number of the participants assumed a pseudo-heterosexual vantage point when

discussing the issue, for example, by qualifying that they had a 'straight' look. Even Sarah, who had a strong attachment to the term 'lesbian', described 'lesbian' as having been '*off-putting*' when she initially came out because of its butch connotations. This was also evident in the responses to the completion task, 'Other people see lesbians as...', which largely reflected the stereotype of the sexless, masculinised lesbian:

E: [...] *oh um women in sensible shoes who have cats and drink lots of tea.*

K: [...] *unstable, (laughs) um, kind of stout and [...] sensible shoe wearing.*

Many participants expressed their anxiety at their sexuality being read through their appearance. Rachel described how her colleagues would have '*more of a problem*' with her sexuality if she conformed to the lesbian stereotype. Kate described how she felt self-conscious about looking like a lesbian and that her inability to 'pass' resulted in a loss of control as people could read her sexuality '*whether I chose to disclose it or not*'. This suggests the butch figure visibly personified a perspective of lesbianism rendered 'other' by society to such an extent that even lesbians want to distance themselves from it (Healey, 1996) and lends further support to suggestions that there is a policing of sexuality from within a lesbian constituency itself (Farquhar, 2000).

To avoid stigmatisation, gay men and lesbians often attempt to 'pass' as heterosexual (Kaufman & Johnson, 2004), however, the participants largely did not employ such tactics. Rather, they adapted the way that they disclosed their sexuality by using the term 'gay' rather than 'lesbian' when coming out. This fits with Markowe's (1996, p.86) argument that in order to minimise the 'threatening position of being a lesbian', a coping strategy such as compromising the way in which identity is defined may be employed by lesbians when coming out.

Sexuality and identity formation

This theme explores how the participants understood the formation of their sexuality.

Three of the participants described their sexuality in essentialist terms, however, all the women interviewed described their sexuality in spatial terms that orientated them, for example, a '*journey*' (Vicky) or a '*path*' (Kate, Rachel) and Sarah described how her sexuality has developed in a specific '*direction*'. Sue described coming out as a '*positive feeling to know where I was*'. Such a construction cannot happen in seclusion, with the sense of self emerging from many forms of language exchanges (Burr, 2003). Indeed, all participants highlighted the significance of cultural signposts in defining their sexuality and a number discussed the role other lesbians played; Sarah asked other lesbians if she were a lesbian and Vicky reflected on how she may have come out earlier had she known other lesbians.

Kate described how she is '*more aware*' of her sexuality when in a heterosexual environment and Rachel noted her colleagues '*definitely think I'm unusual*'. However, Sarah felt that the problematic relationship she perceived others had with the term 'lesbian' negated her sense of self:

S: *I'm not meant to have any sexuality, to be an older lesbian is to be non-sexual. I do a wipe-out of myself when I say I'm a lesbian.*

I don't have any impact on the world.

Sarah felt that her lesbian identity was given meaning through her association with other lesbians. In describing how she now socialised with women who described themselves as 'queer', Sarah spoke of a sense of loss and how '*she found it very hard*'. Vicky felt that the lack of lesbian community was reflected in the dearth of lesbian venues in comparison to gay men ('*what have we got?*'). Emma felt that the diversity of identities on the gay scene is 'an interesting challenge' for lesbians as that, rather than there being one community, there are now multiple.

Self in relation to gender-neutral terms

The term 'queer' was perceived to be gendered male, recalling Castle's (1993) suspicion that 'queer' actually conceals a generic masculinity. The identities that

'queer' purported to represent were seen as diluting the political efficacy, and clarity of sense of self, that came with lesbian identity. Arguably, the political non-conformity of 'queer' and its 'fighting to protect difference, rather than conformity' (Claassen, 2005) also presented, for some participants, a barrier to the assimilation they desired. Although Emma believed the term was '*pushing the community forward*' in how it represented a wider range of identities such as transgender, it was not a term she identified with. Similarly, Rachel saw 'queer' as representing people whose sexualities are '*further away on the spectrum*' than her own and as such prevented her from identifying with it since it seemed to '*encompass more things than I think I am*'. This view that 'queer' can be perceived to be exclusionary by the identities it intends to represent is resonant of Weiss's (2004) argument that transgender and bisexual people also purport to feel excluded from the term. Queer's perceived fluidity of identity was in many cases incongruous with the stable sense of self that participants felt that they had through lesbian identification. In this sense, queer's resistance to identity categories seems to be at odds with lesbian feminism which disregarded difference between women in order to represent a cohesive and shared experience (Segal, 1999). Stein (2010) notes that 'queer' advocates the provisional nature of identities, however, this too seems to be incompatible with the metaphors from the participants' accounts of lesbian identity representing a route or conclusion of a journey that orientated a sense of self.

Some participants were attracted by queer's non-specificity regarding gender and sexuality binaries. For one participant, Kate, queer identity had the potential to be liberating because she viewed it as not defining her by who she was attracted to, or had sexual relations with:

K: [...] it's sort of looking at sexuality and not just saying it's about who you fancy and sleep with but also feeling like it's something separate from the norm and convention.

In other words, the specificity of her gender and sexual orientation can be veiled through the abstruse identification of 'queer'. This affording of privacy was a theme identified by Ussher and Mooney-Somers (2000, p.193), whose research into narratives of members of the Lesbian Avengers revealed 'the lack of sexual privacy associated with taking up a lesbian identity [...] as a justification for not coming out'.

Representation in the media

The theme of 'otherness', with lesbians viewed as '*outsiders*' (Vicky) and '*invisible, irrelevant*' (Vicky), was reflected in how participants viewed the media representation of lesbianism. Invisibility was a significant theme, with participants remarking that lesbians are '*largely ignored*' (Kate) and that the level of representation is '*pathetic*' (Sarah). Rachel spoke of the need to '*to seek*' lesbian representation out and the obligation she felt to watch any representation. There was also a general feeling that gay men are represented more frequently than lesbians and that within the written press, gender-neutral terms only represented men:

K: I think you do see that in the press though the word 'gay' will be used but actually as you continue to read what they're actually talking about is gay men so it can be quite frustrating and feel as though it's talking about gay people as a group but actually it's just focused on men.

Kate believed that the camp sensibility adopted by certain entertainers was a more acceptable form of gay representation, stating '*that camp sort of fancying everyone thing is part of those male acts*'. However, she felt that a lesbian entertainer '*playing up her sexuality [...] would not wash as well*'.

It is challenging for lesbians to escape abjection through cultural representation, either through stigmatised and offensive representation or through, as Halperin and Traub (2009) argue, the unrealistic and overly glamorous representations of lesbians that can also cause abjection through the non-identification they engender. There was

a feeling that stories that included lesbians invariably focused on their sexuality; Sarah felt that representation did not go much beyond *'two women who have a relationship'*. Kate felt that lesbian characters would end up sleeping with a male character so their sexuality was ultimately not even *'part of their identity'*. The representation of lesbians was seen to be unrealistically glamorous with few *'proper looking'* lesbians. It was noted that there were few representations of butch women and, if there were, it was for *'comedic value'* (Kate). The absence of butch lesbians suggested that the media are unsure how to represent positively a figure so susceptible to stigmatisation. For example, Ron Liddle's column in *The Times* (25 July 2010) wrote about 'turning' lesbians and lesbians 'who wear dungarees and don't wash'. Similarly, in *The Sunday Times*, Gill described a lesbian television presenter in pejorative terms such as a 'dyke', 'muscular' and 'a big lesbian' (25 July 2010). Such representation reflected the participants' belief that news stories about lesbians were *'back-stabbing'* (Emma), *'derogatory'* (Vicky) and *'negative'* (Sue, Rachel).

Content analysis of newspapers

The participants' belief that lesbians were poorly represented or ignored in the press, and that gay men were represented more frequently was reflected in the analysis of the newspapers; of the references pertaining to gay people 23 per cent were explicit references to women, 31 per cent to men and 46

per cent generic references. The question remains of how such invisibility and wider negative perceptions of lesbian identity impact on sense of self. This is arguably reflected in the participants' lack of confidence in articulating their lesbian identity, something that Kate identified when she queried whether her reluctance to use the term 'lesbian' was due to internalised homophobia.

Gender-neutral terms across all newspapers comprised 46 per cent of all references about sexuality; this was higher than explicitly gay male or lesbian references. On closer examination of the context, however, 41 per cent of these references were referring solely to men (see Table 1). For example, newspaper reviews for the film *Gay Sex* in the 1970s contained the gender-neutral term 'gay', referring to 'gay promiscuity' in *The Sunday Times* ('DVD release', 2010) and 'gay documentary' in *The Observer* ('DVD release', 2010), yet when the film's content was explored further, it was clear the film and reviews were referring to gay men. This finding fitted with participants' accounts of how they would read the terms 'gay' and 'homosexual' as referring to men. It is unclear whether, in such instances, journalists are unaware of the gender-neutral quality of the term 'gay', or that the representation of women is ignored, or indeed, that it is a combination of both. Gamson (1998) suggests that various hierarchies, including gender and sexuality, are culturally maintained through invisibility and

Table 1: Breakdown of gender-neutral references.

	<i>The Times</i> and <i>The Sunday Times</i> (%)	<i>The Guardian</i> and <i>The Observer</i> (%)
Total references within articles	313	370
Total gender neutral references	139 (44.4)	174 (47.1)
Actual gender-neutral references	79 (56.8)	105 (60.3)
References in gender neutral terms that refer to men	60 (43.2)	69 (39.7)

references the argument for strategic essentialism within the context of cultural representation. With the specificity of lesbian experience being ignored, lesbians arguably face possible discrimination based on gender as well as sexuality.

Conclusion

Language, as understood through the theoretical lens of social constructionism, constitutes a social reality (Burr, 2003) and this study has highlighted the need to be cognisant of the affordances and constraints that gender-neutral, or more inclusive terms such as 'queer', have on women who identify as lesbian, and the importance of improved media visibility. It does not, given the findings of this study, seem fanciful to speculate whether 'lesbian' as a term will become so steeped in stigma and usurped by gender-neutral terms that may provide linguistic efficacy, but ultimately privilege male sexuality, that it could fade from use. The analysis of newspapers revealed a general exclusion of lesbians, with the use of gender-neutral terms serving to mask this invisibility. The assimilation of female sexuality at the cost of its specificity was also apparent in the inter-

views, with participants describing how gender-neutral terms enabled them to assimilate into heteronormative environments. As such, the study is arguably resonant of Markowe's (1996) assertion that the lesbian figure has an agency that can unsettle heteronormative beliefs and systems. Further, such findings recall the argument of whether a strategic essentialism is needed to ensure specificity and cultural visibility (Gamson, 1998).

The implications of gender-neutral language and cultural visibility on lesbian identity warrant further study. It would be interesting to expand the scope of the study in terms of media analysed, including lesbian and gay media. It would also be beneficial to interview a more diverse sample of participants, namely a broader range of age and cultural backgrounds, in order to elicit distinctly different perceptions of sexuality and identity.

Correspondence

Rebecca Swenson

Birkbeck College, University of London.
rebeccaswenson@hotmail.com

References

- Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Castle, T. (1993). *The apparitional lesbian: Female homosexuality and modern culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Claassen, C. (2005). *Whistling women. A study of the lives of older lesbians*. New York: The Haworth Press.
- Farquhar, C. (2000). Lesbian in a post-lesbian world? Policing identity, sex and image. *Sexualities*, 3, 219–236.
- Gamson, J. (1998). Publicity traps: Television talk shows and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender visibility. *Sexualities*, 1(1), 11–41.
- Gill, A.A. (2010). TV review. *The Sunday Times*, 25 July.
- Grosz, E. (1995). *Space, time and perversion*. London: Routledge.
- Guasp, A. (2010). *Unseen on screen: Gay people on youth TV*. London: Stonewall.
- Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female masculinity*. London: Duke University Press.
- Halperin, D.M. & Traub, V. (2009). Beyond gay pride. In D.M. Halperin & V. Traub (Eds.), *Gay shame, gay shame* (pp.2–40) London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Healey, E. (1996). *Lesbian sex wars*. London: Virago.
- Humphrey, J.C. (1993). To queer or not to queer a lesbian and gay group? Sexual and gendered politics at the turn of the century. *Sexualities*, 2, 223–246.
- Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: An introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kaufman, J.K. & Johnson, C. (2004). Stigmatised individuals and the process of identity. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 45(4), 807–833.
- Liddle, R. (2010). 'Your big mistake, Mr Huhne, was not being gay.' *The Sunday Times*, 26 July.
- Marinucci, M. (2010). *Feminism is queer: The intimate connection between queer and feminist theory*. London: Zed Books.
- Markowe, L.A. (1996). *Redefining the self: Coming out as a lesbian*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Neuendorf, K. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook*. California: Sage.
- Padesky, C.A. (1994). Schema change processes in cognitive therapy. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 1, 267–278.
- Ragusa, A.T. (2005). Social change and the corporate construction of gay markets in the *New York Times*' advertising business news. *Media, Culture & Society*, 27(5), 653–676.
- Segal, L. (1999). *Why feminism?* New York: Columbia University Press.
- Smith, J., Flowers, P. & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*. London: Sage.
- Stein, A. (2010). The incredible shrinking lesbian world and other queer conundra. *Sexualities*, 13(1), 21–32.
- The Observer* (2010). 'Gay sex in the 1970s' (DVD release), 4 July.
- The Sunday Times* (2010). 'Gay Sex in the 1970s' (DVD release), 4 July.
- Ussher, J.M. (1997). Framing the sexual 'other': The regulation of lesbian and gay sexuality. In J.M. Ussher (Ed.), *Body talk: The material and discursive regulation of sexuality, madness and reproduction* (pp.131–158). London: Routledge.
- Ussher, J.M. & Mooney-Somers, J. (2000). Negotiating desire and sexual subjectivity: Narratives of young lesbian avengers. *Sexualities*, 3(2), 183–200.
- Walker, B. (2009). Imagining the future of lesbian community: The case of online lesbian communities and the issue of trans. *Continuum*, 23(6), 921–935.
- Weiss, J.T. (2004). GL vs. BT: The archaeology of biphobia and transphobia in the US lesbian and gay community. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 3, 25–55.

Gender and BDSM¹ revisited: Reflections on a decade of researching kink communities

Meg Barker

Editor's Comment: At the 2013 Psychology of Women Section Annual Conference, Meg Barker gave a thought-provoking account of the complexities of consent in sexual relationships. In this paper, she reflects on how her thinking around issues relating to gender and sex have changed through her decade of work in this area.

This paper reflects upon the ways in which my understandings of BDSM and gender have shifted over the past 10 years of studying kink communities. I begin with my early work on women who identified with both BDSM and feminism, and how they presented their positions. Then I touch upon ethical issues of how we research precarious communities, and our role as researchers in making certain narratives available or not. Following this, I summarise an analysis of a BDSM blog which complicates common views of female domination, and raises important questions about gender in kink communities. Finally I mention my most recent work on shifting understandings of consent within kink communities, and how these are in line with certain strands of feminist thought, pointing to important directions for future research. Throughout the paper I endeavour to draw out implications both for research practice and for how we understand the operation of gender and power in kink communities and beyond.

Keywords: BDSM; kink; feminism; gender; power; consent.

THIS YEAR I was deeply flattered to be invited to present a keynote talk at the Psychology of Women Section (POWS) Annual Conference, speaking about my work on consent in *Fifty Shades of Grey* and the BDSM blogosphere (Barker, forthcoming, 2013). Looking back I realised that the last time I spoke at a POWS conference was in 2004 in Brighton when Ani Ritchie and I presented some of our qualitative work on women in sexual communities. Doing a rough calculation I figured this meant that I started researching these areas back in 2003: a full decade ago now.

It seemed a good time to reflect on how my understandings, and research practices, in these areas have shifted over the past 10 years. This was brought home to me particularly at POWS 2013 when the talk that

I attended before my own referenced the first research publication that Ani and I produced based on our kink study (Ritchie & Barker, 2005). Jemma Tosh presented a very thoughtful paper about feminist perspectives on BDSM (Tosh, 2013) which cited that publication a couple of times. I found myself smiling wryly at the simplistic understandings of agency and gender which I'd held back then, but also – thankfully – still feeling proud of the quote which Jemma reproduced from that article.

Hopefully the current paper will be a useful summary of the territory around gender and BDSM for those who are unfamiliar with this area, and an interesting reflection on researching these matters for those – like me – whose focus is on studying such sexual communities.

¹ BDSM stands for Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, and Sadomasochism.

Choice and fantasy/reality: Defending women BDSMers

Back in 2003 the prevailing culture was one of pathologisation, stigmatisation, and criminalisation of BDSM. None of these things have gone away entirely, however, things have certainly shifted in the last 10 years. The new edition of the *American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5)* has retained sadism and masochism as categories but has delineated, much more clearly, between general BDSM practitioners and those who are regarded as 'disordered' because their interest in sadism or masochism causes distress or impairment². Legally, people can still be convicted in the UK for taking part in BDSM which causes injury that is more than 'transient and trifling' (Weait, 2007)³. However, BDSMers charged under the new extreme pornography legislation have been acquitted (Green, 2012). Finally, as we all know, the massive success of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* series has, at least somewhat, brought BDSM into mainstream cultural acceptance, although lines may still be policed between acceptable 'kinky fuckery' and 'real BDSM' (Barker, forthcoming, 2013).

As an activist-academic, my early writing on BDSM focused on challenging common myths and assumptions about BDSM (e.g. Barker, 2005; Barker, 2007; Barker, Gupta & Iantaffi, 2007; Barker, Iantaffi & Gupta, 2007), and both my research participants and I were clearly concerned with giving voice to experiences which demonstrated the problems with such views.

The focus group discussions that Ani Ritchie and I conducted (Ritchie & Barker, 2005), attempted to address, specifically, common perceptions of women members of sexual communities: particularly in relation to feminist debates in this area. The backdrop to this was, of course, the feminist

'sex wars' of the 1980s, which still bubble on today (Barker, 2013). BDSM was one of the key points of contestation in these 'wars' (Sullivan, 2003). Images and films from BDSM communities were often used by 'anti-porn' feminists, out of context, to demonstrate perceived problems with pornography as a whole (Vance, 1984). Linden, Pagano, Russell and Star's (1982) collection *Against Sadomasochism* argued that BDSM was inherently anti-feminist, that it was rooted in patriarchy, and that it supported rape culture through its eroticisation of the power differences between the genders. Even lesbian BDSM was regarded as perpetuating such problematic dynamics and as reflecting internalised homophobia. On the other side of the debate, activists and academics like Pat Califia and Gayle Rubin argued for a 'sex-positive' feminism which embraced BDSM, given the numbers of women BDSMers. They also criticised 'anti-porn' feminists for setting up new sex hierarchies which were as oppressive as the ones they were fighting against (Rubin, 1984).

Our research on women BDSMers challenged the perception of BDSM as inherently anti-feminist in similar ways to the female participants in Taylor and Ussher's (2001) previous critical psychological research on BDSM. Women spoke directly to the anti-BDSM feminist position highlighting:

1. the active and empowered position of dominant women in BDSM, counter to the heteronormative sexual script;
2. their sense that submitting in BDSM was an active choice and that the submissive, or bottom, held the power in the exchange through actively consenting and being able to stop at any time;
3. the differences between BDSM as a fantasy which plays with power dynamics, and the reality of structural gender inequalities in the world; and

² For more details of why even including sadism and masochism as paraphilias in the *DSM* is problematic see Kleinplatz and Moser (2007).

³ This is the case for both tops (those who provide sensation in the BDSM encounter) and bottoms (those who receive it). The latter can be convicted of aiding and abetting assault (on themselves).

4. the potential of BDSM to expose and undermine heteronormativity and gender inequality through a kind of play or parody.

Research participants acknowledged that gender imbalances were present everywhere, including in BDSM communities, and the BDSM was by no means inherently feminist. However, they argued strongly that the fact that women can be dominant, that submissive women *choose* to submit, and that BDSM play is distinct from reality, meant that it was possible to be a kinky feminist.

It seemed that we had successfully busted the myth that BDSM was antithetical to feminism. However, a set of challenges lay in wait for me which would have me questioning many of my own assumptions: about the value of myth-busting, and about simple understandings of agency and choice.

The ethics of BDSM research:

An interlude from gender

Following the publication of a few papers on BDSM, my relatively new friend and colleague, Darren Langdridge, suggested that we co-edit a book on BDSM (Barker & Langdridge, 2007). This was the start of a long and fruitful set of collaborations on sexuality projects which continues to this day.

Darren and I frequently disagree on things and we both get a lot out of our dialogues about these matters. This time the focus of our disagreement was ‘healing narratives’ of BDSM. As previously mentioned, one of the main things that I was publishing about BDSM at this time was a set of papers and chapters – often aimed at therapists and other practitioners – which explicitly challenged the circulating myths around BDSM. Such writing would, for example, present an overview of the research literature countering common claims that BDSM was abnormal, abusive, dangerous, anti-feminist, or a sign of mental illness (Barker, Gupta & Iantaffi, 2007; Barker, Iantaffi & Gupta, 2007). One of the ways in which myself – and my fellow authors – countered the idea that BDSM was pathological was to point to

emerging ‘healing narratives’ within BDSM communities whereby some BDSMers found their play to be therapeutic, or healing. For example, some people used BDSM to revisit abusive or oppressive situations of the past in order to gain power over those situations and their impact. Others felt that BDSM dynamics enabled them to try on new roles and experiences which were personally growthful. Some pointed to the stress relieving potentials of sensation play, or the release of control in BDSM. And some spoke about BDSM practices as a positive alternative to self-injury, akin to the trajectory in the film *Secretary* (an aspect of our data that Ani wrote about in detail – Ritchie, 2008).

Darren rightly pointed out that there was a risk that such ‘healing narratives’ could reinforce one of the common problematic assumptions about BDSM: that all BDSMers were mentally disordered. If BDSM was healing, didn’t that suggest that BDSMers *required* healing? This led us into a much wider conversation about the ethics of conducting research with sexual communities, given the potential and power of such research to (unwittingly) either resist or reinforce destructive narratives (Barker & Langdridge, 2009). This was particularly an issue in relation to research on precarious communities, like BDSM communities, which have yet to gain any real kind of citizenship, recognition or rights (Langdridge, forthcoming, 2013).

On reflection, perhaps our conversations also relate to wider problems with the ‘myth-busting’ form of academic/activist writing. In her new book on bisexuality, Shiri Eisner (2013) suggests that the strategy of going through each ‘myth’ about a sexual community and pointing out why it is incorrect is problematic because it implicitly accepts the assumptions behind each myth. For example, to argue that bisexuality isn’t a confusion, or promiscuous, or a phase, is to suggest that there is something wrong with being confused, promiscuous, or in process rather than having a fixed identity. Perhaps there are similar problems inherent in BDSM

myth-busting. Certainly Darren and I recognised the risk that myth-busting could reinforce a binary between BDSM as harmful versus healing, and pathological versus healthy (i.e. suggesting that it could only be one thing or the other). We will see shortly that myth-busting responses to the accusation that BDSM is anti-feminist, or inherently abusive, may be similarly problematic, in that the creation of a binary (totally true or totally untrue) may serve to conceal problematic gender dynamics and/or abuse behaviours.

Such reflections and conversations also got me thinking carefully about my research practices in these areas. I noticed a tendency of some critical psychological, and sociological, research around sexual communities to swing from being highly celebratory (as in my earlier writings) to highly critical. For example, writing on bisexuality, trans*, and non-monogamies seemed to either celebrate the radical potentials of such sexualities, genders, or relationship structures, or to criticise them, for example, for maintaining exclusions or aspects of normativity (Barker, Richards & Bowes-Catton, 2012). Around this time I noticed some problematic features of BDSM communities in my engagement with them, but I did not want to be another academic swinging from celebratory to critical. Also I was very mindful of the points Darren had raised about the ethics of writing critically about precarious communities.

It was around this time that an opportunity came along which enabled me to write about BDSM and gender in just the balanced manner which I had been looking for.

Female domination: Just for me(n)?⁴

I had been organising the Critical Sexology⁵ seminars with Lisa Downing for some years at this point. Like Darren, Lisa is another person who has challenged me in useful ways which have transformed my thinking. For example, she pointed out to me the risks of

self-disclosure around sexuality slipping into a confessional which reproduces the sense that something is requiring of explanation, as well as the notion of fixed sexual identities (Barker, 2006). Lisa was excited about a blog she'd come across – at a time when blogs were a fairly recent phenomenon – called *Bitchy Jones's Diary*. In this blog a dominatrix, Bitchy, wrote about her experiences and also about the problems she saw with the wider BDSM community which she was part of. Lisa suggested that we put together a Critical Sexology seminar and related journal special issue reflecting on this blog in various ways.

I suggested to Ros Gill that we might write something together on this topic. I was aware of Ros's work around sexual subjectification: her work for recent shifts in mainstream culture towards women's sexuality being presented as autonomous and empowering, despite appearing much like previous representations of women as the objects of men's fantasies (Gill, 2003, 2006). This idea had provided a very useful challenge to my previous assumptions that people – women in particular – had easy and transparent access to their desires, and straightforward agency to choose what to do sexually. The idea that these things are more complicated, with pressures limiting our freedoms in various ways alongside a neoliberal imperative to demonstrate that we are freely choosing, fitted much more with my own experiences, and with those of the women I was working with clinically in sex therapy around this time (Barker, 2011).

It seemed that Bitchy was saying something similar to Ros, so the two of us had a discussion about our thoughts on the blog – rather like that one that Darren and I had had about healing narratives – and wrote this up as a paper. I was coming at it from a broadly pro-kink feminist perspective, and Ros from her approach of noticing the issues around sexual subjectification.

⁴ This subheading comes from the excellent paper by Dee Amy Chinn on post-feminist media which echoes many of Ros's arguments (Amy-Chinn, 2006).

⁵ www.criticalsexology.org.uk

Bitchy's reflections on the kink communities which she was accessing challenged the point which I had thought was relatively unproblematic in my previous research: that dominant kink femininities were clearly feminist and subverting of conventional gender roles and heteronormativity. Bitchy points out, over a series of passionate and amusing blog posts, the ways in which women in her kink communities (submissive or dominant) are expected to beautify themselves in ways that men (submissive or dominant) are not. She suggests that the practices that dominatrices mostly engage with are those that are desired by submissive men rather than those they want themselves. And she argues that the idea of female sexual fluidity reproduces the idea of women responding to men's desires rather than having desires of their own: that their only allowed pleasure is in *being* desired. She links this to the way in which women who are paid for sex (pro dommes and escorts) have become the cultural role models of what empowered female sexuality should look like, both within and outside her community.

Reflecting on these matters with Ros left me with a much more cautious take on matters of choice and agency. It also gave me a new research focus in terms of data: the blogosphere. Ros and I reflected that bloggers like Bitchy – embedded as they are in the communities they write about – frequently resist polarisation into the simplistic celebratory or critical stances that concerned me in some of the academic writing around BDSM (Barker, 2012). This, then, seemed an ideal form of data for the kinds of things that I wanted to say about BDSM, and other, communities.

Complicating consent:

Kink communities on abuse

This brings us to the work which I presented at POWS 2013 (Barker, forthcoming, 2013). Following the paper with Ros I became aware of an explosion of interest on the BDSM blogosphere in issues of abuse and consent⁶. People were saying something very different to the previous BDSM stance on this: that BDSM was not (ever) abuse, and that all BDSM was consensual. They were arguing that in defending against accusations of abuse (by anti-porn feminists in particular) BDSM communities had prevented people who did have experiences of abuse from speaking out. Also, BDSM mantras such as Safe, Sane, Consensual (SSC) and Risk Aware Consensual Kink (RACK), failed to recognise the complexities around consent negotiations, particularly where social power dynamics were present (such as differences in gender, age, race, class, etc.).

As with *Bitchy Jones's Diary*, I felt able to write about these issues academically now that they were being discussed publicly by people within the communities who were able to hold a tension between celebrating what was good about their communities and criticising what was problematic. I also felt that I could write about this in a way that continued my activist-academic project of focusing on what everyone could learn from sexual communities (as opposed to the conventional psychology project of trying to explain sexual 'abnormalities'). It seemed that the conversations about consent happening on the BDSM blogosphere had much to offer wider conversations about abuse which were springing up in the wake of the Jimmy Saville case as well as news reports regarding abuse in care homes and the like. Mindful of the concerns that Darren and I wrote about in relation to academics reproducing damaging narratives

⁶ As with the communities that Bitchy Jones was writing about, it is important to say here that the issues are not reflective of all BDSM communities. For example, in both Barker and Gill (2012) and Barker (forthcoming, 2013) we mention Robin Bauer's work on the dyke+queer BDSM communities in Germany who have recognised and addressed these issues around consent, gender and social power dynamics for many years.

around precarious sexual communities, I determined that these narratives were already in the public domain, and that those who were writing about them were keen that they reach wider audiences because of the previous problems around secrecy and silence in these areas.

Reading through the blogs I was able to track shifts from consent being located within autonomous, bounded individuals to communities which take collective responsibility for creating consent cultures. Standard victim blame narratives were challenged by shifting responsibilities onto perpetrators, and by focusing on consent as the key issue rather than the extent of trauma suffered by the survivor. But there was also a challenging of the idea that only certain people perpetrate abuse, to a sense that everybody could engage in non-consensual practices, and that everyone was responsible, collectively, for reflecting on their own behaviours, for calling out others, and for creating cultures in which it was possible to speak openly about abuse, to get support, and to educate others on consensual practice.

I also noticed how the operation of consent shifted from a focus on whether or not sex/play is enjoyed (in which case it is fine, consensual or not) to a no-means-no version of consent whereby anything is okay unless the bottom or submissive says 'no' or gives a safeword. This then shifted to yes-means-yes model of enthusiastic consent whereby consent and play was negotiated relationally between people with equally valued desires who needed to both/all enthusiastically decided to take part. And finally this developed into understandings which take account of intersecting social power dynamics which limit people's agency and capacity to say 'no' or 'yes'.

Finally I charted how the coverage of consent opened up from sex, to wider intimate relationships, to everyday micro dynamics, to macro structures and wider culture in general. The idea here, again, is that wider culture is 'consent toxic' with many inequalities between social groups

which impact on the degree of agency that individuals have, as well as everyday modes of relating which are non-consensual and involve people acting in positions of power over one another. Within such a culture communities need to work to create capacities to consent, and recognise the limitations around these.

Conclusions and further directions

In conclusion the position I have reached – for now at least – in my research on sexual communities is something akin to Lisa Downing's notion of 'sex-critical' engagement. Being sex critical is offered as an alternative to either sex-positive or sex-negative (e.g. anti-porn) positions. It refuses polarised dichotomies of structural forces versus free choice in favour of an understanding of agency as operating within multiple intersecting power dynamics. In addition there is a position that all sexual practices and identities should be addressed similarly, through a sex critical perspective, rather than attention being focused (as in much traditional psychological work) on marginalised ('abnormal') communities or experiences, with normative sexualities not requiring such scrutiny. But equally sexual communities and experiences are not assumed to be without problematic practices or assumptions by virtue of their being marginalised. In this way a polarised celebratory/criticising (rather than critical) binary is avoided in academic writing, which may be damaging to those who are being written about (Richards et al., forthcoming, 2014).

In terms of research practice, I would invite other sexuality and gender researchers to consider the potential value of blogs and other social media (Twitter, Facebook, Storify, tumblr, and the like) as both data and as means of conducting and disseminating research (Barker, 2012). Particularly I see great potential in research which focuses on these conversations that seem to bubble up and take hold of community and/or public attention for a while. A great example of this, from POWS 2013, was

Bridgette Rickett, Gill Craig, and Lucy Thompson's research on class and transphobia in the media storm around Suzanne Moore and Julie Bindels' articles and tweets about trans earlier this year. Pragmatically such research requires us to leave space in our already busy research lives for moments when such stories and debates hit in our research areas. Also, the possibilities for funding such research would seem to be very limited. However, the potentials for psychologists to be speaking directly to issues of public/community concern, and for them to learn about what is currently at stake in popular discourse, is immense.

Finally, I hope that my work, particularly that with Darren, Ros, Lisa and others, has demonstrated the value of opening up dialogue between different perspectives. The history of feminist work in the areas of sexualities and sexual media has been marked by polarisation and a refusal to engage across differences of opinion (Barker, 2013). The POWS 2013 conference was, for me, an immensely supportive, co-operative environment in which to present my work and, I would imagine, if any space could enable more open, respectful, and productive dialogue on such matters, that would be it. There is much to be gained in open dialogue upon the very things that we feel most vulnerable and defensive about – academically, politically, and personally. But it also takes a good deal of compassion and courage to engage in this way, as well as a (consensual) culture to enable that. Such cultures are not common in academia (Gill, 2010; Williams, 2002), but I hope that – across the BPS Psychology of Sexualities and Psychology of Women's Sections at least – we might be able to foster them.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to my various companions along this journey, without whom this work would have been impossible: Ani Ritchie, Alex Iantaffi, Camel Gupta, Darren Langdridge, Ros Gill, Trevor Butt, Emma Turley, Antony Whitehead, Vanessa Hinchcliffe, Lisa Downing, Alex Dymock, Christina Richards, and Kitty Stryker – as well as all the other bloggers who have been involved in the consent culture conversations.

Biography

Meg Barker is a senior lecturer in psychology at the Open University and a practising therapist specialising in sex and relationship therapy. With Darren Langdridge, Meg published one of the main academic collections on BDSM, *Safe, Sane and Consensual* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). They also co-edit the journal, *Psychology and Sexuality* with Taylor & Francis, and contributed material on BDSM to the British Psychological Society guidelines on working with sexual and gender minorities. Meg co-organises the Critical Sexology seminar series and has published on representations of BDSM (with Alex Iantaffi and Camel Gupta) and constructions of dominant women (with Ros Gill), and is part of a current project exploring the lived experience of submissive men (with Trevor Butt, Antony Whitehead, Emma Turley and Vanessa Hinchcliffe). Meg's previous research on sexualities and relationships has been published in several journals and books and has culminated recently in a general audience book *Rewriting the Rules* (Routledge, 2012) (www.rewriting-the-rules.com). Meg is also lead author of *The Bisexuality Report* and founder member of BiUK (www.biuk.org), and has researched and written about openly non-monogamous relationships (*Understanding Non-monogamies*, Routledge, 2010) and sex and relationship therapy. Email: meg.barker@open.ac.uk

References

- American Psychiatric Association (2013). *American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5 (DSM-5)*. Accessed 23 July 2013, from: <http://www.dsm5.org/Pages/RecentUpdates.aspx>
- Amy-Chinn, D. (2006). This is just for me (n). How the regulation of post-feminist lingerie advertising perpetuates woman as object. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 6(2), 155–175.
- Barker, M. (2005). Experience of SM awareness training. *Lesbian & Gay Psychology Review*, 6(3), 268–273.
- Barker, M. (2006). Sexual self-disclosure and outness in academia and the clinic. *Lesbian & Gay Psychology Review*, 7(3), 292–296.
- Barker, M. (2007). Turning the world upside down: Developing a tool for training about SM. In D. Langdridge & M. Barker (Eds.), *Safe, sane and consensual: Contemporary perspectives on sadomasochism* (pp.261–270). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barker, M. (2011). De beauvoir, Bridget Jones' pants and vaginismus. *Existential Analysis*, 22(2), 203–216.
- Barker, M. (2012). Special issue on sex blogging. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 3(1), 1–4.
- Barker, M. (2013). *Studying pornography. Rewriting the rules*. Accessed 23 July 2013, from: <http://rewritingtherules.wordpress.com/2013/06/01/studying-pornography>
- Barker, M. (forthcoming, 2013). Consent is a grey area? A comparison of understandings of consent in *Fifty Shades of Grey* and on the BDSM blogosphere. *Sexualities*.
- Barker, M. & Gill, R. (2012). Sexual subjectification and Bitchy Jones's Diary. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 3(1), 26–40.
- Barker, M. & Langdridge, D. (2009). Silencing accounts of already silenced sexualities. In R. Ryan-Flood & R. Gill (Eds.), *Secrecy and silence in the research process: Feminist reflections* (pp.67–79). London: Routledge.
- Barker, M. Gupta, C. & Iantaffi A. (2007). The power of play: The potentials and pitfalls in healing narratives of BDSM. In D. Langdridge & M. Barker (Eds.), *Safe, sane and consensual: Contemporary perspectives on sadomasochism* (pp.197–216). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barker, M., Iantaffi, A & Gupta, C. (2007). Kinky clients, kinky counselling? The challenges and potentials of BDSM. In L. Moon (Ed.), *Feeling queer or queer feelings: Counselling and sexual cultures* (pp.106–124). London: Routledge.
- Barker, M., Richards, C. & Bowes-Catton, H. (2012). Visualising experience: Using creative research methods with members of sexual communities. In C. Phellas (Ed.), *Researching non-heterosexual sexualities* (pp.57–80). Farnham: Ashgate.
- Bauer, R. (forthcoming, 2013). *Dyke+queer BDSM as exuberant intimacy – Exploring intimate difference and power*. PhD thesis, University of Hamburg.
- Downing, L. (2012). What is 'sex critical' and why should we care about it? *Sex Critical* (27 July). Accessed 22 October 2012, from: <http://sexcritical.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/what-is-sex-critical-and-why-should-we.html>
- Eisner, S. (2013). *Bi: Notes for a bisexual revolution*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.
- Gill, R. (2003). From sexual objectification to sexual subjectification: The resexualisation of women's bodies in the media. *Feminist Media Studies*, 3(1), 99–106.
- Gill, R. (2006). *Gender and the media*. London: Polity Press.
- Gill, R. (2010). Breaking the silence: The hidden injuries of the neoliberal university. In R. Ryan-Flood & R. Gill (Eds.) *Secrecy and silence in the research process* (pp.228–244). London: Routledge.
- Green, D.A. (2012). The shameful and nasty prosecution of Simon Walsh. *The New Statesman*, 8 August. Accessed 23 July 2013, from: <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/david-allen-green/2012/08/shameful-and-nasty-prosecution-simon-walsh>
- Kleinplatz, P. & Moser, C. (2007). Is SM pathological? In D. Langdridge & M. Barker (Eds.), *Safe, sane and consensual: Contemporary perspectives on sadomasochism* (pp.55–62). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Langdridge, D. (2013, forthcoming). *Sex-Sexuality-Citizenship: Beyond the boundaries of belonging*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Langdridge, D. & Barker, M. (Eds.) (2007). *Safe, sane and consensual: Contemporary perspectives on sadomasochism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Linden, R.R., Pagano, D.R., Russell, D.E.H. & Star, S.L. (Eds.). (1982). *Against sadomasochism: A radical feminist analysis*. San Francisco: Frog in the Well.
- Richards, C., Barker, M., Lenihan, P. & Iantaffi, A. (forthcoming, 2014). Who watches the watchmen? A critical perspective on the theorisation of trans people and clinicians, *Feminism & Psychology*.
- Rickett, B., Craig, G. & Thompson, L.O. (2013). 'Bad wigs and bed wetters': Constructions of gender and class in trans-popular discourse. Presentation to the 2013 Psychology of Women Section Annual Conference, Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, 10–12 July.

- Ritchie, A. (2008). Harming or healing? The meanings of wounding among sadomasochists who also self-injure. In V. Burr & J. Hearn (Eds.), *Sex, violence and the body: The erotics of wounding* (pp.71–87). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ritchie, A. & Barker, M. (2005). Feminist SM: A contradiction in terms or a way of challenging traditional gendered dynamics through sexual practice? *Lesbian & Gay Psychology Review*, 6(3), 227–239.
- Rubin, G. (1984). Thinking sex: Notes for a radical theory on the politics of sexuality. In C. Vance (Ed.), *Pleasure and danger: Exploring female sexuality* (pp.267–319). London: Routledge.
- Sullivan, N. (2003). Sadomasochism as resistance? In N. Sullivan (Ed.), *A critical introduction to queer theory* (pp.151–167). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Taylor, G.W. & Ussher, J.M. (2001). Making sense of S&M: A discourse analytic account. *Sexualities*, 4(3), 293–314.
- Tosh, J. (2013). *Fatal fantasies: What does the desire to die mean for feminist psychology?* Presentation to the 2013 Psychology of Women Section Annual Conference. Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, 10–12 July.
- Vance, C. (Ed.). (1984). *Pleasure and danger: Exploring female sexuality*. London: Routledge.
- Weait, M. (2007). Sadomasochism and the law. In D. Langdridge & M. Barker (Eds.), *Safe, sane and consensual: Contemporary perspectives on sadomasochism* (pp.63–82). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Williams, C.L. (2002). Sexual harassment and sadomasochism. *Hypatia* 17(2), 99–117.

Young women's constructions of risky health practices: A Q-methodological study

Ruth Cross

As noted by several authors, risk has received increasing attention in health promotion and public health in the past few decades. This paper will present and discuss data from a Q-methodological study which explored young women's constructions of risky health practices. Fifty-seven young women aged 18 to 24 years completed Q sorts containing 43 statements about health and risk. The Q sort statements were derived from interviews with other young women of the same age range and similar demographics. Data are presented that demonstrate the different ways in which the young women constructed ideas about risky health practices. This paper presents three factors which represent alternative, contrasting constructions of risk and health that challenge mainstream discourse. An interpretation of these factors is given. The factors have been given the titles 'Risk-taking can be positive', 'Health is privileged over risk-taking', and 'The right to take risks' respectively. Each factor is critically considered within the context of relevant theory and research with specific reference to feminist perspectives.

THIS PAPER discusses different ways in which risk in health is constructed by young women. The notion of risk has been explored within a range of social scientific literature resulting in the broad and persuasive conclusion that it has become a major socio-cultural concept which has permeated much of modern life (Beck, 2007; Douglas, 1992; Giddens, 1998). A number of writers have commented on this in relation specifically to health promotion and public health (for example, see Lupton, 2003; Nettleton, 2006; Peterson & Lupton, 1996). The resulting focus on risk in health has led to a range of individual behaviours (or social practices) being identified as 'risky' (Robertson, 2000) which must, therefore, be avoided. This emphasises personal responsibility for health and the duty to manage it by reducing risk (Wilkinson, 2004). Consequently, mainstream constructions of risk in health tend to be negative and position risk-taking as being necessarily evaded or, at the very least, minimised (Austen, 2009). In contrast to this, however,

risk-taking within neoliberal ideology is generally lauded and, outside of the realm of health, the contemporary neo-liberal subject is often exhorted to actually take risks (Gill & Scharff, 2010).

From a feminist perspective, risk and risk-taking can be viewed traditionally as 'masculine' space (Humberstone, 2000). In contrast, the regulation of normative femininity and prescribed conditions for feminine performance dictate that risk should be avoided and that safe guarding health is a feminine imperative (Crawford, 2006; Hyde, 2007; Moore, 2008a, 2010). There is a particular focus in public, professional and academic circles on young women's health behaviour as problematic. The troubling of young women's behaviour is not new as is clearly illustrated in Jackson and Tinkler's (2007) paper examining media representations of young women in 1918–1928 and 1995–2005. They specifically highlight how young women's behavioural practices are rendered problematic through constructions of the historical 'modern girl' and

contemporary idea of the 'ladette'. For a number of reasons, however, increasing attention is being paid to young women's so-called risky health behaviours. A range of so-called risky health practices are increasingly, and sometimes frequently, engaged in by young women as evidenced by: rises in sexually transmitted infections (The UK Collaborative Group for HIV & STI Surveillance, 2007; Health Protection Agency, 2010); so-called 'binge drinking' (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2010); and smoking (Office for National Statistics, 2009). An increased focus on risk in health alongside an increase in young women's risky behaviours is interesting and worth exploring using a feminist perspective.

The general literature and research on risk taking highlights how lay perspectives draw on discourses of biomedical and professional expertise (Bourne & Robson, 2009) and highlight the requirement to pursue health (Peterson & Lupton, 1996). There is an emphasis on risk perceptions, the choice involved in taking risks (Alaszewski & Burgess, 2007) and the ability to control risk through rational decision making processes (Crossley, 2002; Rodham et al., 2006). The influence of others on risk taking practices is also apparent (Murray & Turner, 2004).

Although literature specific to young women's risky health behaviours is limited, related work can help develop understanding in this area. Lyng (1990, 2005) has researched voluntary risk-taking and explored why some people actively seek out risk. Lyng developed the concept of 'edge-work' exploring the spatial concept of boundaries in risk-taking and how the margins between safety and danger are negotiated. However, Lyng's work was carried out in the context of high-risk sports activities such as sky diving. It also focused on men's experiences of risk taking noting that men take more physical risks than women. Lupton and Tulloch's (2002) work on pleasure in risk-taking considers risk more generally within everyday life. It offers an alternative perspective to mainstream under-

standings by highlighting positive aspects of taking risks. Descombe and Druquer (1999) argue that risk taking which results in serious threats to health can lead to learning. They refer to 'critical incidents'; serious health related events that are constructed by young people in a way which subsequently (positively) influences their health behaviour choices. There is, in addition, a small but growing body of work offering alternative perspectives on the phenomenon of binge drinking which position this practice as leisure time out (Measham & Brain, 2005) and harmless fun (Guise & Gill, 2007). Szmigin et al. (2008) contend that binge drinking is often framed in positive ways and call for it to be reconsidered as calculated hedonism. This supports Parker and Stanworth's (2005) arguments that risk taking can function in a positive way.

Writers such as Mielewczyk and Willig (2007) argue for a move away from an individualistic focus on specific behaviours which characterises the socio-cognitive approaches seen to dominate mainstream health psychology. Instead, they argue that it is more important to better understand the meaning which certain practices have and purposes or function which they serve. In keeping with this perspective this paper examines alternative ways in which risk-taking in health is constructed by young women and considers how these can provide insight into why risk-taking takes place.

Method

Q-methodology is an approach which does not aim to test hypotheses but instead seeks to explore subjectivity and subjective experience. It has, therefore, been described as an 'essentially exploratory technique' (Stenner et al., 2003, p.218). Barry and Proops (1999, p.339) explain that Q-methodology is a 'qualitative but statistical approach to enable the discovery of a variety of discourses'. The method lends itself to exploring different perspectives or views about a given issue or subject. This study is concerned with understandings in relation to health and risk –

'why things are the way they are' (Stainton-Rogers et al., 1995, p.250). Q has been used in several studies exploring meaning and understandings, for example, in relation to smokers' accounts of their smoking (Collins et al., 2002). It has a specific history in feminist research (Snelling, 2004) largely established by Kitziinger's (1987) work on the social construction of lesbianism. For a more detailed account of Q-methodology, see Stenner, Watts and Worrell (2009) or Watts and Stenner (2005).

The Q set

The Q set consists of a number of items participants sort that are broadly representative of the subject under exploration (Stenner et al., 2003). These can be wide ranging and may derive from many different sources. In this study the items were derived from interview data consisting of 22 verbatim transcripts in which young women were interviewed about health and risk. This method of generating items is commonly used (Barry & Proops, 1999). An initial number of 106 statements representative of the discourse within the young women's talk were extracted from the interview data. Guided by the themes identified in the interview data, in consultation with four pilot participants, and through the removal of any ambiguous or repetitive statements, the number of statements was reduced to a final set of 43.

The participants

In Q methodology the participants are often purposively selected on the basis of their presumed interests, the purpose being to 'sample the range and diversity of views expressed rather than to make claims about the number of people expressing them' (Kitziinger, 1986, p.84). The participants for this study were drawn from young women in further education. Fifty-seven young women volunteered to take part in the study and, although all were within the age range 18 to 24 years, their demographics reflected a range of socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities.

The procedure

Taking part in a Q-methodological study involves ranking a set of statements according to the extent of agreement or disagreement (Brown, 1996), for example, along a continuum from 'Least like me' to 'Most like me' (Kitziinger, 1987) (see Figure 1). This is customarily done in the pattern of a forced quasi-normal distribution (Peritore, 1989). It is a self-directed process in which the each participant follows a specific set of instructions.

In order to undertake the sorting process the young women were asked to reflect on their understandings of health and risk and the meaning of these to them. They were invited to give open-ended comments on this. They were advised to first sort the statements into three piles (most like me, not like me, neutral) in order to aid the sorting process. They then had to read through the 43 statements and sort them according to a fixed distribution pattern from -4 (representing 'Least like me') through to +4 (representing 'Most like me') (see Table 1). Once the participants were happy with their statement positions they were required to write the numbers of the statements onto a response grid.

Data analysis

Q-methodology 'employs a particular form of multivariate analysis in order to identify and describe the different 'stories' that can be told about a particular topic or issue' (Stainton-Rogers et al., 1995, p.248). Q-methodology examines the relationships between the participants by identifying, through the process of analysis, groups of participants who have sorted their statements in similar ways (Senn, 1993). This was done using a dedicated computer package (PQMethod) into which each of the 57 participant Q sorts were entered by hand. The factors were extracted using Principal Component Analysis. Varimax rotation was then performed. Factors with eigenvalues in excess of 1.0 and which had at least two Q sorts which correlated significantly with it only were selected for interpretation

Figure 1: The process of Q sorting.



Table 1: Summary of the fixed distribution pattern.

	Least like me – Most like me								
Rating	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
No. of responses	3	4	5	6	7	6	5	4	3

(Watts & Stenner, 2005). This process resulted in a seven factor solution, each factor representing a group of perspectives or viewpoints (Q sorts) which were highly correlated with one another. These correlated sorts were merged, using weighted averages, to produce a factor which best characterised the viewpoints represented (Brown, 1980, 1993). This resulted in a ‘best estimate’ (Barry & Proops, 1999) for each factor which looks like a single completed Q sort. The factors were then interpreted with reference to the relative positioning of the individual statements within them and to the qualitative information gathered alongside the Q sort in the form of participant comments.

Factor interpretation

A detailed exploration and interpretation of all seven factors is beyond the scope of this paper due constraints of word limit. Therefore, only three of the seven emergent

factors will be discussed. These have been selected on the basis of being most conceptually different or distinguishable from one another. In the analysis and interpretation of each factor the characterising or distinguishing statements which appear at the extremes of each – at the -3, -4 and +3, +4 positions are considered as well as statement positions across the whole factor. This is in order to consider the relationship between the statements, to achieve a holistic account of each factor and to enable comparisons across the factors (Wallis et al., 2009). The statement positions within each factor are detailed in Table 2. The three factors are labelled ‘*Risk-taking can be positive*’, ‘*Health is privileged over risk-taking*’ and ‘*The right to take risks*’ respectively. The labels are intended to provide a summary of the key position presented by the factor and to give a sense of the different constructions of health and risk within each factor.

Table 2: Statement scores table.

	Statement	Factor		
		1	2	3
1.	Sleeping with someone without using anything... it's putting yourself at risk when there is no need to.	-2	4	-3
2.	I don't understand how people can smoke even though there is something on the packet that says 'smoking kills' – it's like you're wasting your life.	-3	4	4
3.	I just think people aren't being very responsible. People go out and get drunk and then lose all their morals.	-3	2	-3
4.	There are those people who just don't know when to stop and I just think they're making themselves so vulnerable.	-1	0	1
5.	Your friends, the people around you will influence what you do.	1	3	1
6.	I don't really take risks.	-4	-3	1
7.	I think that you should be sensible about risks because some risks are just not worth taking.	0	3	-1
8.	I'd say that if someone were going to take a risk to do with their health then they should be look at whether it is worth it or not.	2	2	3
9.	Risk is about something that could go wrong later on or something that has already taken place – something that could potentially go wrong due to being unhealthy or over healthy.	0	-2	-1
10.	I think not maintaining a healthy and good balance in terms of nutrition and physical activity can be a risk to some extent.	2	-2	2
11.	I don't exercise so much, I don't have time. I do know that it's important but I just don't have time for it really.	-2	0	0
12.	Health for me is feeling well, related to well-being, the way you look, the way you feel yourself.	4	0	3
13.	I think that risk is only linked to negative impact. There is not that much risk you can take that will have a good impact on your health.	-3	-4	-4
14.	I'm not exercising and that is a risk.	-3	-4	-4
15.	Health is just to feel alive kind of thing, you don't have to force yourself to do anything, you've got energy.	-1	0	-2
16.	You know the risk of things but you still do them don't you?	3	-4	-2
17.	It's a big risk when you take drugs as one time you might be fine but next time you might get a dodgy one, or it just could affect you totally differently. It's a risk not worth taking in my opinion.	1	4	-1
18.	There's so much attention on the bad risks you never think about the risks that are worth taking at all.	0	0	0
19.	I don't always do what I intend to do.	1	2	-2
20.	Taking a risk is doing something you wouldn't usually do.	-1	1	-2
21.	I've got my own mind and I don't do things I don't want to do.	3	1	4
22.	You appreciate being healthy more when you're ill.	1	2	2

Table 2: Statement scores table (continued).

	Statement	Factor		
		1	2	3
23.	You get told you can't even eat too much fruit cos it's gonna kill you, you can't eat too much of this cos it's going to kill you, what can you do anymore?	-2	-2	-3
24.	I think if someone wants to do something I think they should be in their right to do what they want like.	3	1	4
25.	I think there are too many risks now.	-4	-1	-1
26.	I love a challenge so if there's a risk there I'll take it.	2	-1	2
27.	Risk is putting your life in danger – just not treating your body right.	-2	-1	0
28.	I think it's just the lifestyle these days – people aren't really caring so much for themselves.	-1	-1	0
29.	I think they always look at the negative sides rather than the positive when you hear the word risk.	0	0	3
30.	Risk means doing things that aren't necessarily good for you, that won't necessarily be the best thing to do.	-1	-1	0
31.	It's not as bad as they say it is, it might be somewhere else but I've never seen anything like that.	-2	-3	-3
32.	Risk can be a good and a bad thing, depends on the situation I think.	4	0	2
33.	It's only if I've had drink inside me I'll take a risk cos I'm very closed off. I won't take chances, but when I've got drink inside us I take risks. You think 'what the hell, why not?' I think everyone, the majority of people go that way as well.	0	-3	-2
34.	You could risk your health by not doing certain things like not going to the doctors if something is bothering you that's a risk cos you haven't got anything checked, like if you had a lump or something.	0	3	-1
35.	I've took risks because it gave me a buzz.	2	-2	1
36.	I suppose there's a risk to your health whatever you do isn't there?	0	-2	3
37.	You can risk your health just walking across the road, there's a risk that you could be knocked over.	1	1	1
38.	Some people take risks for fun. They love it and find enjoyment in them, like jumping out of planes.	2	1	2
39.	I think it's too easy to go out and get really drunk so I just think sometimes it's too easy for you to know when to stop.	-1	-3	-4
40.	I think you could learn a lot from taking a risk, if something happened to you I think it would make you think twice before doing it.	4	-1	-1
41.	If you don't look after your health then your health is at risk.	1	3	0
42.	If someone's health is at risk and they're aware of it I think that's a good thing because people can make changes or things can be done.	3	2	1
43.	I always do see risk as a negative thing.	-4	1	0

Factor analysis

Factor 1: 'Risk-taking can be positive'

The account constructs risk and risk-taking as positive rather than negative (43: -4, 25: -4, 13: -3, 29: 0, 18: 0, 23: -2). Risks are taken (6: -4; 16: +3) and experienced as a 'buzz' (35: +2), enjoyment and fun (38: +2) and 'challenge' (26: +2) rather than as danger (27: -2); they are seen as good as well as bad (32: +4, 30: -1). Qualitative comments confirm this – risk *'is something that can make a change to your life in a good or bad way'* and *'is something you take which could be good or bad for you'*. Risking your health is sometimes worth it (8: +2) however, not maintaining health can be a risk (10: +2). Classic risk-taking practices (which usually carry negative associations) such as getting drunk, smoking, sleeping with someone without protection are not viewed as risky (3: -3, 2: -3, 14: -3, 1: -2, 11: -2, 28: -1, 39: -1, 4: -1). In contrast, however, drug taking is viewed as risky and not worth doing (17: +1). A lot can be learned from taking a risk; if something happened it would make a person think twice (40: +4). Risk is *'perhaps putting yourself in danger, again mentally or physically but it could be risking something that could be good for you for example, taking a risk of instinct and it being right or for the better'*. An awareness of health risk can be a good thing because action can be taken (42: +3). A person has a right to do what they want (24: +3) and has their own mind (21: +3). Health is related to feeling well, well-being and the way a person looks and feels (12: +4).

This account constructs risk-taking in health in an optimistic way emphasising the more positive aspects of risk-taking such as providing challenge and thrill (Moore, 2008). This challenges the gender-bound assumption that women do not take risks (Walklate, 1997) and contrasts with findings in the wider literature on risk in health which emphasises the negative aspects of risk and risk-taking. It also contradicts results of research on the social construction of risk by young people (men and women) carried out

by Austen (2009) in which she found what she terms 'risk neutrality'. This construction is not neutral but resonates more with what Jackson and Tinkler (2007) term 'the pleasure seeker', highlighting enjoyment and fun echoing pleasure discourse associated with risky health practices found elsewhere in the literature. In keeping with findings by Szmigin et al. (2008), risky behaviour is framed as something positive particularly with regards to learning something from taking risks. Constructing risk-taking in this way draws on humanistic discourse with an emphasis on the learning and development which can take place through risk-taking and has similarities with the notion of critical incidents proposed by Denscombe and Drucquer (1999). In addition, however, this might also be interpreted as constructing risk-taking as 'transformative' and meaningful. Risk awareness is a good thing but this does not stop risks from being indicating a sense of agency. The acknowledgement and (unique) ownership of risk-taking in health in this factor indicates a sense of agency which supports Lyng's (2005) proposition of the 'voluntary' risk-taker. With regards to a range of practices identified as risky to health only drug taking is viewed as risky, suggesting a more libertarian position on the other types of so-called risky practices or an empathy for those whose take risks with their health (for example, by smoking).

Factor 2: 'Health is privileged over risk-taking'

This account constructs risk and risk-taking in health in a more negative way (43: +1). There were many qualitative comments from the participants whose Q sorts correlated highly onto this factor which support this. Risk was defined as *'danger'*, *'something bad happening'*, *'something which can cause harm to someone'* and *'something which jeopardises health'*. A more cautious account of risk and risk-taking in health is represented. Risk is *'doing something a person doesn't normally do and could lead to consequences'* (the implication being that such consequences would be

negative). Sleeping with someone without using anything is viewed as putting yourself at risk when there is no need to (1: +4). With reference to other classic risky health behaviours, smoking is viewed as wasting your life (2: +4); taking drugs is viewed as a big risk not worth taking (17: +4); and people should be responsible rather than getting drunk and losing their morals (3: +2). This general idea is also underpinned by the qualitative data; health *'is also making sure our body is in good condition by watching what you eat and doing exercise'*. Risks are not taken if they are known about (16: -4). Health is at risk if it is not looked after (41: +3; 34: +3) so, for example, exercise is carried out (14: -4). People should be sensible about the risks they take – some are not worth taking (7: +3) however, it should be determined whether the risk is worth it or not (8: +2). Risk is not simply linked to negative outcomes (13: -4). Other people have an influence on what you do (5: +3). Sometimes intention does not translate into action (19: +2). As in the first factor, risks are taken (6: -3) however, not under the influence of alcohol (33: -3). The buzz or challenge associated with risks is not a motivator to take them (35: -2, 26: -1) however, some people might take risks for fun and enjoyment (38: +1).

This more negative and cautious construction of risk and health contrasts somewhat with the account within the first factor. There is no need to put oneself at risk, particularly at the expense of health. If there is any cognisance or awareness of risk then it should be avoided. This account presents a strong position that if you do not look after yourself then your health is at risk. Qualitative comments which would seem to support this included that *'health is being fit, eating responsibly and exercising regularly'*. The avoidance of risk-taking in health is an important feature of this factor construction. This can be seen as being consistent with gendered practice around risk-taking (Gustafson, 1998). This factor can also be interpreted as drawing on neoliberal discourse. It emphasises autonomy and control; health and risk

avoidance as being the responsibility of the individual and the duty to self-care and self-monitor (Robertson, 2000; Wilkinson, 2004). Drawing on a feminist perspective here the duty to control the self and look after your health supports the idea of women as wardens of health (Holmila & Raitasalo, 2005; Moore, 2008a, 2010) and this factor can, therefore, be interpreted as constructing ideas about health and risk in this more traditional way. This factor construction reflects mainstream discourse within public health and health promotion which is concerned with minimising risks to health (Arnoldi, 2009) and it emphasises the health conscious citizen (Fusco, 2006). It draws on biomedical expertise (Bourne & Robson, 2009) about risky practices enforcing the prescription of healthy lifestyles (Gastaldo, 1997), particularly the imperative to health (Peterson & Lupton, 1996). These are, as Moore (2008a) contends, notions that are more closely associated ideas of femininity

Factor 3: 'The right to take risks'

The account constructs risk and risk-taking in health more in terms of independence and autonomy. People have got their own minds and do what they want (21: +4). If someone wants to do something then they should be able to (24: +4). It is not too easy to go out and get drunk (39: -4) and the influence of alcohol does not make risk-taking more likely (33: -2). Sleeping with someone without using anything is not viewed as putting yourself at risk (1: -3) nor, similarly to the first factor, is getting drunk viewed as being irresponsible (3: -3). Lack of exercising is not viewed as a risk (14: -4). Intention is viewed as sometimes leading to action (19: -2) further constructing ideas of being in control although there is some agreement with the idea that other people will influence what you do (5: +1). Risks are taken because they give a buzz (35: +1); for fun or enjoyment (38: +2) or for the challenge (26: +2). There is disagreement with the statement that things are done even when risk is known about (16: -2) again

invoking ideas about control. If risks are taken with health then people should consider whether it is worth it or not (8: +3). Risk can be good as well as bad (32: +2, 42: +1) as indicated by the qualitative data – *'doing something where the outcome isn't definite so you could come out of it better or worse'*. Risk is not just linked with negative outcomes (13: -4, 23: -3, 31: -3, 43: 0, 18: 0) or something that can go wrong (9: -1) although it generally has negative connotations (29: +3). There is a risk to health whatever you do (36: +3; 37: +1) and not maintaining your health is a risk to some extent (10: +2).

This factor constructs risk-taking in health differently to the first and second factors giving greater emphasis to independence, autonomy and control. Similarly to the first factor risk taking is constructed in a more positive way. For example, the function of risk-taking as potentially positive is also a feature of this factor (Parker & Stanworth, 2005). This construction, however, draws more strongly on agentic notions of risk-taking in health emphasising what Crossley (2002) calls the rational actor and the notion of having an independent mind which is not influenced by others. Interestingly this account emphasises not wanting to be told what to do and having the right to do what you want to. It echoes similar findings in relation to men and health such as those by Gough and Conner (2006) and Robertson and Williams (2010). Taking risks is, therefore, about making a choice (Alaszewski & Burgess, 2007). The strong sense of independence and the right to take risks whatever the outcome rejects negative appraisals of risk as found by, for example, Austen (2009). Similarly to Factor 1 this account highlights the pleasure that voluntary risk-taking might give (for fun) as found by Tulloch and Lupton (2003). Unique to this construction, however, is the idea that taking risks in health is unavoidable which lends some support to Denscombe and Drucquer's (1999) position that health risks are seen as endemic in contemporary society.

Factor consensus

There was some consensus across the three factor constructions which reflects dominant discourses about health and risk. Risk is not constructed within any of the factors as being linked only to negative impact. The right to be able to do something if you want to highlights a neoliberal emphasis on personal freedom (Gill & Scharff, 2010). This replicates Rodham et al.'s (2006) findings whereby adolescents perceived that they had control over whether or not to engage in risky health behaviours. It emphasises the importance of personal independence found elsewhere in the literature on research into the health and lifestyles of adolescents. There is also agreement, however, about the influence of others which highlights the importance of social context on risk-taking and the influence of peers noted by, for example, Murray and Turner (2004). In general alcohol use is constructed as less problematic and is not seen as leading to greater risk-taking. Interestingly this contrasts with evidence that alcohol consumption increases risky practices (Measham, 2004).

Conclusion

Ideological constructions of femininity portray women, for the most part, as necessarily risk-averse. This study, however, has found a greater diversity in the discourse around health and risk than has been previously appreciated. It contributes to the general literature on health and risk as well as specifically adding to the empirical work around young women and risky health practices. There are some interesting issues which challenge existing ideas around risk-taking in health and the more negative ways in which young women's social practices (or health behaviours) are viewed. Whilst some of the young women do strongly cohere around a construction of risk-taking in health as something which should be avoided as seen in Factor 2 'Health is privileged over risk-taking' this is only one of the ways in which

risk-taking in health is constructed. Factor 1 'Risk-taking can be positive' positions risk-taking in a more positive way and Factor 3 'The right to take risks' presents a more independent and agentic construction around risky health practices. Exploring young women's constructions of risk-taking in health is important in terms of developing understanding which might better inform policy and practice in public health and health promotion and the way in which messages about risk-taking in health are

framed and subsequently communicated to young women. There are also implications for further research here in terms of exploring young women's experiences of risk-taking, the meaning of risk-taking in health and the multiple functions which it may serve.

Correspondence

Ruth Cross

Leeds Metropolitan University.

r.m.cross@leedsmet.ac.uk

References

- Alaszewski, A.M. & Burgess, A. (2007). Risk, time and reason. *Health, Risk and Society*, 9(4), 349–358.
- Arnoldi, J. (2009). *Risk: An introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Austen, L. (2009). The social construction of risk by young people. *Health, Risk and Society*, 11(5), 451–470.
- Barry, J. & Proops, J. (1999). Seeking sustainability discourses with Q-methodology. *Ecological Economics*, 28, 337–345.
- Beck, U. (2008). *World at risk*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourne, A.H. & Robson, M.A. (2009). Perceiving risk and (re)constructing safety: The experience of having 'safe' sex. *Health, Risk & Society*, 11(3), 283–295.
- Brown, S.R. (1980). *Political subjectivity: Applications of Q-methodology in political science*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Brown, S. (1993). A primer on Q-methodology. *Operant Subjectivity*, 16(3/4), 91–138.
- Brown, S. (1996). Q-methodology and qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 6(4), 561–567.
- Collins, P., Maguire, M. & O'Dell, L. (2002). Smokers' representations of their own smoking: A Q-methodological study. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 7(6), 641–652.
- Crawford, R. (2006). Health as meaningful social practice. *Health*, 10(4), 401–420.
- Crossley, M.L. (2002). The perils of health promotion and the 'barebacking' backlash. *Health*, 6(1), 47–68.
- Denscombe, M. & Drucquer, N. (1999). Critical incidents and invulnerability to risk: Young people's experience of health-related incidents and their willingness to take health risks. *Health, Risk and Society*, 1(2), 195–207.
- Douglas, M. (1992). *Risk and blame: Essays in cultural theory*. London: Routledge.
- Fusco, C. (2006). Inscribing healthification: Governance, risk, surveillance and the subjects and spaces of fitness and health. *Health & Place*, 12, 65–78.
- Gastaldo, D. (1997). Is health education good for you? Re-thinking health education through the concept of bio-power. In A. Peterson & R. Bunton (Eds.), *Foucault: Health and medicine*. London: Routledge.
- Giddens, A. (1998). *The third way: The renewal of social democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gill, R. & Scharff, C.M. (2010). *New femininities: Post-feminism, neoliberalism and subjectivity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gough, B. & Conner, M.T. (2006). Barriers to healthy eating among men: A qualitative analysis. *Social Science and Medicine*, 62(1), 387–395.
- Guise, J.M. & Gill, J.S. (2007). Binge drinking? It's good, it's harmless fun. A discourse analysis of accounts of female undergraduate drinking in Scotland. *Health Education Research*, 22(6), 895–906.
- Gustafson, P.E. (1998). Gender differences in risk perception: Theoretical and methodological perspectives. *Risk Analysis*, 18(6), 805–811.
- Health Protection Agency (2010). *HIV in the United Kingdom: 2010 Report*. London: Health Protection Agency.
- Holmila, M. & Raitasalo, K. (2005). Gender differences in drinking: Why do they still exist? *Addiction*, 100, 1763–1769.
- Humberstone, B. (2000). *Her outdoors: Risk, challenge and adventure in gendered open spaces*. Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association.
- Hyde, S. (2007). *Half the human experience: The psychology of women*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Institute of Alcohol Studies (2010). *Binge drinking – nature, prevalence and causes*. St Ives: Institute of Alcohol Studies.

- Jackson, C. & Tinkler, P. (2007). 'Ladettes' and 'Modern girls': 'Troublesome' young femininities. *The Sociological Review*, 55(2), 251–272.
- Kitzinger, C. (1986). Introducing and developing Q as a feminist methodology: A study of accounts of lesbianism. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Feminist social psychology: Developing theory and practice*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Kitzinger, C. (1987). *The social construction of lesbianism*. Bristol: Sage.
- Lupton, D. (2003). *Medicine as culture: Illness, disease and the body in Western societies*. London: Sage.
- Lupton, D. & Tulloch, J. (2002). 'Life would be pretty dull without risk': Voluntary risk-taking and its pleasures. *Health, Risk and Society*, 4(2), 113–124.
- Lyng, S. (1990). Edgework: A social psychological analysis of voluntary risk taking. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 95(4), 851–886.
- Lyng, S. (2005). *Edgework: The sociology of risk taking*. New York: Routledge.
- McKeown, B. & Thomas, D. (1988). *Q-methodology*. Iowa: Sage.
- Measham, F. (2004). The decline of ecstasy, the rise of 'binge' drinking and the persistence of pleasure. *Probation Journal*, 51(4), 309–326.
- Measham, F. & Brain, K. (2005). 'Binge' drinking, British alcohol policy and the new culture of intoxication. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 1, 262–283.
- Mielewczyk, F. & Willig, C. (2007). Old clothes and an older look: The case for a radical makeover in health behaviour research. *Theory & Psychology*, 17, 811–837.
- Moore, D. (2008). Erasing pleasure from public discourse on illicit drugs: On the creation and reproduction of an absence. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 19, 353–358.
- Moore, S. (2008a). Gender and the 'new paradigm' of health. *Sociology Compass*, 2, 268–280.
- Moore, S. (2010). Is the healthy body gendered? Toward a feminist critique of the new paradigm of health. *Body & Society*, 16, 95–118.
- Murray, C. & Turner, E. (2004). Health, risk and sunbed use: A qualitative study. *Health, Risk and Society*, 6(1), 67–80.
- Nettleton, S. (2006). *The sociology of health and illness* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Office of National Statistics (2009). *Smoking habits in Great Britain*. Newport: Office for National Statistics.
- Parker, J. & Stanworth, H. (2005). 'Go for it!' Towards a critical realist approach to voluntary risk-taking. *Health, Risk and Society*, 7(4), 319–336.
- Peritore, P.N. (1989). Brazilian party left opinion: A Q-methodology profile. *Political Psychology*, 10(4), 675–702.
- Peterson, A. & Lupton, D. (1996). *The new public health: Health and self in the age of risk*. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Robertson, A. (2000). Embodying risk, embodying political rationality: Women's accounts of risks for breast cancer. *Health, Risk and Society*, 2(2), 219–238.
- Robertson, S. & Williams, R. (2010). Men, public health and health promotion: Some critical perspectives considered. In B. Gough & S. Robertson (Eds.), *Men, masculinities and health: Critical perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rodham, K., Brewer, H., Mistral, W. & Stallard, P. (2006). Adolescent's perception of risk and challenge: A qualitative study. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29, 261–272.
- Senn, C.Y. (1993). Women's multiple perspectives and experiences with pornography. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 17, 319–341.
- Snelling, S.J. (2004). Q-methodology and the political opportunity of feminist psychology. *Feminism & Psychology*, 14(4), 519–521.
- Stainton-Rogers, R., Steener, P., Gleeson, K. & Stainton-Rogers, W. (1995). *Social psychology: A critical agenda*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Stenner, P., Watts, S. & Worrell, M. (2009). Q-methodology. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology*. London: Sage.
- Stenner, P.H.D., Cooper, D. & Skevington, S.M. (2003). Putting the Q into quality of life: the identification of subjectives constructions of health-related quality of life using Q-methodology. *Social Science and Medicine*, 57, 2161–2172.
- Szmigin, I., Griffin, C., Mistral, W., Bengry-Howell, A., Waele, L. & Hackley, C. (2008). Re-framing 'binge drinking' as calculated hedonism: Empirical evidence from the UK. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 19, 359–366.
- The UK Collaborative Group for HIV and STI Surveillance (2007). *Testing times: HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in the United Kingdom*. London: Health Protection Agency.
- Tulloch, J. & Lupton, D. (2003). *Risk and everyday life*. London: Sage.
- Walklate, S. (1997). Risk and criminal victimisation: A modernist dilemma? *British Journal of Criminology*, 37(1), 37–45.
- Wallis, J., Burns, J. & Capdevila, R. (2009). Q-methodology and a Delphi poll: A useful approach to researching a narrative approach to therapy. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 6, 173–190.
- Watts, S. & Stenner, P. (2005). Doing Q-methodology: Theory, methods and interpretation. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2, 67–91.
- Wilkinson, S. (2004). Feminist contributions to critical health psychology. In M. Murray (Ed.), *Critical health psychology*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Discursive constructions of UK swingers' self-identities and practices in a culturally gendered mononormative context

Stephen Symons

In Western culture, romantic love is typically understood, defined, and normalised as both sexually and emotionally monogamous through discourses of 'mononormativity'. From a select review of critical psychology literature, it is demonstrated how, culturally and academically, mononormative discourses are often reproduced entwined with normative gender discourses, rendering both discourses as potentially inseparable. This presents a problem for celebratory discourses – which often present non-monogamous relationships as liberatory and revolutionary challenges to mononormativity – because they fail to account for the potential influence of gender discourses. Gender discourses may have implications for ways non-monogamous relationships are practiced, thus the aim of this paper is to explore the potentially complex intersections of non-monogamy and gender. It is, therefore, asked: how are swingers' self-identities and practices discursively constructed within a culturally gendered mononormative context, and what are the implications? Eight face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with five female and three male UK swingers. A feminist informed critical discourse analysis (Allred & Burman, 2005) is used as the analytic framework. From this analysis, the paper concludes that when normalised monogamy is challenged, the potential for liberation offered by non-monogamous sexual practices can be constrained by hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity that circulate in talk about non-monogamous sexual practices. These discourses of masculinity and femininity carry power dynamics which restrict men's and women's autonomy to varying degrees, limiting the capacity of swingers to be 'free'. In turn, this produces a set of contested identities which celebratory discourses of non-monogamy fail to account for.

IN WESTERN CULTURE, romantic love is typically understood, defined, and normalised as both sexually and emotionally monogamous. This paper interrogates this dominant and omnipresent discourse of 'mononormativity' (Barker & Langdridge, 2010a, 2010b) by examining intersections of gender and non-monogamy. Foucault (1981/1976) argues that sexual normalisation occurs through expert discourses which set boundaries for agency by permitting and legitimating particular sexual practices, and prohibiting others. Foucault (1991/1975) also argues that people then self-regulate to such discourses, which socially reinforces them. This paper focuses on one such

'prohibited' relational practice, 'swinging', where couples retain emotional monogamy, but reject sexual monogamy in favour of consensual, and mostly recreational extra-dyadic sex (Bergstrand & Williams, 2000). Swinging is distinct from polyamory – a practice which rejects all monogamy, and aims to 'maintain intimate and sexual relationships with multiple partners simultaneously' (Haritaworn, Lin & Klesse, 2006, p.515). Previous research on non-monogamy has mainly focused on polyamory (e.g. Barker, 2005; Finn & Malson, 2008; Haritaworn et al., 2006; Klesse, 2006; Ritchie & Barker, 2006) with only limited research on swingers. Therefore, swingers offer potential

for new insights into our understanding of intimate relationships.

Within critical psychology, mononormative discourses have often been entwined with traditional constructions of gender. For example, in her early paper on Western relationships and gender, Hollway (1984) identified three discourses which shape heterosexual and monogamous relationships. The 'male sex drive' discourse is embedded in evolutionary discourses on sexuality (e.g. Buss, 1999, 2008) and suggests males are continually driven by uncontrollable bio-sexual urges. This reproduces men as predatory and animalistic, and women as implicit passive receptors to male sexuality, which to an extent, is a dehumanising and over simplistic dichotomy. The 'have-hold' discourse dichotomises femininity by reproducing 'whores' that men only 'have' sex with, or 'wives' that men 'hold' onto for more meaningful and permanent relationships. This discourse establishes monogamous marriage as 'the proper context' for expressions of feminine desire, as does the 'permissive' discourse which permits female promiscuity, but only pre-marriage. In socio-cultural terms, gendered mononormativity is reproduced, for example, through advice columns (Wilbraham, 1997) where women are positioned within their marriages as emotional labourers who are to restore the 'crisis' of their husband's infidelity. The 'crisis' is constituted in relation to how marriage is socially constructed around gender norms and monogamy. Such positionings function to establish gendered norms which then influence gendered subjectivities (Hollway, 1984). From this close knit entanglement of monogamy and gender, one question that might be asked is whether these gender constructions have implications when they meet non-monogamy.

Celebratory discourses have attempted to highlight the liberatory and revolutionary potential of non-monogamous relationship arrangements (e.g. deVisser & McDonald, 2007; Jackson & Scott, 2004). But while non-

monogamous relationships may appear to challenge dominant mononormative social practices, creating a sense of sexual liberation, in this paper, I seek to consider these relationships through a discursive and feminist lens, to consider how gendered constructions might function in non-monogamous relationships, particularly swinging. My interest is in exploring the potential of swinging to disrupt mononormative social practice, but also to consider the potential constraints on such potential disruptions. Here, I attempt to set aside celebratory discourses, because they overlook potential complexities which may arise at intersections of non-monogamy and gender, and instead I attempt to examine these complexities directly.

The aims of this paper, therefore, are to explore possible complexities at intersections between swinging and gender, and how gender discourses may influence swinging identity, practice, and subjectivity, and to consider the implications of this. This paper, therefore, asks: how are swingers' self-identities and practices discursively constructed within a culturally gendered mononormative context, and what are the implications?

Methods

To enable me to explore how gender is (re)produced in people's accounts of swinging, I used individual interviews, which were analysed using a feminist informed Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) (Alldred & Burman, 2005). FDA enabled me to consider intersecting and interwebbed discourses, and to consider issues of governmentality and production in relation to participants' accounts of swinging. This is useful in this study because, as Parker (1992) suggests, FDA is political in nature and, therefore, more suitable for politically repressed populations, such as swingers (Roberts, 2003).

I sent 20 emails to the administrators/managers of 10 swingers' websites, eight swingers' clubs, one swingers' hotel, and one co-author of a recent study, asking

permission to recruit participants through their facilities. Only website administrators responded – one banning me immediately, the other three granting advertising permission. From the advertisements, I received nine responses all from one website. From 16 potential interviewees from the website, one was too far away, four responses came too late for inclusion in the study, and four stopped communication after the initial contact. Eight self-identified swingers (seven through the website, and one through personal contact) aged 37 to 55 participated in individual interviews. Interviews lasted 38 to 93 minutes, and were conducted in various UK locations; six in participants' homes and two in a hotel lobby. From the three men and five women, there were three married couples, and two women whose male partners were unavailable for interview.

I developed an interview guide drawing on key points and absences in the literature, covering questions about social acceptance, monogamy, commitment, romantic love, and rules and boundaries. In each interview, a broad question asked about how participants decided to start swinging. I transcribed my interviews verbatim using a denaturalised approach where involuntary vocalisations and intonation are omitted, but accurate substance, meaning, and the '*maneuverings of power*' (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005, p.5) are retained. This is why Oliver et al. recommend this approach for critical discourse analysis. Parker (2005) argues that research interviews are always semi-structured because they perpetually carry '*the traces of patterns of power*' (p.53) that allow participant resistance. I found in several of the interviews, such traces were clearly evident – for instance, Lindsay (37) seemed hesitant in the interview encounter, giving brief and unelaborated responses that seemed to suggest discomfort with being 'researched'. In contrast, Bill, an older man who saw himself as well established in the swinging community tended to dominate and shape the interview. In my analysis of these inter-

views, I try to capture both the content and context of the interviews, to consider the implications of these kinds of differences in the operation and production of power in the research.

Doing discourse analysis

FDA emphasises the omnipresent power relations embedded within discourses or discursive practices (Parker, 2005); this includes the production of objects, for example, 'delinquency', and related agentic subjects, for example, 'delinquents'. Through such functions, FDA also emphasises who legitimates these discursive constructs, who self-regulates to them, and ultimately which social institutions are supported and subverted by them (Parker, 1992). Foucault (1981/1976) argues power is bi-directional, and subjectivities are constituted in relation to dominant discourses in both resistant and conforming ways. To deconstruct these dynamics, I used FDA to identify if and how my participants self-regulate, reproduce, resist, produce, and re-regulate discourses, and how these functions construct self-identities and connect to wider social institutions. Whilst being mindful that indentifying political 'knowledge' itself produces political knowledge (Gillies & Alldred, 2012) I followed Alldred and Burman's (2005) analytic steps, and included Willig's (2001) step in which subjectivity is considered.

Ethics

All British Psychological Society (2009) ethical guidelines were strictly followed, and the ethics committee board at the University of Northampton reviewed this study's application and granted approval. All participants were informed with an information sheet and opportunity to ask questions at both initial interest, and interview, at which point written consent was obtained. Interviewees were debriefed post-interview both verbally and with literature, which contained my, and my supervising tutor's contact details for the purpose of withdrawal. Also, relevant

support group contact details were given in the event distress was triggered. After transcription, to protect participant's identities, audio recordings were destroyed, and pseudonyms (used in this paper) were used within transcripts. Consent forms were locked separately from data to protect confidentiality.

Analysis and discussion

In this analysis, I explore possible complexities at the intersections of swinger and gendered subjectivities, exploring how gender discourses are implicated in the construction of 'swinger identities', and how swinging constitutes gender. This paper, therefore, asks: how are swingers' self-identities and practices discursively constructed within a culturally gendered mononormative context, and what are the implications? The following analysis shows that though swinging couples challenge mononormativity, their accounts also often involve reproductions of gender norms and the deployment of the construct of 'free choice'. This presents a tension with celebratory discourses that emphasise the liberatory and disruptive potential of swinging and other poly-relational practices. I will illustrate this argument with two examples from my interviews that demonstrate a common patterning across the accounts.

Bill's interview was nearly ending and I asked if he had anything to add to our discussion. I asked this to all interviewees because open platforms often reveal spontaneous insights from beyond the constraints of my questions, thus lessening my institutional power. Bill began explaining how soap-opera characters are typically adulterous, and how a current character is coping with his wife's infidelity. He then expresses relief at not being *'there anymore, and never will again'* (533–534), and that he does not *'live in that world anymore'* (544). This suggests swinging is an honest acceptance of inevitable non-monogamy, and the ongoing discussion follows similarly:

B: *'I don't envy the vanilla world. I think they ought to wise up and accept nature.'*

Int: Which is?

B: *Human nature, we're an animal*

Int: Which means?

B: *It means the female genuinely prefers the larger male with a larger male genitals because she is programmed to believe he will be the best seed for her offspring, and that is what drives us to have sex, end of. So it's true, women do prefer bigger willies [Int: (laughs)] erm, and it's his job to displace the other male you know? The strongest and fittest wins through, it's what we are, the woman is designed to be promiscuous. That's what she does, it's in her nature to be what men in the vanilla world nowadays would call a slut, trollop, you name it, because she is designed to be that way, and the male is designed to go around and sow his seed everywhere, he can, it's nature, it's what we're designed to do.'* (553–565)

Bill's opening statement positions his swinging as having 'freed him' from a constraining 'vanilla world'. By suggesting others should *'wise up and accept nature'* Bill positions himself as an insightful expert about human relationships. He naturalises his own interpretation of human sexuality as an obvious truth in which anyone who disagrees should *'wise up'*. Bill uses biological discourses to achieve this by claiming *'we're an animal'*. When prompted for meaningful explanation, Bill engages evolutionary short-term mating discourse (Buss, 1999) which in itself attempts to explain female promiscuity. However, this discourse also constructs females as 'ejaculate manipulators' (Baker & Bellis, 1993), an objectifying construction, which renders female sexuality as a function of male ejaculatory needs, and locates women as essentially passionless – simply *'manipulating male ejaculate'*, rather than engaging in active and pleasurable sexual practices. In Bill's talk women's agency is limited to their capacity to choose *'bigger willies'*. For males, Bill reproduces existing evolutionary masculinity in which men *'sow [their] seed everywhere'* and strive to be the *'strongest and fittest'*. Thus, Bill's talk legiti-

mates subject positions for male promiscuity in a competitive context because it is a man's '*job to displace the other male*' to 'win' females. Here, females lose their limited agency, and are implicitly objectified as passive trophies for male celebration. Through Bill's rejection of monogamy, and by exclusion of polyamory, swinging, which by Bill's account is framed as active male competition, is, therefore, implicitly ratified as more reflective of 'normal' relationships.

Overall, though Bill resists mononormativity through the construction of 'the vanilla world' as deluded and deceptive (denying the obvious 'truth' of human, what I will term here, 'poly-nature'), he deploys problematic gender constructions to achieve this resistance. Women can choose sexual partners, but cannot choose promiscuity because they are constructed as both 'innately' promiscuous (for reasons of biology, not pleasure), and passive in relation to male sexuality. Similarly, men cannot choose monogamous relationships due to their 'innate' competitiveness for multiple female mates. Through these entrenchments, implications arise for both swinging practice and gender identity. In terms of gender, legitimised sexual competition continues to privilege males in the sexual sphere for as long as females are 'trophies'. Moreover, by re-regulating feminine sexuality discourses to legitimate compulsory promiscuity, women's autonomy is lessened. The implications for swinging practice means its competitive framing inhibits community ideals that infuse polyamorous ideology, and contradicts principles of sharing. The main issue here is that through Bill's subjectivity – arguably influenced by traditional gendered discourses – the liberal logic of swinging is at tension with the gendered way choice is constrained. This complexity continues to construct contested identities which celebratory discourses fail to appreciate.

In another interview, my discussion with Lindsay became focused on her partner. I asked whether she was happy with him, and though she was, her '*great hunger for sex*' (390)

is not fulfilled, which in itself critiques the definitiveness of the 'male sex drive' discourse. Here, Lindsay explicitly articulates her desire, and her enjoyment of sex in a manner inconsistent with the more reactive sexuality previously described by Bill. I already knew Lindsay attends a swingers' club without her partner, so referring to that I asked '*Do you go to the club to satisfy that?*' (410) and Lindsay said yes. I ask a little more about this: '*Where, how?*' (412), she replied:

'In the club, in rooms, erm, go in a room with them, it's just based on sex, there's no kissing is allowed. Allowed to caress my body, use protection [Int: yeah] and them are the rules also, they all, you know, use protection as well. So there is quite a few rules and regulations in what I can do and what I can't do also.'

Int: What do you mean by that?

L: My partner, he wouldn't like me kissing with another guy.' (413–418)

Lindsay's self-positionings are complex because she slips between two relational contexts, both of which appear patriarchal. In one context, Lindsay objectifies herself in relation to male sexuality, and male subjects, where she privately '*goes in a room*' where they '*caress [her] body*'. She is clearly positioned as an agent here, articulating what is and is not allowed, and her narrative explicitly highlights a focus on her own enjoyment. Her sexual encounters are governed by 'rules and regulations', to which men must adhere. However, when questioned further, it transpires these are not her rules. Though she can choose to go clubbing, apparently as a free sexual agent, her sexual behaviour whilst there is restricted and regulated by her partner. She rapidly shifts between subject and object positioning – a powerful agent, who dictates the rules, and a passive recipient of male regulatory power. Her partner *permits* her sexual freedom, and this is constrained by him, even in his absence, through her own accession to his rules. These rules protect something implicitly sacred, which arguably is a relationship based on mononormative ideals, thus privileging *couple* identity.

Lindsay ultimately reproduces mononormativity through discursive self-regulation, which appears to be influenced by patriarchal power. From this, the implication means she must practice swinging in a particularly monogamous way, which constrains her autonomy. This image resonates with Young's (1980) 'double hesitation' concept in which Young argues there are notable embodied gender differences: males move with confidence, whereas females are more restrained. For example, when girls throw, they throw hesitantly, which does not necessarily reflect less strength, but low confidence stemming from social messages about the gendered use of bodies. So Lindsay is free to swing, but simultaneously inhibited. The main issue here is that through Lindsay's subjectivity, which is influenced by male regulatory power, the liberal logic of swinging is at tension with the gendered way female autonomy is constrained, which constructs contested identities. Consistent with Bill's narrative, this is also a complexity which celebratory discourses fail to appreciate.

In sum, Bill reproduces evolutionary discourses of masculinity and femininity which naturalises swinging as an arena for male sexual competition in which males are sexually privileged. He also engages evolutionary discourse to produce females with some, but limited agency, which ultimately restrains female autonomy. Lindsay positions herself within two patriarchal structures in which she initially objectifies herself in relation to masculine sexuality, and then subjects herself to her partner's authority. In socially wider terms, the discursive constructions here support institutions of marriage and the family, and patriarchal ideology, but subvert advocates of liberal sexuality,

especially feminist activist groups. My intention is neither to reproduce gender, nor to pathologise swinging, but to illustrate how the omnipresence and potency of gender discourses create complexity at intersections of swinging and gender. The lynchpin to this complexity is the question of who is choosing what? when couples challenge monogamy.

In conclusion, I argue that when dominant mononormative practices are challenged, the ideology of sexual liberation presented by various forms of poly relationships faces considerable challenge from the entrenchment of gender discourses, which restrict men's and women's purported autonomy and sexual freedom to varying degrees. In turn, contested identities are constructed which celebratory discourses fail to consider. This paper is important because it highlights some of the more intricate and problematic complexities that arise within what appears to be a liberatory style of relating. Bringing these to light may inform further research, or help inform relationship therapists who encounter difficulties in swinging couples. However, a limitation of this paper is that participants are between ages 37 to 55, so I may have a cohort effect which reflects more modernist views. Much younger swingers may have more post-modern views on gender, and may be somewhat less influenced by traditional gendered discourses. Therefore, future research could focus on younger swingers to explore whether and how gender discourses influence the construction of their swinger self-identities.

Correspondence

Stephen Symons

University of Northampton.

References

- Allred, P. & Burman, E. (2005). Analysing children's accounts using discourse analysis. In S. Greene & D. Hogan (Eds.), *Researching children's experience. Approaches and methods* (pp.175–198). London: Sage.
- Baker, R.R. & Bellis, M.A. (1993). Human sperm competition: Ejaculate manipulation by females and a function for the female orgasm. *Animal Behaviour*, 46, 887–909.
- Barker, M. (2005). This is my partner, and this is my... partner's partner: Constructing a polyamorous identity in a monogamous world. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 18(1), 75–88.
- Barker, M. & Langdridge, D. (2010a). Whatever happened to non-monogamies? Critical reflections on recent research and theory. *Sexualities*, 13(6), 748–772.
- Barker, M. & Langdridge, D. (Eds.). (2010b). *Understanding non-monogamies*. New York: Routledge.
- Bergstrand, C. & Williams, J.B. (2000). Today's alternative marriage styles: The case of swingers. *Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality*, 3. Retrieved from: <http://www.ejhs.org/volume3/swing/body.htm>
- British Psychological Society (2009). *Code of Ethics and Conduct: Guidance published by the Ethics Committee of the British Psychological Society*. Retrieved from: http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/code_of_ethics_and_conduct.pdf
- Buss, D.M. (1999). *Evolutionary psychology: The new science of the mind*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Buss, D.M. (2008). *Evolutionary psychology: The new science of the mind* (3rd ed.). London: Pearson Education.
- deVisser, R. & McDonald, D. (2007). Swings and roundabouts: Management of jealousy in heterosexual 'swinging' couples. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 46(2), 459–476.
- Finn, M. & Malson, H. (2008). Speaking of home truth: (Re)productions of dyadic-containment in non-monogamous relationships. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 47, 519–533.
- Foucault, M. (1981). *The history of sexuality. Volume 1: An introduction*. New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1976).
- Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. London: Penguin. (Original work published 1975).
- Gillies, V. & Alldred, P. (2012). The ethics of intention: Research as a political tool. In T. Miller, M. Birch, M. Mauthner & J. Jessop (Eds.), *Ethics in qualitative research* (2nd ed.; pp.43–60). London: Sage.
- Haritaworn, J., Lin, C. & Klesse, C. (2006). Poly/logue: A critical introduction to polyamory. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 515–529.
- Hollway, W. (1984). Gender difference and the production of subjectivity. In J. Henriques, W. Hollway, C. Urwin, C. Venn & V. Walkerdine (Eds.), *Changing the subject* (pp.227–262). London: Methuen.
- Jackson, S. & Scott, S. (2004). The personal is still political: Heterosexuality, feminism and monogamy. *Feminism & Psychology*, 14(1), 151–157.
- Klesse, C. (2006). Polyamory and its 'others': Contesting the terms of non-monogamy. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 565–583.
- Oliver, D.G., Serovich, J.M. & Mason, T.L. (2005). Constraints and opportunities with interview transcription: Towards reflection in qualitative research. *Social Forces*, 84(2), 1273–1289.
- Parker, I. (1992). *Discourse dynamics: Critical analysis for social and individual psychology*. London: Routledge.
- Parker, I. (2005). *Qualitative psychology: Introducing radical research*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Ritchie, A. & Barker, M. (2006). 'There aren't words for what we do or how we feel so we have to make them up': Constructing polyamorous languages in a culture of compulsory monogamy. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 584–601.
- Roberts, M. (2003). *Related to bigotry: The repression of swingers in early 21st century Britain*. London: Libertarian Alliance. Retrieved from: www.libertarian.co.uk/lapubs/socin/socin028.pdf
- Wilbraham, L. (1997). The psychologisation of monogamy in advice columns: Surveillance, subjectivity and resistance. In A. Levett, A. Kottler, E. Burman & I. Parker (Eds.), *Culture, power and difference: Discourse analysis in South Africa* (pp.65–82). London: Zed Books.
- Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Young, I.M. (1980). Throwing like a girl: A phenomenology of feminine body comportment motility and spatiality. *Human Studies*, 3(1), 137–156.

2013 Postgraduate Prize Winner

ADHD: 'Because you're worth it'

The marketisation of ADHD to adult women

Helen Winter

Drawing on the traditions of discursive psychology and critical discourse analysis this study examined the marketisation of 'ADHD' to women in a small sample of online 'YouTube' videos. Of specific interest was the constructed and constructive nature of discourse at a 'micro' level, with a particular focus on the reification and commodification of the 'ADHD-product'; and the discursive strategies used to persuade women of the potential benefits of 'ADHD' diagnosis and 'treatment'. The video material analysed represented a combination of first person testimonies from the 'sufferer', and the sharing of 'expertise' by 'professionals'. The analytic categories generated told a 'story' of the construction and commodification of the 'ADHD-product', unproblematically positioned within the biomedical discourse; followed by the active promotion of 'ADHD' to women, with strong endorsements for the use of stimulant medication to 'enhance performance' and 'increase one's potential'. Implications for feminist practice are discussed in light of the analysis.

ATENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER' (ADHD)¹ is a diagnosis which divides opinion and ignites debate. Some have fought for its recognition as a legitimate medical disorder (e.g. Asherson, 2013); others have contested its existence and refer to it as a cultural construction (e.g. Timimi & Leo, 2009). Regardless, reported prevalence rates continue to increase amongst the child and adolescent population (Getahun et al., 2013); whilst the incorporation of more adult-inclusive criteria into the *DSM-5* 'sets the stage' for the adult diagnosis to follow suit (Whitely, 2011).

According to the *DSM-IV* (APA, 1994, p.85), the essential feature of ADHD is a 'persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequently displayed and is more severe than is typically observed in individuals at comparable level of development'. On the basis of

the diagnosis' reputation and most data in children, it may be assumed that the adult-ADHD demographic would be predominantly male. However, many studies have not supported this prediction.

Simon et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of studies looking at the prevalence of ADHD amongst adult populations. Their general conclusions suggest that, diagnosis and prescription rates are more equally distributed in adulthood, with some countries diagnosing more women than men. For example, in Italy and New Zealand the ADHD population is made up of 86 per cent and 83 per cent women, respectively.

In an earlier study, Castle et al. (2007) analysed a large sample of American pharmaceutical data. The results indicated that, between 2000 and 2005, women demonstrated the highest annual prescription growth rate of any demographic group.

¹ Although I use 'ADHD' with 'critical' intentions, for ease of reading, inverted commas have not been used past this point.

Some authors have attributed this demographic-shift to previously undiagnosed cases in childhood and the presentation of 'pseudo-new' cases in adulthood (Simon et al., 2009, p.209). This hypothesis is informed by the assumption that males display 'their' ADHD through externalising behaviour whereas girls present with internalising behaviour. As such, females only become 'symptomatic' with the introduction of adult stressors such as family, work and study (Bren, 2004).

An alternative viewpoint examined societal discourses in relation to mental health and women. Moncrieff et al. (2011, p.18), citing Ussher (1991), suggest that ADHD may be the 'latest framework offered to women through which to express their distress and dissatisfaction'. The authors support this by highlighting the increase in promotional material aimed at women.

Moncrieff et al. (2011) also discuss the construction of adult ADHD in relation to the market drive of pharmaceutical industries and the medicalisation of behaviour. Specifically they refer to Rose's (1998) concept of the 'neurochemical self' and the tendency for psychopharmacology research to provide only biological explanations for variations from the norm; thus encouraging people to adopt purely biological descriptions of themselves and ways to act upon themselves. If this is so it may be that women are less inclined to consider external societal/relational/familial pressures and instead look for 'biomedical' problems within themselves.

Mental health and women

Discourses of femininity have been described as:

(...) sets of shared cultural beliefs and practices that construct the meaning of 'woman', what it is to be a woman, and experiences of subjectivity in women.

Stoppard, (2000, p. 23)

So described, these discourses define and constrain femininity; laying down invisible barriers in the guise of 'normality' and

'social acceptability'. As these discourses are hidden they are unquestionable and often so limiting that some have suggested they provide the explanation for many of the 'female disorders', such as postpartum depression (Knudson-Martin & Silverstein, 2009); as well as the over representation of women in many mental health diagnoses (Ussher, 2010).

According to Ussher (1991), if we do not attend to the gender differences in psychiatric diagnoses, then conventional explanations will continue to be used automatically to 'categorise, to compartmentalise, to control' (p.104).

Selling sickness: Marketing a medical understanding

There's a lot of money to be made in telling healthy people they're sick.

Moynihan et al. (2002, p.886)

According to Moynihan (2005); 'the first step in promoting a blockbuster drug is to build the market by raising public awareness about the condition the drug is designed to target' (p.192). This process appears to have begun in relation to the promotion of ADHD to women (Moncrieff et al., 2011). Indeed, Conrad and Potter, (2000) have related the expansion of the ADHD category to 'new markets' (p.575), popularised via the rapid transmission of information through television, internet, and popular literature.

The current study

Thus far there has been minimal research into the construction of the 'ADHD-woman' or the multi-media mechanisms through which the 'disorder' has been 'sold' to women (Moncrieff et al., 2011). Thus, the aim of this study is to examine on a local level (cf. McHoul & Rapley, 2005) how ADHD is being turned into a commodity and marketed to women via publically accessible online videos. In the course of making transparent these processes I hope to encourage further questions (Foucault, 1977); thus contributing to 'social change through critical analysis' (Wooffitt, 2005, p.139).

Methodology

Epistemology and methodology

The analysis was conducted from a *micro-social-constructionist* stance; viewing construction as 'taking place within everyday discourse between people in interaction' (Burr, 2003, p.21).

Following the lead of McHoul and Rapley (2005), a hybrid version of *discursive psychology* (DP) was used; incorporating *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995) into a DP framework (Edwards & Potter, 1992).

CDA and DP possess broad similarities, such as a critical stance toward traditional psychological research methods (Wooffitt, 2005). However, they also possess subtle yet significant differences which may be seen as complementary of one another. Specifically, DP is primarily concerned with '*how people use discursive resources in order to achieve interpersonal objectives in social interaction*' (Willig, 2001, p.91, italics in original). In contrast, CDA aims to make transparent the relationships between discourse practices, social practices and social structures; relationships that might be opaque to the layperson (Fairclough, 1992). As such, CDA '*adopts an overt political stance, in terms of both the kinds of topic it studies and the role it sees for the results of the research*' (Wooffitt, 2005, p.139). Thus CDA complements this study as it adds to the 'how' by asking whose interests are being served. In this way it has been said to function as an intervention 'on the side of dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups' (Fairclough & Wodak, 2004, p.358).

Description of sample

The internet is now seen as *fundamental* in helping to deliver messages, sell products and promote action; making it a valuable avenue of analysis (Conrad & Potter, 2000; Norris & Lloyd, 2000). As such I elected to maintain a focus on electronic resources; choosing to select my corpus of data from the online video search engine YouTube (www.youtube.com). Operating as a

subsidiary of Google (Woog, 2009), YouTube currently gains over 800 million new users each month, with over one trillion views in 2011 (YouTube, 2012).

The data was collated using the simple search term 'ADHD Women' to ensure the videos were easily accessible to the general public. The videos selected for analysis were those which appeared most consistently within the top seven results during the census period (September 2011 to July 2012). The corpus of data represented testimonies of 'sufferers' and 'professionals' discussing the emerging social phenomenon of 'adult-ADHD-in-women'.

The full corpus of data was analysed as part of a 28,000 word doctoral thesis. However, due to the pragmatic limitations of this paper, extracts from three of the videos are presented for analysis here.

Procedure

The data was analysed in line with the phases proposed by Potter and Wetherall (1987). Phase one centred on the identification of 'systemic patterns in the data' and phase two focused on a search for 'functional effects and consequences' (Tuffin & Howard, 2001, p.203).

The aim was thus to identify the particular micro-level rhetorical devices that had been used whilst also attending to the themes, concepts and power relations embedded within the text (Fairclough, 1992).

Analysis and initial discussion

As previously described, the material presented constitutes part of a larger analysis. However, for the purposes of this paper the analytic subcategory, 'Increase Your Potential' has been selected due to its particular relevance to the 'psychology of women'.

This analysis focuses on women's promotion of stimulants as a means via which one may 'increase potential' and 'enhance performance'. The focus on drugs was an integral component in the *marketisation-of-*

ADHD-to-women, which also included: (1) the biomedical construction of the 'ADHD-woman'; (2) persuasion to view performance through the lens of 'attentional deficits'; (3) a 'realisation' of the 'life-improving' qualities of ADHD; and (4) the fight for diagnosis.

The data represents testimonial extracts of three 'ADHD-sufferers'; 'Luciana' (a self-proclaimed business woman), 'Brooke' (a college student) and Dr Walker (a 'psychotherapist' and 'ADHD expert')².

Increase your potential

The testimonies presented in the extracts all support the dominant biomedical discourse of ADHD; as well as the need for medical intervention to alleviate the 'symptoms'. The witnessing of the 'benefits' of ADHD diagnosis and treatment is aided by the rhetoric of *category entitlement* (Potter, 1996). This device works to enhance the *reality* and *truth* of a claim, as the narrator is seen to speak from a position of assumed knowledge and/or experience.

Luciana talks with energy and enthusiasm about the positive effects of the stimulant drug 'Adderall' (Extract 1). However, a link from her YouTube-page redirects the audience to a website for 'Adderall-alternatives'; raising questions over Luciana's position as a 'neutral consumer'.

Extract: 1

- 2 And, today I'm gonna talk about
Attention Deficit Disorder,
3 because I definitely have it. And,
I finally got medicated,
4 which is something that has really
changed my life. And has,
5 erm, been very positive for my
business.

Luciana

Luciana begins her blog by succinctly and unproblematically presenting ADHD in its *reified* form; 'I definitely have it' (line 3) (Potter, 1996). Her description of *having* ADHD is synonymous with the way one may

describe *having* the flu; it possesses a *physical disease* status (Szasz, 1971) and encourages the action of getting 'medicated' (line 3). Medication is consequently promoted as *life-changing* and *positive for business*. These descriptions draw on the rhetoric of *extreme-case-formulations* (Pomerantz, 1986), which are designed to be dramatic and persuasive as they construct an outcome as significantly different from the norm.

In Extract 2, Luciana uses the rhetorical device of *active voicing* (Hepburn, 2003; Wooffitt, 2005) to present the views and impressions of her colleagues as corroborating her depiction of the difficulties she faced pre-medication. This also creates a *shift in footing* (Dickerson, 1997; Potter, 1996), as Luciana becomes merely the reporter of her employee's opinions; which helpfully corroborate her own story.

Extract: 2

- 16 'hey, you know, Luciana, you need to
get some ADHD
17 medicine, because you can't focus on
what you want us to
18 do, and, y-you have a hundred things
going at the same time,
19 and em, you can't, err, channel all your
energy so...'

Luciana

Luciana also explicitly connects her increased 'potential' with taking the drug.

Extract: 3

- 26 I feel like my potential has sky-rocketed
now that, erm,
27 I'm on medication.

Luciana

Luciana constructs her difficulties within the dominant biomedical discourse providing a narrative of *abnormality*. The rhetorical device of a *narrative form of accounting* (Potter, 1996) can also be seen to be at work here. This involves the linking together of events into a sequence, in a way that implies causality. This device works to increase the

² All names have been anonymised.

plausibility of an account. Luciana's argument runs thus (Harper, 2004):

I have ADHD > I had difficulty focussing and channelling energy > employees noticed and commented on this > employees provided encouragement to get ADHD medication > I finally got medicated > medication changed my life > medication has been positive for my business > my potential has sky-rocketed.

The taken-for-granted assumption inherent in this narrative is that ADHD exists as a legitimate medical disorder. Proof of this construction is taken from the reported improvements in Luciana's symptoms after taking Adderall. However, *correlation does not imply causation* (Utts, 2004) and it would, therefore, be circumstantial to make such a claim (McKay, 2000). As discussed by Leo and Lacasse (2009), it is well documented that ADHD stimulants improve attention span, along with other stimulant drugs like caffeine; but there is little evidence that they have beneficial effects in the long-term, or effects on any presumed underlying pathology that is independent of these established psychoactive effects (Moncrieff, 2009).

Similarly to caffeine, however, there is a discourse surrounding ADHD medication that would imply one could use the drugs in a similar way. For example, Brooke, in Extract 4 states:

Extract: 4

125 And I only take it on days that are very
academically
126 demanding. Because there are side-
effects and they're
127 not fun.

Brooke

In comparison to a 'typical' *relationship* to prescription drugs for a 'biomedical condition'; Brooke suggests here that the drugs are a 'means to an end'. They help her with her academic work; enhancing performance on 'days that are very academically demanding' (lines 125–126). However, because she does not like the side effects, she *chooses* when to take the drugs; in a similar manner as one might *choose* to drink coffee

to facilitate concentration, but avoid caffeine at other times due to migraines. There are also parallels here with recreational drug use, whereby the user is not 'addicted' but rather they are pursuing a 'temporary but potent altered state of consciousness' (Page & Singer, 2010, p.9).

Below, Dr Walker speaks about her own experience of ADHD and the positive impact the medication has had on her home life.

Extract: 5

24 Erm, I also noticed that, if I cook, coz I
love to cook, I can
25 actually clean the kitchen afterwards,
which has been, like
26 monumental, because I cook and I just
like leave it because,
27 y'know I don't like to do all the
detailed work. Erm, also I can
28 read through something all the way
through the first time and
29 know what it says. And before I would
read a paragraph,
30 have to go back and read it again,
because by the time I got
31 to the end of the page I was like what
did I just read?
32 So medication's really helped in those
aspects of life

Dr Walker

Dr Walker, within her professional remit as a 'psychotherapist', writes and broadcasts for a popular ADHD magazine. Hence the rhetorical device of *category entitlement* (Potter, 1996) is relevant, not only due to her presumed knowledge in the area as an 'ADHD-patient'; but also as a 'doctor' specialising in ADHD. Thus, it may be hypothesised that a key concern for Dr Walker would be to establish the legitimacy of ADHD and the positive effects of the medication, in order to protect her 'identity' as well as her career and credibility as a known 'ADHD-expert'. This is achieved in Extract 5 via the use of the rhetorical device of *contrast* (Boyett, 2008) whereby Dr Walker favourably compares her medicated life with her life pre-diagnosis and treatment.

Dr Walker chooses examples which, by their ubiquity, effectively democratise access to the ADHD label; needing to re-read paragraphs as one's mind has wandered (line 31); feeling reluctant to clean up the kitchen after cooking (line 27); each example, demonstrating how ADHD medication can provide a 'quick-fix' 'in those aspects of life' (line 32). Indeed, in the 'comments' section of this video one user writes: 'the dishes! OH MY GOD! it's always the dishes!' (*sic*) to which Dr Walker responds:

I have to unload and load the dishwasher today, and I have done everything else on my 'to do' list except that. lol Maybe 'dishwasher dysfunction' should be added to the DSM diagnostic criteria for ADHD.

The ADHD 'product' appears to have been marketed to women via personal endorsements and testimonials of both 'professionals' and 'sufferers'. Contrary to what may typically be thought of as *science*, 'the world of facts' (Potter, 2006, p.17) with a reliance on *evidence-based practice*, this analysis would suggest ADHD may be more appropriately defined by the context of its emergence, as a commercial 'product' with an identified female 'market'. The impact of this is explored in more detail below.

Further discussion and conclusions

'Desperate Housewives' vs. 'Superwomen'

'Failing to finish household chores', appears in the *DSM-5* as a symptom of adult-ADHD (APA, 2012, p.1). In the videos, medication was promoted as a way overcoming such difficulties, as well as supporting academic and occupational success. In the UK, 69 per cent of women are in paid employment (Office for National Statistics, 2012); however, 92 per cent still complete all the household tasks. Gill (2007) suggests that, for women, 'carrying out a double-day is rendered invisible by the superwoman imagery' (p.97) of 'having it all'.

In relation to ADHD, the child population has been critically conceptualised as: 'Requires medication to progress academically' (Rogers & Mancini, 2010, p.87).

I propose that the adult-female-population may also be critically conceptualised as 'requires medication to achieve 'superwoman status''. Thus, in the same way that stimulants have been used to increase children's academic standards (Leo & Lacasse, 2009); women may now be medicated to ensure they demonstrate optimum performance in every area of their lives.

Feminist authors have written about the relationship between a patriarchal society and women's use of substances (Ettorre, 1994). If women fail to qualify as 'superwoman' then they are encouraged to look for a solution; the material used in this study would suggest the clandestine marketing of stimulant medication has offered an appealing resolution to such 'deficiency' in performance.

Implications for feminist practice

Empowering and educating women

In discussing the discourses of femininity, Stoppard (2000) described the way women continue to be judged against old ideas of what it is to be 'female' as well as now needing to be successful career-women and look eternally young and attractive. Ussher (1991) also described the 'discourse of madness' which 'serves to divert attention away from the problems within society, focussing attention onto the individual, who is suffering only as a direct result of societal pressures' (p.148). As long as these discourses are hidden they also remain unquestioned. By consistently engaging women in conversations as outlined above, these limiting discourses may be brought to the surface, deconstructed and challenged.

Some would argue, however, that this work should move away from individual conversations, placing more emphasis on a drive for social action (Ettorre, 1994).

Lobbying for change and political action

ADHD is consonant with the consumerist and competitive values of a late capitalist society. It both pathologises underperform-

mance (Conrad & Potter, 2000) and under-productivity; and offers a solution in the form of stimulant drugs. Moreover, the ADHD-model appears to produce an identity that favours the interests of both the *psy-complex* and pharmaceutical companies. In bringing such discourses and devices to the surface, they may subsequently be challenged and revealed as 'a 'practical moral enterprise' (Coulter, 1979, p.151), that requires democratic participation and control' (Moncrieff, 2010).

According to Ettorre (1994), an important focus for action would be to raise public awareness of the relationship between patriarchal society and women's use of substances. A starting point might then be to begin publishing relevant critical literature in more high-profile, mainstream journals or popular media outlets (Leo & Lecasse, 2009). We could also take a more assertive approach in utilising social media and networking platforms (e.g. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter) to disseminate alternative discourses of female distress. This could involve constructing alternative YouTube material, about 'ordinary' pressures and 'ordinary' responses; devoid of the need for labels, medication or the involvement of the 'psy-complex'.

More generally, attention needs to be paid to lobbying websites such as YouTube; requesting stricter regulations on the covert promotional material used, noting the illegality of Direct to Consumer Advertising in the UK (WHO, 2009).

Final reflections

This paper has highlighted some of the *rhetorical tropes* used to persuade women of the 'currency' of ADHD in helping to 'conquer' the multiple demands and responsibilities of the modern-day 'superwomen' (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). ADHD has been offered, indeed promoted, to women as a formulation of their 'underperformance' and a 'key' to the solution (Conrad & Potter, 2000).

Szasz (1971) argues that it is the classification and diagnosis of behaviours that result in the individual being 'scapegoated' by an oppressive society. Moreover, with 'treatment', potentially stigmatised women are promised a means via which they may be brought back into the fold. Issues of social inequalities and power are notably absent in each of the videos, with only the 'neuro-chemical self' (Rose, 1998) left available for manipulation and modification.

It has been particularly remarkable to note that a 'disorder' which was once considered almost entirely limited to boys (Timimi, 2005), is now being readily applied to women. This further reinforces the notion that ADHD is serving as yet another means via which women may reframe their discontent (Moncrieff et al., 2011). Meanwhile, stimulants look ready to compete with anti-depressants as the next chemical panacea, or 'mothers-little-helper'.

Correspondence

Helen Winter

helen_winter84@hotmail.com

References

- American Psychiatric Association (APA) (1994). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed.)*. Washington, DC: APA.
- American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2012). *DSM-5 Development: 06 Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Rationale for Changes in ADHD in DSM-5*. Arlington, Virginia, USA. Retrieved June 2012, from: <http://www.dsm5.org/ProposedRevisions/Pages/proposedrevision.aspx?rid=383#>
- Asherson, P. (2013). ADHD in adults: A clinical concern. In C. Surman, *ADHD in adults*. Boston, MA: Humana Press.
- Boyett, J. (2008). *Won't get fooled again*. New York: AMACOM.
- Bren, L. (2004). ADHD: Not just for kids anymore. *FDA Consumer Magazine*, 38(6).
- Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism*. East Sussex: Routledge.
- Castle, L., Aubert, R., Verbrugge, R. & Khalid, M. (2007). Trends in medication treatment for ADHD. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 10(4), 335–342.
- Conrad, P. & Potter, D. (2000). From hyperactive children to ADHD adults: Observations on the expansion of medical categories. *Social Problems*, 47(4), 559–582.
- Coulter, J. (1979). *The social construction of mind*. London: Macmillan.
- Dickerson, P. (1997). 'It's not just me who's saying this...' The deployment of cited others in television political discourse. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 36, 33–48.
- Edwards, D. & Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive psychology*. London: Sage.
- Ettorre, E. (1994). What can she depend on? Substance use and women's health. In S. Wilkinson & C. Kitzinger, *Women and health* (pp.85–101). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In A. McHoul & M. Rapley, *How to analyse talk in institutional settings: A casebook of methods* (pp.25–40). London: Continuum.
- Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (2004). Critical discourse analysis. In C. Seale, *Social research methods: A reader*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Pantheon.
- Fox, S. (2011). *Health Topics: 80% of internet users look for health information online*. Pew Research Centre, Pew Internet and American Life Project. California: California Healthcare Foundation.
- Getahun, D., Jacobsen, S., Fassett, M., Chen, W., Demissie, K. & Rhoads, G. (2013). Recent trends in childhood attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 1–7.
- Gill, R. (2007). *Gender and the media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hansen, S., McHoul, A. & Rapley, M. (2003). *Beyond help: A consumers' guide to psychology*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS.
- Harper, D. (2004). Storying policy: Constructions of risk in proposals to reform UK mental health legislation. In B. Hurwitz, T. Greenhalgh & V. Skultans, *Narrative research in health and illness*. Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Healy, D. (2004). Shaping the intimate: Influences on the experience of everyday nerves. *Social Studies of Science*, 34, 219–245.
- Hepburn, A. (2003). *An introduction to critical social psychology*. London: Sage.
- Knudson-Martin, C. & Silverstein, R. (2009). Suffering in silence: A qualitative meta-data-analysis of postpartum depression. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 35(2), 145–158.
- Leo, J. & Lacasse, J. (2009). The manipulation of data and attitudes about ADHD: A study of consumer advertisements. In S. Timimi & J. Leo (Eds.), *Rethinking ADHD: From brain to culture* (pp.287–312). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McHoul, A. & Rapley, M. (2005). A case of attention-deficit/hyperactivity diagnosis: Sir Karl and Francis B slug it out on the consulting room floor. *Discourse and Society*, 16(3), 419–449.
- McKay, T. (2000). *Guidelines for critical thinking: Reasons, explanations and decisions*. Canada: Wadsworth.
- Miller, T. (2010). Ritalin: Panic in the USA. *Cultural Studies Review*, 14(2), 103–112.
- Moncrieff, J. (2009). *The myth of the chemical cure: A critique of psychiatric drug treatment*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Moncrieff, J. (2010). Psychiatric diagnosis as a political device. *Social Theory & Health*, 8(4), pp.370–382.
- Moncrieff, J., Rapley, M. & Timimi, S. (2011). The construction of psychiatric diagnoses: The case of adult ADHD. *Journal of Critical Psychology Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 11(1), 16–29.
- Moynihan, R. & Cassels, A. (2005). *Selling sickness*. New York: Nation Books.
- Moynihan, R., Heath, R. & Henry, D. (2002). Selling sickness: The pharmaceutical industry and disease mongering. *British Medical Journal*, 324, 886–891.
- Norris, C. & Lloyd, G. (2000). Parents, professionals and ADHD: What the papers say. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 15(22), 123–137.

- Office for National Statistics (2006). *The Time Use Survey: 2005*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Office for National Statistics (2012). *Labour Market Statistics*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Page, B. & Singer, M. (2010). *Comprehending drug use: Ethnographic research at the social margins*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Parker, I. (2005). *Qualitative psychology: Introducing radical research*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Pomerantz, A. (1986). Extreme case formulations: A new way of legitimating claims. *Human Studies*, 9, 219–230.
- Potter, J. (1996). *Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric and social construction*. London: Sage.
- Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology*. London: Sage.
- Rogers, R. & Mancini, M. (2010). The discursive pathways of ADHD. In C. Dudley-Marling & A. Gurn (Eds.), *The myth of the normal curve* (Vol. 11, pp.87–103). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Rose, N. (1998). *Inventing ourselves: Psychology, power and personhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Simon, V., Czobor, P., Balint, S. & Meszaros, A. (2009). Prevalence and correlates of adult attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder: Meta-analysis. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 194, 205–211.
- Stoppard, J. (2000). *Understanding depression: Feminist social constructionist approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Szasz, T. (1971). *The myth of mental illness*. London: HarperCollins.
- Timimi, S. (2005). *Naughty boys: Antisocial behaviour, ADHD and the role of culture*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Timimi, S. & Leo, J. (2009). *Rethinking ADHD: From brain to culture*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tuffin, K. & Howard, C. (2001). Demystifying discourse analysis. In A. McHoul & M. Rapley (Eds.), *How to analyse talk in institutional settings: A casebook of methods* (pp.196–205). London: Continuum.
- Ussher, J. (1991). *Women's madness: Misogyny or mental illness*. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Ussher, J. (2010). Are we medicalising women's misery? A critical review of women's higher rates of reported depression. *Feminism Psychology*, 20, 9–35.
- Utts, J. (2004). *Seeing through statistics*. California: Duxbury Press.
- Wilkinson, S. & Kitinger, C. (1996). *Women And health: Feminist perspectives*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Wooffitt, R. (2005). *Conversation analysis and discourse analysis: A comparative and critical introduction*. London: Sage.
- Woog, A. (2009). *YouTube*. Chicago: Norwood House Press.
- World Health Organisation. (2009). Direct-to-consumer advertising under fire. *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 87(8), 565–644. Retrieved from: <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/8/09-040809/en/index.html>
- YouTube (2012). *YouTube: Press statistics*. Retrieved 31 July 2012, from: http://www.youtube.com/t/press_statistics

Should I stay or should I go? Intersectionality, feminist methodologies and research on/with others

Megan Chawansky

The notion of intersectionality is considered to be one of the most important contributions made to social theory by the discipline of women's studies. Described variously as a theory, method, concept, lens, and analytic, it contends that one ought to attend to the various ways in which multiple identity categories (e.g. race, class, sexuality, and gender) interact to impact individual lives and the lives of similarly-situated groups. Despite its relatively stable and widely-embraced premise, persistent debates and questions surround intersectionality and continue to inspire critical attention by scholars of gender and women. This article recounts some of the persistent debates and questions to inspire further consideration on intersectionality within discussions of feminist methodology. It demonstrates the utility and tensions of the theory/method through illustrative examples of how intersectionality operates within sport for development and peace (SDP) research.

Keywords: Intersectionality; sport; methodology; development.

Frédérique Apffel-Marglin is Professor of Anthropology at Smith College, where she directs the Center for Mutual Learning (CML). She has done fieldwork in Eastern India for 25 years, publishing several books based on this work, but gave up fieldwork in 1992 for ethical/political reasons.

(Saunders, 2002, p.xi)

I CAME ACROSS the biographical note listed above as I prepared a grant application that requested funding to travel to India and study a girl-focussed 'sport for development' programme. In a text on post-development thought, I was not surprised to read that a scholar had decided to cease fieldwork in light of ethical concerns, but it did make me pause and reflect on my situation and research aspirations. The unresolved questions I persistently struggle with came to the forefront of my mind: Why did I want to go to India? Was I 'qualified' to do research there with/on others? Was I suited to represent the lives and stories given to me by the girls in my proposed project? Why was I not researching the 'underserved' girls within my own community? These particular questions and related ones troubled me from the moment I entered into 'Sport for

Development and Peace' (SDP) research and work five years ago. The subset of sport programming that is considered a part of the transnational SDP movement seeks to capitalise on the instrumental value of sport and to use sport as a means through which to teach lessons on teamwork, goal-setting, respect, and conflict resolution. SDP programmes usually, but not always, take place in lower-to-middle-income countries (LMIC) and attempt to align with more traditional international development initiatives. Despite limited evidence to document success, the low-cost and UN-support of SDP initiatives means that more come into existence every year. Increasingly, SDP seek to attend to the needs and issues faced by girls in LMIC, and these programmes in particular raise a number of important questions for me, notably: what theoretical and

methodological tools are available to guide my research questions and plans?

When I began working in the SDP field, I did not enter with unbridled enthusiasm about the possibility of sport for social good. I had recently finished my PhD in the area of sport, had degrees in women's studies, and had meandered through the ups and downs of my own high-level sporting career. I (thought I) knew too much about the negatives of sport, of gender politics, neocolonialism, and tensions around the notion of a global feminism to enter the field with any false hopes of sport being a bridge across all social barriers. I was not naïve, but nor was I unaffected when I faced criticism in light of my American, Western woman, and *mzungu* (the White person) status. Despite the challenges, occasional ambivalence and uncertainty I feel at times, I am committed to better understanding the sports programming that is being done in the name of girls' empowerment. This inevitably requires me to travel and meet with participants in a research setting. In this article, I attempt to articulate the complexities my struggles as a scholar interested in researching (*other*) girls' and women's experiences with sport and physical culture. I do this by turning attention to the SDP field to highlight issues of gender, nation, sexuality, race, and Global North/Global South collaborations and partnerships. I begin with a thorough discussion of the concept of intersectionality as a way of locating the work I do within some larger theoretical and methodological debates. The belief in the import of intersectionality underpins many of the concerns I possess with respect to research on/with others; I know that I may be linked to my research participants by my gender and understanding of sport, but I am also separated by many other factors. The methodological application of intersectionality is less clear, and much of this article will offer more questions than a fixed answer to my question of how one 'does' SDP research with attention to the spirit of intersectionality.

From theorising intersectionality to doing intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw, UCLA Professor of Law, is often credited as the originator of the term intersectionality (McCall, 2005). Crenshaw's writing utilised an analysis of intersectional identities to examine and better understand the experiences of women of colour in employment (Crenshaw, 1989) and in domestic violence (Crenshaw, 1991). The term itself appeared in the title of Crenshaw's (1991) article which explored the ways in which feminist or anti-racist models and understandings of domestic violence left women of colour out of the discussion, and subsequently bereft of services, policy, and theorising. Though considered a legal scholar, Crenshaw's (1991) intersectional analysis explored the ways in which the experiences of women of colour were omitted in legal, as well as structural, political, and representational contexts. As such, her work provided an example of the ways in which the theory or model of intersectionality could be utilised on multiple fronts. While Crenshaw (1991) claimed that 'intersectionality is not being offered [here] as some new totalising theory of identity' (p.1244), recent work by scholars writing in education (Cole, 2009), public health (Bowleg, 2008), ethnography (Mazzei & O'Brien, 2009), political science (Hancock, 2007; Yuval-Davis, 2007), geography (Valentine, 2007), international development (Baines, 2010), and psychology (Warner, 2008), suggests that its utility as a theory is still quite strong and straddles disciplinary boundaries. Knapp (2005) notes that the staying power of intersectionality underscores the way in which it offers 'a way out of the impasses of identity politics in theory production while maintaining feminism's political impetus' (p.255). Its longevity can also be attributed to its ability to provide a response to one of the foundational concerns within feminism: how to acknowledge and address diversity among women (Davis, 2008). Within sport studies, the premise of intersectionality is nearly fully embraced with scholars such as McDonald

and Birrell (1999) (see also Birrell & McDonald, 2000) arguing for and demonstrating the utility of considering multiple axes of power within their work. Even those who do not necessarily 'do' intersectional analyses at least see fit to purport that their work attends to this theoretical premise. As Knapp (2005) remarks, scholars often incorporate the 'race-class-gender, etc., moral mantra' into written work to communicate that, 'I'm well informed' and 'I'm politically correct' without articulating how this particular theoretical understanding of identities informs their work theoretically and methodologically (p.255). This issue is attended to in more detail below.

Foremost, however, it is important to note that though Crenshaw (1989, 1991) may have coined the term, many scholars correctly note that the sentiment behind it appears in several important Black feminist texts from the 1970s and 1980s, most notably the Combahee River Collective statement, produced in 1977. The Combahee River Collective statement, written by a collective of self-identified Black feminists, critiqued the inability of the 'women's' movement to articulate a vision that accounted for and addressed multiple identities and the various realities of women. As such, it delivered a significant challenge to the utility of identity politics at the time and provided a new conceptual model for considering and better understanding diversity among women. Intersectionality's connection to Black feminist thought and its primary interest in the intersection of race and gender demanded and created space for the experiences of Black women to be included and theorised. For some, this over-reliance on Black women as subjects/objects of intersectionality raises political, methodological, and theoretical issues. I summarise and review this issue and several others below with the hope of better teasing out the tensions that exist around intersectionality.

One of the persistent questions within discussions of intersectionality relates to the question of who or what can be objects/

subjects of research utilising intersectionality. Does its origins in Black feminist thought, its inherent critique of research and theorising which leaves out women of color, and the understanding that most do not 'regard intersectionality as a neutral term' (McCall, 2005, p.1771) demand that intersectionality focus on foregrounding the experiences of women of colour? Some would answer in the affirmative, and as Bruening (2005) argues, sport research still needs this cajoling because too often the experiences of Black women are not included. In this instance, intersectionality can be imparted as both a political and analytical tool to speak to these omissions. Nash (2008), however, is concerned about the unintended consequences of intersectionality's 'theoretical reliance' on Black women's experiences (p.8). In particular, Nash (2008) suggests that this reliance proves problematic on two fronts: it treats Black women as 'unitary and monolithic' subjects, obscuring differences 'between Black women', and it does little to advance Black feminist thought (pp.8-9). Furthermore, Nash (2008) suggests that intersectionality projects 'continue(s) in the tradition of Black feminism' without articulating a clear understanding of how it differs from previously completed work in the area (p.9). In some ways, then, it may be seen to stymie new theoretical evolutions within Black feminist thought.

Nash's (2008) concerns raise additional questions. If intersectionality's over-reliance on Black women as subjects might contribute to ancillary problems, and if all people have intersections of identity, can any person or any group can be studied via intersectionality? Or must they be considered to possess marginalised identities to remain true to the politicised beginnings of intersectionality? These questions are necessarily related to larger questions about more recent forays into studies of Whiteness, masculinities, and heterosexual identities, and in the context of discussions on intersectionality, these types of questions persist

and require one to consider the larger political issues underpinnings of research questions and purpose. Within the literature on sport studies, the question seems unresolved as scholars have used the premise of intersectionality (though not necessarily the word itself) to explore both the white masculinity of US baseball player, Nolan Ryan (Trujillo, 2000) and the ethnicity and heterosexuality of US golfer, Nancy Lopez (Jamieson, 2000).

Part of the issue refers back to the impreciseness of the term's current use. Nash (2009) suggests that the term intersectionality has moved from its original usage and has since been used 'as an anti-exclusion tool that foregrounds the experiences of women of color, as a political strategy for combating oppression, and as a sophisticated analytic grappling with how race, gender, class and sexuality intersect to shape experiences of identity and oppression' (p.588). Others see it as a 'concept or heuristic device, and still others see it as a reading strategy for doing feminist analysis' (Davis, 2008, p.68). In all its myriad forms and incarnations, intersectionality's core offering remains consistent; it critiques social theories which attempt to understand difference and diversity via additive or parallel models. Intersectionality claims that these approaches fail to accurately capture the complexities and the realities of the lived experiences and suggests that key elements of social identity are best understood at their points of convergence, so that the ways in which different systems of social stratification commingle might be acknowledged, better understood, and addressed. In some ways, the ambiguity with which intersectionality is understood and applied stunts not only the advancement of Black feminist thought but also any research that endeavours a comprehensive and complete analysis.

Despite – or because of – the ambiguity surrounding intersectionality, the theory continues to attract attention both within and outside of women's studies. McCall (2005) describes intersectionality as possibly

the most significant 'theoretical contribution' by the field of women's studies (p.1771). Her work attempts to identify and describe three ways that scholars manage the complexities of multiple analytical categories within their research, calling them: anticategorical, intracategorical, and inter-categorical. If imaging these three approaches on a continuum, McCall (2005) places 'intracategorical complexity' in the middle, as it 'acknowledges the stable and even durable relationships that social categories represent at any given point in time, though it also maintains a critical stance toward categories' (p.1774). Scholars imparting this method for addressing the complexities of identities frequently highlight cases or groups that exist 'at neglected points of intersections' (ibid., p.1774). Newhall and Buzuvis (2008) provide a recent example of this strategy within the realm of sport studies via their exploration of the *Harris vs. Portland* lawsuit wherein former Pennsylvania State University basketball coach, Rene Portland, was sued by a former member of the university's women's basketball team, Jennifer Harris, who alleged that her dismissal from the team was tied to sexual orientation discrimination and racial discrimination by Portland. Newhall and Buzuvis (2008) examined media coverage of the lawsuit and suggest that media's considerable attention to the sexual orientation angle of this case effectively erased both the racial discrimination claim as well as discussions of race as they intersect and interface with expectations of gender and sexual orientation. They attempt to address this oversight by examining how various sources 'address, both separately and together, issues of sex and gender, sexual orientation, and race' (ibid., p.346).

Despite McCall's (2005) efforts, the problems with 'doing' intersectionality research is that no one is quite sure exactly how to do it, or, for that matter, how to 'do' it well. This concern is one of the most frequently debated among feminist academics (Davis, 2008, p.75). Questions persist regarding how

many and which particular identities must be included within an analysis that rests upon the tenets of intersectionality. Others wonder if an intersectional analysis must necessarily focus on oppressive interplays or if it might be a useful construct from within which to theorise intersections that might be beneficial. The debates over how to do intersectionality-informed research and analyses exists primarily outside the realm of sport studies, and therefore one of the aims of this article is to bring these conversations to examples within a transnational sport studies topic for further discussion and refinement. In so doing, I invariably support Davis's (2008) assertion that the persistent questions and continuous scholarly engagement with intersectionality bespeaks its success as a (feminist) theory.

Intersectionality in SDP research

The celebration of the possibilities of sport and of individual programmes is only beginning to be matched by critical engagement with the visions, outcomes, delivery, and management of such programmes. The steadfast belief in the potential for SDP programming reflects a primary and sometimes uncritical faith in the instrumental value of sport that has been critiqued by scholars such as Black (2010) for replicating errors found in other development initiatives. My aim here is not to review previous work on the topic, but instead to highlight select research to not only illustrate the ways in which intersectionality might be utilised within the field, but hopefully convince readers that bringing an intersectional approach to all elements of theorising in the SDP world is essential for thinking through the complex issues the field presents.

I understand that the current absence of (formal) evidence of intersectionality within SDP research does not necessarily suggest evidence of absence of the need for it. Though intersectional analyses may not be currently available within the extant SDP academic literature, my time in the field as a SDP practitioner (and as one who is regu-

larly engaging practitioners and scholars in the field) allows me to regularly confront situations that call for intersectional analyses. Further, I am keenly aware of the way in which the 'nonprofit industrial complex' encourages SDP practitioners to 'package themselves [and their programmes] as slick, business-minded, 'culturally competent' professionals' to secure funding necessary for their continuance (Luft & Ward, 2009, p.24). Much like the scholars Knapp (2005) calls out for accessing the 'race-class-gender, etc., moral mantra' (p.255) into their written work without a clear description as to how this is done, many SDP programmes lack a cohesive programme theory for how they actually deliver on their well-meaning intentions of addressing intersectionality. My first suggestion for incorporating intersectionality into the field of SDP research, then, is actually less about using it as a methodological approach, and more about framing and documenting the work that is already being done through this perspective.

The theory of intersectionality also allows one to understand how certain identities or discourses can become subsumed within both understandings of individual and movements as a whole. Within SDP academic literature, the issue of sexual identity remains largely out of view, though I would argue that this is one of the fundamental themes that the movement as a whole seeks to address. From SDP programmes that deal with HIV/AIDS to those which seek to advise girls on sexual and reproductive health, curriculums on sexual behaviours is largely visible, though the discussions of the ways in which sexual identities merge with behaviours and intersect with other identities is limited. Therefore, I would encourage SDP researchers and scholars to begin to unpack the ways in which discourses of 'appropriate' (hetero-) sexuality intersect with other identities to pervade the SDP movement, yet very rarely appear in the literature (an exception would be Forde, 2008). Further, I would encourage those interested in the study of

interns/practitioners in the field to build on the important work of Darnell (2010) to consider the ways in which the sexualities of individuals in the field intersect with their racial and gendered subjectivities. Finally, while the SDP movement as a whole has been studied and critiqued as a neo-colonialist and imperialist intervention, it has been less studied as a 'gendered, racialised, classed [and] heteronormative' movement (Baines, 2010, p.119). Intersectionality reminds us that these elements are equally as relevant in shaping the aims, objectives and outcomes of the movement.

Conclusion

Increasingly, research which aspires to better understand human subjects is not considered complete unless it can demonstrate adequate attention to the interplay of identities such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and ability status. Similarly, articles and texts on conducting research and research methodologies within the realm of sport studies, and outside of it, consistently remind scholars of the importance of attending to issues of multiple and interlocking identities within their work. Certainly attempting to understand the complex interplay of various social identities as opposed to weighing their respective difficulties or trying to 'add up' identities (e.g. girls who are non-white and disabled are doubly oppressed) is a relatively new contribution to social theory, and one that still warrants critical debate, attention, and refinement from scholars located outside the realm of sport sociology.

Intersectionality, the idea that 'one cannot reduce identity to a summary of the social groups to which a person belongs' and rather must examine the ways in which 'these social groups interact with each other to create specific manifestations' (Warner, 2008, p.454) is understood on a theoretical and practical level but less so on a methodological level. This is likely related to the few resources available which explore either how to 'do' or how to assess research that claims to embrace intersectionality. The suggestions I offer above about how to include the premise of intersectionality within SDP research offer several examples of how to use the theoretical underpinnings of the approach. That said, the practical 'doing' of intersectionality in the field remains a bit elusive for me and is not adequately addressed within this review. If/when I travel to India to research girls' experiences in sport for development programmes, I intend to return with more insights into the application of intersectionality as a method. I will also likely bring more political and ethical issues that may convince me that it is better to stay than to go.

Correspondence

Megan Chawansky

m.chawansky@brighton.ac.uk

References

- Baines, D. (2010). Gender mainstreaming in a development project: Intersectionality in a post-colonial un-doing? *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 17(2), 119–149.
- Birrell, S. & McDonald, M.G. (2000). *Reading sport: Critical essays on power and representation*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
- Black, D. (2010). The ambiguities of development: Implications for 'Development Through Sport'. *Sport in Society*, 13(1), 121–129.
- Bowleg, L. (2008). When Black + Lesbian + Woman = Black Lesbian Woman: The methodological challenges of qualitative and quantitative intersectionality research. *Sex Roles*, 59, 312–325.
- Bruening, J.E. (2005). Gender and racial analysis in sport: Are all the women White and all the Blacks men? *Quest*, 57, 330–349.
- Cole, B. (2009). Gender, narratives and intersectionality: Can personal experience approaches to research contribute to 'Undoing Gender'? *International Review of Education*, 55, 561–578.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalising the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of anti-discrimination doctrine, feminist theory and anti-racist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139–67.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of colour. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–7129.
- Darnell, S.C. (2010). Sport, race and bio-politics: Encounters with difference in 'Sport for Development and Peace' internships. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*.
- Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword. *Feminist Theory*, 9(1), 67–85.
- Forde, S. (2008). *Playing by their rules*. Kenya: Moving the Goalposts.
- Hancock, A. (2007). When multiplication doesn't equal quick addition: Examining intersectionality as a research paradigm. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(1), 63–79.
- Jamieson, K. (2000). Reading Nancy Lopez. In S. Birrell & M.G. McDonald (Eds.), *Reading sport: Critical essays on power and representation* (pp.144–165). Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
- Knapp, G. (2005). Race, class, gender: Reclaiming baggage in fast travelling theories. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 12(3), 249–265.
- Luft, R.E. & Ward, J. (2009). Toward an intersectionality just out of reach: Confronting challenges to intersectional practice. In V. Demos & M. Segal (Eds.), *Advances in gender research: Perceiving gender locally, globally and intersectionally* (pp.9–37). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.
- Mazzei, J. & O'Brien, E.E. (2009). You got it, so when do you flaunt it? Building rapport, intersectionality, and the strategic deployment of gender in the field. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 38(3), 358–383.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3), 1771–1800.
- McDonald, M.G. & Birrell, S. (1999). Reading sport critically: A methodology for interrogating power. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 16, 283–300.
- Nash, J.C. (2008). Re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, 89, 1–15.
- Newhall, K.E. & Buzuvis, E.E. (2008). (e)Racing Jennifer Harris: Sexuality and race, law and discourse in Harris vs. Portland. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 32(4), 345–368.
- Saunders, K. (Ed.) (2002). *Feminist post-development thought*. London: Zed Books.
- Trujillo, N. (2000). Hegemonic masculinity on the mound. In S. Birrell & M.G. McDonald (Eds.), *Reading sport: Critical essays on power and representation* (pp.14–39). Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
- Valentine, G. (2007). Theorising and researching intersectionality: A challenge for feminist geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 59(1), 10–21.
- Warner, L.R. (2008). A best practices guide to intersectional approaches in psychological research. *Sex Roles*, 59, 454–463.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2007). Intersectionality, citizenship and contemporary politics of belonging. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 10(4), 561–574.

The construction of Gender Dysphoria at 'Classifying Sex: Debating *DSM-5*'

Zowie Davy

ON THE American Psychiatric Association's (APA) website the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5)*, is promoted as the 'most comprehensive, current, and critical resource for clinical practice available to today's mental health clinicians and researchers of all orientations' (American Psychiatric Association, 2012a). The manual is 'comprehensive,' indeed; it has grown in size since its first edition to over 900 pages in its current *DSM-5* incarnation. We could argue as Farley, the former president of the American Psychological Association, does that the *DSM* authors are contributing to an increase in 'the relentless production of disorders and pathologising of normal extremes' (Gornall, 2013, no page no.) and the facilitating of mental illnesses. In response to the publication of the *DSM-5*, a two-day conference at the University of Cambridge took place: 'Classifying Sex: Debating *DSM-5*', at which discussants debated the potential impact of the manual's criteria for pathological, paraphilic and by default 'normal' sexualities, gender identities, and psychiatric practice. The delegates considered amongst many other topics the role of power and evidence, at least that is how I understood many of the contributions to the debate.

The panel that I was invited to contribute to featured Kenneth Zucker (Chair of the Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders work-group of *DSM-5*) to whom I was to critically respond. In this reflective commentary I would like to focus on power and evidence because Zucker has previously described the *DSM*'s international influence as spreading

from clinical care and training to clinical research (Zucker, 2010b). Moreover, Zucker's conference talk, 'The Science and Politics of *DSM-5*' (Zucker, 2013) invoked these conceptual frameworks. Zucker's intriguing first presentation slide read: 'Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac (Henry Kissinger, 1973).' This was followed by a slide illustrating the sum of publications Zucker and the other Chairs of the *DSM-5* working groups had published accompanied by Zucker's remarks that these publications were part of the reason why they were selected by the APA's Board of Trustees (BOT) and as Chairs of their respective work groups. This generated in me a sense that power and evidence were tangled, and that conflicting positions of power were being played out in a number of domains, profiting from many tactical partnerships (Foucault, 1998 [1984]): the BOT, the contributors to the working groups, the academe and in some cases the (parents of) patients themselves through data from the clinics.

Kissinger's quotation was not spoken to by Zucker; thus, I understood the first slide, rightly or wrongly, simultaneously as an admittance of the *jouissance* he sustains from the relative power he has over the (gender and sexual) lives of many and an in-joke for the benefit of his colleagues and allies. For me the joke was at best veiled, banal, lascivious humour. Zucker's attempts at humour lasted throughout his talk, sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing to arouse a titter. Whilst the 'humour' flowed I was consistently drawn to the fact that we should not be laughing at these quips due to the

power that is constantly asserted over people's bodies by sexologists and psychiatrists in conjunction with those influenced by and those in partnership with the *DSM*, such as the police, law courts, civil courts and so on. Those that laughed, to my mind, should have been more aware that the *DSM* in some jurisdictions can act as an agent of law, with grave potentials, as the 'warning' from psychiatrist and APA historian Zilboorg suggests:

'a medical discipline which is still young and vigorous and ambitious enough to be adventurous, and yet is already mature enough to become a factor in almost every walk of our daily life: as human beings, as citizens, as men-in-the-street and as leaders of others, as pupils at the hands of life and as teachers under the guidance of the laws of mental functioning, as prisoners of the law and judges on the bench' (Zilboorg, 1944, pp.vi–vii).

This reminds us that those psychiatrists representing what constitutes sanity can do (symbolic) violence to the so-called insane, forcing them to fit into preconceived diagnoses, to play the patient role (Cooper, 1967) and perhaps attempt to divide feminist, queer and trans* continuities that are emerging in contemporary life.

Complex power relations

I would like to borrow Raymond Williams' (1977, p.112) concept of 'lived hegemony' in which hegemony is a complex ephemeral process of 'experiences, relationships and activities' to understand how 'deviant' sexualities and genders are engendered in the *DSM-5*. Zucker illustrated this in his paper when he attempted to shift the emphasis away purely from his and work group members' power within the authorial process and placed it firmly in the hands of the APA's BOT; their consolidated science and expertise act as axioms upon which another group of players deliberate. Zucker in his conference paper suggested that the BOT of the APA had the final say in what was

to be included in the final product. Whilst this may be true, the influence of his and his colleagues' work is visible between pages 423 and 459 of the latest edition of the *DSM* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), even though there are no references cited. In a dissenting piece about the BOT not including hebephilia (sexual attraction to pubescent children) in the *DSM-5*, Blanchard (2013) also suggested that the power of inclusion lay at the feet of the APA's BOT. He stated: that he had to remove from any public forum an

'insider's view' of specific people, events, or APA politics connected with that decision. All members of *DSM-5* Work Groups were required to sign an agreement with the APA that prohibits them from divulging any 'confidential information,' which was defined so as to include group discussions, internal correspondence, or any other information about the *DSM-5* development process' (Blanchard, 2013: no page number),

even though his data was scientifically 'validated.' Moreover, allusions to different groups, academics and researchers being represented in the 'consultation' process were iterated by Zucker without much substantiation. An editorial published in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, written by Zucker, argued that the *DSM-5* produced in the internet age heralded a democratised process with improved transparency (Zucker, 2013). Notions of validity, trustworthiness and rigour are invoked here; however, we should not take this at face value and must review these contributions on the APA's website.

Paradigmatic divisions

Zucker's paper (2013) did not appear to be something new. A repetition of previously articulated sentiments (see Tosh, 2011) was evident, such as the paradigmatic division between (postmodernist/poststructuralist) philosophers and scientists (politics and science respectively). This strategy could be

understood as functioning in a number of ways. Firstly, the repetition of a disciplinary divide can be seen to attempt to hide the fallacy of academic citation practices that split the objective science from subjective expert opinion. The scientific citations' value is increased through the author's, like minded colleagues' and research partners' and advocates' citation practices so much so that research evidence 'demands' the title of 'expert knowledge,' 'science,' and in our case, 'evidence' of trans* and sexual phenomena. At the same time we can ask what is not cited in a bid to keep the fallacy/narrative/discourse/fiction/paradigm alive. According to Ansara and Hegarty (2012), Zucker was the head of a powerful network of collaborating researchers who contribute to a cisgenderist diagnostic paradigm—cisgenderism is a discriminatory ideology that delegitimises people's own classifications of their genders and bodies. If we examine the literature reviews that have been published in a bid to reformulate the diagnosis for trans*, we can get an idea of how wide the democratised process was. Consulting the American Psychiatric Association's website (APA, 2012b) we can witness a distinct lack of attention to empirical work outside of the journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior* and a number of included papers were 'Letters to the Editor,' Zucker himself. Little work from social sciences, health sciences and the humanities was considered. Perhaps the psychiatric profession could learn a bit from the constructivists and trans* theorists Zucker summarily dismisses.

Disorder to Dysphoria

Whilst my area of concern in this commentary is with the inherent power that psychiatric diagnoses sustain over people's lives generally, I take a heightened exception to the power relations in my research area of trans*. The shift in the diagnosis that asserts that 'Gender Dysphoria' – the replacement diagnosis for Gender Identity Disorder – is a better option for trans* people has been widely contested (see TGEU, 2012).

However, I would like to suggest that any attempt to draw a simple linear account of power exerted from the *DSM* through gender clinics, misunderstands the multiplicity of practices in gender clinics (see May, 2002; Wren, 2005) outside of North America. Nonetheless, it is widely known, at least in my circle of researchers and activists, that Zucker's 'treatment' is not accepted by a number of trans* health advocates. This stems from the rigidity of what constitutes masculinity and femininity in his view and; moreover, his appeasement of misogynistic North American gender stratification (Serano, 2007). Some organisations (Winters, 2013) have suggested that Zucker's 'reparative practices' on gender non-conforming children may well constitute cruel and inhuman treatment if read against criteria described by the United Nations. The requirement to perform particular behaviours that correspond to whether you were born with a penis or vagina in stereotypical ways, to pacify societies' bullies, undermines the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2013), which states that respect for the views of the child alongside recognition of the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination is central to the consideration of gender equality. UNICEF has warned that gender-based discrimination is one of the most ubiquitous forms of discrimination that children face. For instance, sexological diagnoses using the *DSM's* Gender Dysphoria would still rely on a universalised and binary understanding of behaviors and bodily aesthetics, which are theorised as 'masculinity' and 'femininity' to augment essentialist claims about binary sexes. Whilst this is problematic at one level of 'treatment' because of the lack of consent from the children being treated, this clears the child's carer(s) of any part in the process. For instance, it will be more likely that parents who regard stereotypical behaviors natural rather than socially interpellated add to the 'science' of psychiatric sexology by providing the 'data' that contributes to the published materials in this area. The

atypical behaviour or gender distress that people may experience is situational and the result of societal standards, carers' views in collaboration with a health system that uses evidence that does not think beyond a binary framework and dated model of incongruence to 'natural' signifiers of masculinity and femininity. My research (Davy, 2008, 2010, 2011; Davy & Steinbock, 2012) and many others (Cromwell, 1999; Hines, 2011; Stone, 2006 [1991]) have illustrated that some trans* do not fit neatly into these restrictive binary 'scientific' models, which causes a problem for the diagnoses and for the purported 'cure.' Hence, my paper 'Will it make a difference or is it just semantics?: Diagnosing trans people in the *DSM-5*' (Davy, 2013) addressed three complex questions for the APA and Zucker:

1. In what ways does changing the taxonomy in the *DSM-5* lessen the already stigmatised position of trans* people?
2. Is it time for the *DSM* to better reflect human diversity by shifting the emphasis away from the dated two-sex model?
3. How does the trans* anti-pathologisation movement challenge *DSM-5* recognition?

None of the questions were adequately addressed. On the first question, Zucker responded to the question of stigmatising as if there was a hierarchy of shame that those diagnosed with a 'disorder' should find it more amenable with the change to Gender Dysphoria amongst a number of other changes. Reflecting the somewhat anomalous harm reduction model that asserts that Gender Dysphoria somehow lessens the stigma surrounding gender identities, gender expressions or bodies that do not conform to birth-assigned gender stereotypes, while at the same time providing some kind of diagnostic coding for access to medical transition treatment for those who need it is a position that is contentious and according to legislative powers beyond the North American borders is unnecessary.

Responses from the trans* anti-pathologisation movement

In an attempted shift from gatekeeper to facilitator, in contemporary models laid out in the *Standards of Care*, in its seventh version now, it stipulates that for people who desire surgical interventions

'it is important for mental health professionals to recognise that decisions about surgery are first and foremost a client's decision – as are all decisions regarding health care. However, mental health professionals have a responsibility to encourage, guide, and assist clients with making fully informed decisions and becoming adequately prepared' (World Professional Association of Transgender Health, 2012, p.27).

Myself and others have suggested that diagnostic criteria based on distress and impairment, rather than difference from cultural gender stereotypes, may offer a path toward physical transitioning goals; however, the trans* anti-pathologisation movement argue for a more radical paradigmatic shift. Self-determination, according to some trans* advocates, is another way of making recognition claims for those wanting technological interventions to change gender beyond a psychiatric frame (Cuban Multidisciplinary Society for Sexuality Studies, 2010; TGEU, 2012). Transgender Europe situates self-determination within a human rights discourse. In this literature it emphasises that every trans* person has a right to actualise their transition, as far as they wish it should go.

Perhaps this position is more closely aligned to some groups working towards the new World Health Organisation's *ICD-11* (Drescher, 2013; Drescher, Cohen-Kettenis & Winter, 2012), which supports a name change of 'Gender Incongruence' to enable medically necessary treatments based on medical rather than psychological models of care. This approach is gaining weight in the trans* anti-pathologisation movement (TGEU, 2012), perhaps because of governments, such as the Argentinean one that

recently legislated on, arguably, the most progressive trans* recognition law in the world. The law allows people to alter their gender on official documents without first having to receive a psychiatric diagnosis or surgery. In the *New York Times* online, Katrina Karkazis, a Stanford University professor of bioethics said that Argentina's new law will 'Not only [...] give you the right to self-identify, but for those who want medical intervention, [it] require[s] public and private providers to cover procedures for self-actualisation' (Schmall, 2012, no page number). The self-determination frame challenges health care professionals to work towards supporting trans* health interventions by reducing the psychopathological framework in which trans* are viewed. In effect, these claims remove the need for psychiatric diagnoses of Gender Dysphoria. In 1991 Sandy Stone (1991) observed that for strategic reasons a liberal transsexual politics may direct its energies towards the human rights of transsexuals rather than, for example, at psychomedical constructions of transsexuality. Here in 2013 we can see that human rights groups have refocused their energies towards transsexuality and other trans* identities by showing that these aesthetic¹ expressions of gender are 'expressions of sexual diversity' (Cuban Multidisciplinary Society

for Sexuality Studies, 2010) within normal extremes, moving beyond dualist notions of trans*. As one prominent group argues: attempting to diagnose diversity is, they say, 'a pointless exercise' (TGEU, 2012). Gender Dysphoria should not be classified because 'difference is not disease, non-conformity is not pathology, and uniqueness is not illness' (GID Reform Advocates, 2010, no page number). This debate is couched in the discourse of human rights and self-determination. The claims from these trans* advocates have started to erode the power of psychiatry over trans* bodies without implying the dualist notions of body and mind and situate trans* gendering within notions of affect. From this self-determination position they are redressing the notion of pathology for trans* and trans* politics in which people can self-actualise their gender (role) desires in whatever ways they wish.

Correspondence

Zowie Davy PhD

Senior Lecturer in Community Care,
University of Lincoln, UK.

'Classifying Sex: Debating DSM-5' was held at 'CRASSH', in Cambridge, 4–5 July 2013.

<http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/2076/>

References

- American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2012a). *American Psychiatric Publishing*. Retrieved 17 July 2013, from: <http://www.appi.org/SearchCenter/Pages/SearchDetail.aspx?ItemId=2555#>
- American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2012b). *Publications from DSM-5 development*. Retrieved 9 August 2013, from: <http://www.dsm5.org/Research/Pages/Publications.aspx>
- American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.)*. Washington, DC: APA.
- Ansara, Y.G. & Hegarty, P. (2012). Cisgenderism in psychology: Pathologising and misgendering children from 1999 to 2008. *Psychology and Sexuality*, 3(2), 137–160.
- Blanchard, R. (2013). A dissenting opinion on DSM-5 Pedophilic Disorder. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 1–4.
- Cooper, D. (1967). *Psychiatry and anti-psychiatry*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Cromwell, J. (1999). *Transmen and FTMs: Identities, bodies, genders and sexualities*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

¹ The term 'aesthetic' is 'the expression of the formal qualities of sentience, like the visual, aural, tactile, and so on, which transmit aesthetic affects, and the perception of such; simply stated, the experience of affects' (Davy & Steinbock, 2012, p.268).

- Cuban Multidisciplinary Society for Sexuality Studies (2010). *Statement on depathologisation of transsexualism*. Retrieved 7 January 2013, from: <http://ilga.org/ilga/en/article/mg7Y7pB1Rg>
- Davy, Z. (2008). 'Transsexuals' body modification as narcissistic self-regard. In Z. Davy, J. Downes, L. Eckert, N. Gerodetti, D. Llinares & A.C. Santos (Eds.), *Bound and unbound: Interdisciplinary approaches to genders and sexualities* (pp.112–130). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Davy, Z. (2010). Transsexual agents: Negotiating authenticity and embodiment within the UK's medicolegal system. In S. Hines & T. Sanger (Eds.), *Transgender identities: Towards a social analysis of gender diversity* (pp.106–126). London: Routledge.
- Davy, Z. (2011). *Recognising transsexuals: Personal, political and medicolegal embodiment*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Davy, Z. (2013). *Will it make a difference or is it just semantics?: Diagnosing trans people in the DSM-5*. Paper presented at the 'Classifying Sex: Debating DSM-5', University of Cambridge, 4 July.
- Davy, Z. & Steinbock, E. (2012). 'Sexing up' bodily aesthetics: Notes towards theorising trans sexuality. In S. Hines & Y. Taylor (Eds.), *Sexualities: Past reflections and future directions* (pp.266–285). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Drescher, J. (2013). Controversies in gender diagnoses. *LGBT Health*, 1(1), 9–13.
- Drescher, J., Cohen-Kettenis, P. & Winter, S. (2012). Minding the body: Situating gender diagnoses in the ICD-11. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 24, 568–577.
- Foucault, M. (1998 [1984]). *The will to knowledge: The history of sexuality Vol. 1* (R. Hurley, Trans.). London: Penguin.
- GID Reform Advocates (2010). *The vision of GID reform*. Retrieved 6 June 2013, from: <http://www.gidreform.org/>
- Gornall, J. (2013). DSM-5: A fatal diagnosis? *British Medical Journal*, 346, f3256.
- Hines, S. (2011). Sexing gender; gendering sex: Towards an intersectional analysis of transgender. In Y. Taylor, S. Hines & M. Casey (Eds.), *Theorising intersectionality and sexuality* (pp.140–162). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- May, C. (2002). Becoming women: Transgendered identities, psychosexual therapy and the challenge of metamorphosis. *Sexualities*, 5(4), 449–464.
- Schmall, E. (2012). *Transgender advocates hail law easing rules in Argentina*. Retrieved 7 January 2013, from: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/25/world/americas/transgender-advocates-hail-argentina-law.html?_r=0
- Serano, J. (2007). *Whipping girl: A transsexual woman on sexism and scapegoating*. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press.
- Stone, S. (1991). The empire strikes back: A post-transsexual manifesto. In J. Epstein & K. Straub (Eds.), *Body guards: The cultural politics of gender ambiguity* (pp.280–304). New York: Routledge.
- Stone, S. (2006 [1991]). The empire strikes back: A post-transsexual manifesto. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp.221–235). New York: Routledge.
- TGEU (2012). *Diagnosing diversity is crazy – Trans people are sane*. Retrieved 7 January 2013, from: http://www.tgeu.org/TGEU_PR_Diagnosing_diversity_is_crazy_Trans_people_are_sane
- Tosh, J. (2011). 'Zuck off! A commentary on the protest against Ken Zucker and his 'treatment' of Childhood Gender Identity Disorder. *Psychology of Women Section Review*, 13(1), 10–16.
- UNICEF (2013). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved 23 July 2013, from: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>
- Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Winters, K. (2013). *GID reform weblog*. Retrieved 7 April 2013, from: <http://gidreform.wordpress.com/>
- World Professional Association of Transgender Health (2012). *Standards of care for the health of transsexual, transgender, and gender non-conforming people*. Retrieved 11 December 2012, from: <http://www.wpath.org/documents/SOC%20V7%2003-17-12.pdf>
- Wren, B. (2005). *Thinking post-modern and practicing in the enlightenment: Managing uncertainty in the treatment of transgendered adolescents*. Paper presented at the 'Clinical analogies: Thinking embodied subjectivity across disciplines', University of Lancaster.
- Zilboorg, G. (1944). Presenting this volume. In J.K. Hall, G. Zilboorg & H.A. Bunker (Eds.), *100 years of American psychiatry* (pp.xi–xv). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Zucker, K. (2013, 4 July). *The science and politics of DSM-5*. Paper presented at the 'Classifying Sex: Debating DSM-5', University of Cambridge.

POWS Craftivism Workshop

Kirsty Budd, Paula Singleton & Lucy Thompson

POWS Conference, 10–12 July, Windsor.

ON THURSDAY 11 JULY, as part of the POWS Annual Conference this year, and for the first time, we held a Craftivism Workshop. We initially came up with this idea as we were very interested in crafty things, but were new to recruiting craft as a means of activism and so wanted to explore what ‘craftivism’ was all about.

The term ‘craftivism’ was coined by Betsy Greer and describes *‘the practice of engaged creativity, especially regarding political or social causes. By using their creative energy to help make the world a better place, craftivists help bring about positive change via personalised activism’* (Greer, 2007). Essentially, craftivism is a way of engaging in activism through the use of craft skills, such as knitting, sewing, collage and crochet. It is a way of participating in political and social activism through craft.

In the workshop we attempted two craftivism projects: feminist bunting and ‘protest’ Barbies. These projects were inspired by some developed by Craftivist Collective, a UK-based craftivist movement founded by Sarah Corbett, which now has thousands of members all over the world. Sarah dedicates time to spreading the word about craftivism, co-ordinating projects, giving talks and running workshops, and she was very supportive about the workshop we held at the POWS conference.

Delegates at the workshop helped us to create our thoughtful bunting, which adorned the slogan ‘Viva La Feminista’. Further, delegates each designed a ‘protest Barbie’, which were, without a doubt, the star of the show. Delegates gave their Barbies a feminist ‘makeover’, decorated them and created placards expressing a statistic, fact or

statement relating to gender inequality. The idea is that the Barbie is then displayed in public in order to provoke thought about gender inequality issues in those passers by who notice her. All of the Barbies were fantastically thought-provoking and, to name a few, included a Barbie stripped bare, and declaring that she’s ‘still not asking for it’. Another Barbie was used to convey the problematic nature of a Turkish custom whereby women who do not remain a virgin at marriage are instructed to wear a red ribbon around their white wedding dress in order to demonstrate their ‘impurity’. The protest Barbie was dressed in a white dress with a purple ribbon, and with a placard which asks us to consider whether she’s ‘pure enough?’. Helen Winter, who won the POWS postgraduate prize this year, used her Barbie to critique the marketing of ADHD to women and to express that the use of stimulants to become a ‘superwoman’ is not the answer. Yet another campaigned that menstruation should not be seen as a disorder and that it should not appear as such in the *DSM*. There was also technology Barbie in a torn and dirty lab coat, carrying a placard announcing ‘Maybe there’s a reason we leave STEM careers – look within your organisation’.

What this workshop demonstrated is that craft can be a very effective, non-threatening way to engage in activism. It served as a medium through which we had time and space to discuss and debate issues and concerns we have as feminists and to express these through craft. Although this form of activism is perhaps not for everyone, we would recommend that you give it a go. You don’t need fancy equipment or a great deal





of skill, just lots of ideas. It can be an empowering and fulfilling way of drawing people's attention to social injustice or issues of discrimination, and, what is more, it's really good fun. Thanks to everyone who joined in the craftivism workshop at the POWS conference and made it so memorable and such a success! We encourage you to incorporate this community-building activity into your next event; it is a great ice-breaker, and combines talk around political and academic interests in an enjoyable and powerful way.

Sarah Corbett

Sarah Corbett's background is in engaging people in global injustices working for Christian Aid, DFID and most recently Oxfam. She started doing craftivism (craft + activism) in 2008 as a hobby and reaction to traditional forms of activism. Due to demand Sarah set up the global Craftivist Collective in 2009 which now has thousands of supporters across the world. This hobby has turned her into one of the leading spokes-people in the craftivism movement

(*The Times* featured her as the leader of one of their five 'New Tribes' of 2012). Sarah has worked with Tate, Hayward, cult jewellers Tatty Devine, TOMS Shoes, British Library, Secret Cinema and Save the Children amongst others. As well as collaborating with charities and art institutions, she also sells craftivism products, kits and commissions, delivers workshops and talks and exhibits her own craftivism work around the world and is a craftivism columnist for *Crafty Magazine*. She has a craftivism book coming out in October 2013 with Thames & Hudson and part crowd-funded by 150 funders.

Quote from Sarah Corbett:

Craft connects your heart, head and hands, and when you relate that to justice issues, it can be world-changing personally and politically!

Our manifesto is: 'To expose the scandal of global poverty, and human rights injustices through the power of craft and public art. This will be done through provocative, non-violent creative actions.'

We focus on 'slow activism' reflecting on global issues whilst stitching and creating small and beautiful creations to leave as street art or give as gifts to influential people to provoke thought and action on global injustices and encourage people to help rather not harm the world. Craft is our method of campaigning but it is the political and social change that is the priority for us in all that we do and produce. In the words of one of our craftivists Rosa Martyn: 'A spoonful of CRAFT helps the ACTIVISM go down'. We hope to help people be the change they wish to see in the world by offering products, services, projects and a platform for this community of like-minded people to feel supported and part of this movement. Come join us!

For more information about craftivism, see:
<http://craftivist-collective.com>
<http://craftivism.com>

Correspondence

Kirsty Budd

k.budds@keele.ac.uk

Paula Singleton

P.Singleton@leedsmet.ac.uk

Lucy Thompson

Lucy.Thompson@leedsmet.ac.uk

Reference

Greer, B. (2007). *'Craftivism' Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice*. London: Sage.

Interfacing with older LGBT citizens

Helen Owton

Two-day Masterclass: Challenging discrimination

Bournemouth University, 17–18 April 2013

ORGANISED BY Kip Jones and Lee-Ann Fenge, who are researchers at Bournemouth University, the two-day Masterclass was staged for 25 participants in order to be informed of new knowledge about growing older as gay or lesbian. A third member of the research team, Marilyn Cash, joined us on the second day. In addition to the event being staged by Bournemouth University, there was also a fantastic array of food and drinks available for participants throughout the two days in Bournemouth University's Executive Business Centre; a location that meant we had the whole of the top floor with a breathtaking view overlooking Bournemouth town. Prior to arriving Kip had sent out a paper which helped inform us of what the day might involve: 'Collecting older lesbians' and gay men's stories of rural life in south-west England and Wales: 'We were obviously gay girls... (s) he removed his cow from our field' (Jones, Fenge, Read & Cash, 2013).

Lee-Ann started the presentation entitled 'Perspectives for practice informed by evidence from human experiences: participatory approaches to explore ageing and sexuality' by proceeding to describe and explain the historical emergence of the projects that have joined interests together. A description of the Gay and Grey project was followed by the Gay and Pleasant Land? Project (Fenge & Jones, 2006), which explored the connectivity between ageing, rurality and sexuality and employed participatory methods that were built on insights gained in the earlier Gay and Grey Project (Fenge, Jones & Read, 2006). This project

was a three-year funded project as part of the Research Councils UK-funded New Dynamics of Ageing Programme (a unique collaboration between five Councils – ESRC, EPSRC, BBSRC, MRC, AHRC). It is evident that the Bournemouth team have all worked extremely hard to obtain this funding and are impassioned about making a difference by involving members of the community and spreading, sharing knowledge to wider communities.

Kip was invited to the stage where he proceeded to talk about the development and the making of the film *Rufus Stone* and explained how diligent he wanted to be in representing the stories from the research accurately. Specifically, the stories of suicide amongst older gay men were prevalent in several of the accounts that participants gave them in the research. In addition, problems of isolation, mobility, friendship and support networks, along with issues of lack of service provision, were all discussed amongst older gay men and lesbians, much in the same way that they are concerns for the larger heterosexual ageing population, particularly in rural areas. The story of *Rufus Stone* was created over a length of time using composite characters and situations, all unearthed in the Gay and Pleasant Land? Project through in-depth biographical life story interviews, focus groups, and actual site visits to the rural locations where LGBT citizens were living. Out of this project, a dramatic arc was born. Kip Jones also used his personal experiences and memories to add richness to events. Listening to some of the responses from audience members, he

was pleased (and seemed relieved) to hear that many of them felt that he had told their story too. Indeed, communicating stories in this way seeks resonance with its audience.

Before we adjourned for lunch, Kip played the awaited and anticipated 30-minute film which was evocative, emotional, strong, touching, intelligent, uncomfortable and immensely sad at times. I felt moved by the sadness of one of the characters crying, 'I'm just so lonely' and particularly enjoyed the fire scene where Rufus threw items of old furniture to burn as a cathartic release.

During lunches, we were able to mingle with each other; there were many volunteers on the course who were equally strong and impassioned about making a difference in the community. The most fun part about the two-day Masterclass was the amount of interaction opportunities that were provided for us. On the first day, we were thrown into role-playing and split into three groups; each was given a particular scene of the film to re-play as if in the present day – how would it be different? There were some evocative, emotive, brave, and humorous performances on both of the days. On the second day, we all seemed to be more in the flow, and our group staged two performances creating a care home that was LGBT friendly: one was humorous and fun which was followed by a more thoughtful poetic

piece. Everyone seemed to fully throw themselves into these roles attentively, playfully and purposefully. Whilst the second day was equally full of interactional play, it had a more reflective tone and we opened up about some of our own prejudices that we experience in our own different worlds.

Towards the end of the two days, I felt that I had a couple of new friends and we were sent on our way with fantastic 'party bags' with the 'Methods to Diversity' deck cards and an exclusive dvd copy of the film. Many buzzed excitedly with the prospect of utilising the deck of cards for developing practice with older lesbians and gay men as well as having exclusive copies of the *Rufus Stone* film to take with them each to show to their own communities. I plan to employ both of these in my teachings, seek out some viewing opportunities. I thoroughly recommend these sorts of events to others who would like to provide students with a rounder picture of research. Whilst showing deep gratitude to the project team for staging such a successful and engaging event, I would also like to thank the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement for funding me to attend this event.

Correspondence

Dr Helen Owton

University of Northampton.

Helen.Owton@northampton.ac.uk

References

- Gay and Grey (2006). *Lifting the lid on sexuality and ageing: A research project into the needs wants, fears and aspirations of older lesbians and gay men*. Bournemouth: Help and Care Development Ltd.
- Fenge, L. & Jones, K. (2011). Gay and Pleasant Land? Exploring sexuality, ageing and rurality in a multi-method performative project. *British Journal of Social Work*. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcr058
- Fenge, L., Jones, K. & Read, R. (2010). Connecting participatory methods in a study of older lesbian and gay citizens in rural areas. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 9(4), 320–333.
- Jones, K., Fenge, L., Read R. & Cash, M. (2013). Collecting older lesbians' and gay men's stories of rural life in south-west England and Wales: 'We were obviously gay girls...(s) he removed his cow from our field'. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 14(2). Retrieved 14 May 2013, from: <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1919>

Book Reviews

***The Self at the Centre of a Reflective Approach:
A Qualitative Inquiry into Everyday Life***

Svend Brinkman

London: Sage, 2012.

Reviewed by Iona Tanguay

About the author

Svend Brinkman is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Aalborg, Denmark. His field of research and expertise includes philosophical, moral and methodological issues in psychology and the social sciences. Brinkman has written extensively about qualitative research and is a director of the Centre for Qualitative Studies at the University of Aalborg.

A Qualitative Inquiry into Everyday Life is intended as a 'survival guide' for students and experienced qualitative researchers who have an interest in turning the everyday resources around them into research subjects. Each chapter includes in-depth theoretical and methodological discussions and examples of Brinkman's own qualitative research as case study material. He urges the reader to engage with his text as a purposeful, creative process. Practical thought-provoking tasks are set, with the intention of getting the would-be researcher writing.

Brinkman sets out to demonstrate that small-scale investigative studies into everyday life can create high quality research findings that can in turn enrich our understanding of more general aspects of our cultural and social lives. Utilising a range of theoretical and methodological conceptual tools, Brinkman demonstrates effectively that the ephemera of everyday life is a rich source of material for the imaginative researcher.

In this short book review, I will outline some of the theoretical and methodological approaches, which Brinkman states inspire his approach, and engage with the text in an active, reflective manner. I will critically

appraise an example of Brinkman's research conversations and identify questions, which I was unable to resolve for myself in this reading. Due to the restrictions of time and space I am unable to consider fully the diverse examples of research, which Brinkman systematically describes, and analyses.

Theoretical and methodological influences

Brinkman favours theoretical and methodological eclecticism and demonstrates that a range of conceptual tools and methods can be constructively employed. Drawing on many aspects of grounded theory, Brinkman employs inductive methods and suggests that it is useful to start any qualitative study without a prior hypothesis or particular analytical framework. Data collection should inform the methods and theoretical concepts applied. Although Brinkman acknowledges the use of methods of grounded theory such as journaling, analytical writing, memo writing and coding of data, he prefers to utilise these flexibly according to the specific research situation.

Theoretically, Brinkman maintains that his stance towards qualitative enquiry is largely influenced by the pragmatism of Dewey and hermeneutics. Dewey's conception of 'knowing' as an active process that helps humans to cope with the world can be seen throughout Brinkman's text. He describes Dewey's pragmatism as an 'anthropology of the human knower' and he identifies this as an area of interest for qualitative researchers as the boundaries between 'scientific knowing and human knowing in general are blurred.' (Brinkman, 2012) This is a key problem for me, as it leads me to question the status of knowledge produced in qualitative studies of everyday life.

The hermeneutic philosophical tradition was initially used as a method to interpret

texts biblical texts, and in the 19th century, human life itself. (Wilhelm Dilthey). According to Brinkman, Heidegger extended the concept to include an ontological perspective, which asks; 'What is the mode of being of the entity that understands?' (Brinkman, 2012)

Knowledge as a situated human activity

In common with many proponents of qualitative research methods, Brinkman suggests that the researcher can never be fully objective. Citing Nagel, Brinkman concurs that the 'God's-eye perspective' or 'view from nowhere', is not a scientific fact, but rather a situated human activity. Positivist and scientific knowledge has often been privileged in Western societies, often at the expense of the meaning, which research subjects attach to their experiences of the world. As Kincheloe, (2003) maintains,

'Humans inevitably view the cosmos from a point resting within themselves. Indeed they converse about the world in a language shaped by human experience.' (Kichenloe, 2003, p.192)

Viewing the world differently

It is essential for the qualitative researcher to develop what Brinkman terms 'conceptual audacity', in order to be able to interpret and allow the reader to view the world differently (Brinkman, 2012, p.21) He sees the interpretative practice of qualitative research as akin to art and cites Noblit and Hare, (1988) who stress the role of art in making the world unfamiliar.

Brinkman discusses three analytical stances, which he uses to interpret and deconstruct research data.

- Making the obvious obvious – this is largely a phenomenological perspective, which includes thick descriptions of the everyday world. For Brinkman this approach can be poetic
- Making the hidden obvious – this approach draws on Marxism and Foucault and critical theory. It stresses the power relations and hidden under-

lying structural relationships which influence behaviour.

- Making the hidden dubious – Brinkman describes this as a deconstructive process, which seeks to uncover taken for granted assumptions.

Deconstructing a 40th birthday party

In an attempt to understand more clearly these interpretative techniques, I completed one of Brinkman's reflective writing exercises. I wrote a short piece about organising my own 40th birthday party. I had identified the event as being a way of dealing with a high level of social and personal expectations and anxiety about the significance of this age. In trying to make the obvious obvious, I found it difficult to describe elements neutrally without engaging my judgement and critical faculties. My 'voice' came across as somewhat wry and humorous. It was easier to employ a less judgemental voice when writing in the third person, using the subject 'the celebrant' rather than 'I'. Rather than poetic, my attempts at phenomenology came across as humorous, perhaps revealing my conflicted feelings.

I then tried to deconstruct taken for granted assumptions, 'making the obvious dubious.' This was easier, as many of the factors I suggested are well-known social rituals and activities that we collectively participate at birthday parties. Many of these seem to fulfil particular social and psychological functions. I noted how early guests were encouraged to help blow up and arrange balloons, which performed the function of helping to break the ice between strangers, whilst also giving early guests something constructive to do.

I didn't manage to re-write the text critically to 'make the hidden obvious'. I could have looked at who was not invited to the party and this would have involved looking at power relations, and any disharmony within my family and friendship network. This would have been an uncomfortable task, but potentially revealing, depending on the paradigm of the qualitative researcher. This

also suggests potential problematic or no-go areas, which researchers should be aware of, when asking participants about personal areas of their lives.

Following this short task, I felt I needed more time and guidance, to develop these conceptual tools to help me to analyse an everyday experience more critically and closely.

The self as subject and object

At the heart of Brinkman's text is the paradoxical relationship of the researcher to his or her self, as positioned within the study. This is most evident in self-observation studies where the researcher is 'both the subject and object in the process of observation', (Brinkman, 2012). As Brinkman acknowledges, self-observation in the social sciences has often been seen as problematic as the question of how reliable and valid a subjective, introspective account can be has often been raised.

Brinkman arrives at an answer of sorts by drawing inspiration from the phenomenological approach of Husserl, who sought to 'describe the essential structures of human experience from a first-person perspective' (Brinkman, 2012) by focusing on description, rather than analysis or enquiry,

Brinkman argues that a methodology that seeks to describe itself internally should not be regarded as peripheral, but rather as a *central* methodology and technique to access the meaningful realm of human subjects. Rather than being a conundrum for the researcher to solve, it transpires that Brinkman views the self, observing itself, as a necessary condition for accessing internal human experiences such as shame and guilt. According to Brinkman, these are experiences no scientific study that ignores the first person perspective can adequately explain.

Ethics

As qualitative research is concerned with personal details of people's lived experiences, it is a given that ethical concerns should be a primary concern for researchers.

The researcher needs to think through any potential harm that could result from his or her study. However, Brinkman points out that ethical issues are never 'solved' prior to undertaking a study, even when the required approval from an ethics committee has been granted. Brinkman proposes an 'ethics of doubt' in a bid to ensure that the researcher remains open and reflective about the ethical problems and conflicts that they are likely to encounter in any study.

The researcher needs to have a finely attuned ethical sensibility, and sense of integrity together with 'a commitment to moral issues and action' (Brinkman, 2012, p.55) The judgement about increasing a body of knowledge or respecting the privacy and rights of persons, will usually lie with the individual researcher. This seems to depend largely on their own knowledge, commitment and sense of honesty and fairness, which certainly may prove problematic.

As Brinkman points out, in common with feminist researchers, there are ethically dubious ways that the researcher can use a caring, committed dynamic to create a false sense of solidarity or friendship with the subjects of their study to help to achieve their research aims. Citing therapist-researcher (Fog, 2004) Brinkman concurs that techniques which may be mutual and legitimate in a therapeutic situation, such as interviews and empathic conversations may become problematic within a research situation.

An experienced researcher's knowledge of how to create rapport and get through a participant's defences may serve as a 'Trojan horse' to get inside areas of a person's life where they were not invited. (Brinkman, 2012, p.56)

Human reality as a conversational reality: A conversation about post-secularism

In using conversations as a research method to interrogate everyday life, researchers are involved in a process of situating themselves as a particular kind of 'self', enacting roles in relation to other selves.

Brinkman uses his example of an investigative conversation with an old friend, to investigate his own thoughts and feelings, about post-secularism. He employed a 'Socratic questioning' approach, in that he sought to gently challenge his friend about his beliefs. His friend, Thomas, had joined a spiritual community, called Tiger's Nest, which borrows loosely from Buddhist and Christian teachings. Brinkman wanted to investigate how a rebellious, analytically-minded psychology student, could undergo such a radical transformation. The question of their similar biographies and Brinkman's admiration of his friend seems to underlie Brinkman's 'breakdown' of understanding and it seems that he was also seeking to resolve some of his own secular prejudices.

This section begins with an 'autoethnographic' element as Brinkman wrote his own biography into the text. This personal story draws the reader into a more intimate relationship with the author, and his quest to resolve an area of his own life. The personal element of the research, engages the reader with its accessible narrative, and the enticing oppositional tale of a lost young man, who is charmed by an older female spiritual leader and her offer of what appears to be an enlightening tantric education.

Following Denzin (2001) Brinkman analyses the conversation and recognises, a moment of 'epiphany' in Thomas' description of his meeting with the Tiger's Nest's leader. He also interprets his friend's subsequent complete immersion in the religious community, as providing him with the symbolic resources to frame and give an overarching meaning to his life. At the same time he alerts the reader to his own internal feelings that his friend Thomas has denied another part of himself, in his acceptance of a submissive role and rejection of his former analytical mode of being.

It is helpful to the reader that Brinkman has included large extracts of the original transcription of the conversation, rich with the voice of Thomas, and also elements of his own thoughts and asides within the text.

This is clearly demarcated and shows the reader that the research conversation is separate from the interpretative analysis.

It would be useful here for Brinkman to discuss more fully the ethics the researcher must consider, when utilising a friendship and using a personal issue to resolve something, in a research situation. He mentions that he shared the transcript with his friend, who requested that he amend certain parts, but as a reader with no vested interest, I can't help asking whether it is ever acceptable to utilise a friendship for an external aim such as qualitative research.

Brinkman frames his research intentions differently in that he suggests that he used the research focus as an excuse to look up an old friend. However, a critical onlooker would most likely see that the friendship was used as a 'way in' to a psychologically and sociologically interesting research situation. Although Brinkman is a reflexive and sensitive researcher, in this situation, a more critical approach would be profitable, particularly as there could be unintended consequences following the publication of this research.

Conclusion

Brinkman successfully achieves 'conceptual audacity' in his text. This text comes across as multi-layered, rich in description, and analysis, while at the same time providing a valuable stock of qualitative theory, and useful examples. In particular, Brinkman's analytic reading of the Danish reality TV show, *Paradise Hotel*, stands out. Brinkman sees this as 'an extreme version of post-modernity' and applies deconstructive and critical readings effectively to his text, whilst highlighting the importance of shame and the role of the self in the show.

One criticism is that a full-discussion of the ways that the specific factors of the researcher's gender, identity, class and race impact on any research situation, seems to be missing from the sections about self-analysis. This may be simply because this was not considered relevant to the paradigm,

and the specifics of identity are capably considered elsewhere in the case study examples. However, this is an inspiring textbook, which would be useful to novice and experienced qualitative researchers alike.

Questions that I have for further study, are concerned with philosophical issues such as the meta-analysis of the aims and status of qualitative research into everyday life.

- What is the status of knowledge that is produced in small-scale enquiries, for example: one-to-one research conversations and studies of self-analysis?
- How can qualitative researchers in everyday research situations ensure that they cultivate an ethical sensibility, which questions whether a respect for persons is always fully considered?

- How can the aims of small-scale qualitative research be effectively linked to wider issues of social justice?

Iona Tanguay

ionatangy@googlemail.com

References

- Brinkman, S. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry in everyday life: Working with everyday life materials*. London: Sage.
- Glaser, B.G. (2012). Stop. Write! Writing grounded theory. *Grounded Theory Review*, 11(1), 2–11.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: principles in practice* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Kincheloe, J.K. (2003). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge Falmer.

Fat

Deborah Lupton

London: Routledge, 2012.

Reviewed by Chloe Law

Fat by Deborah Lupton is a relatively short account, (approximately 100 pages) on the relevance of fatness/obesity in today's society. Covering a wide range of topics from different perspectives of persons viewing the fat body to how it feels to be 'fat', as well as considering the politics of obesity and what is being done to combat and alternatively, make our perceptions of fatness worse. Lupton is a sociologist who specialises in food, weight and obesity and has written over 100 articles on her specialist subject; allowing her to take a more critical yet informed approach to the topic than previous writers who are aiming to give a brief overview of the topic of 'fatness' in today's society.

Fat is an informative, witty, comprehensive and yet concise introduction into current writings and research on the fat body. This review of the literature draws from research done within the social sciences, fact activists, and from work considering the cultural issues that are affecting

the size acceptance movement. Lupton's easy-going writing style making for an easy but compelling read for all students.

Fat looks at the fat body from a different perspective to most other literature on this topic, considering why the larger body is a constant source of discussion. Most pieces of research look into how the fat body can be reduced down to socially acceptable sizes instead of considering how it is to be a larger person within today's society. Health care professionals claim there to be an obesity epidemic, which needs to be dealt with via public campaigns and sharing knowledge on how to diet effectively and the need to exercise more. Lupton reviews all sides of the argument, arguing that fatness is not a disease, as more people are overweight rather than 'normal' anyway. She further states that the psychological effects of the stigmatisation associated with being 'fat' is creating worse affects than the obesity itself, due to the depression, self-repulsion and constant yo-yo dieting that these opinions can cause.

In this way, Lupton's book is a useful introduction to the subject area for any student, identifying the key theories involved within the obesity debate and summarising them in an easy to understand language.

Lupton shows how fatness can be caused by health problems rather than causing them itself, and gives well-presented information on the research and fat activist movement. Lupton's refreshingly different stance on the fatness debate also gives you a chance as a reader to learn a more well-rounded view on

the subject area, contrary to many other authors who only concentrate on the socially accepted view of fatness being an illness that must be prevented and reduced.

Chloe Law

Chloe-law@hotmail.co.uk

***The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*
Eric Margolis & Luc Pauwels.**

London: Sage (2011).

Reviewed by Dr Emma Rich

One of the first things that struck me when reading *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods* was just how far the field has come in recent years in terms of the range of media innovations and emerging technologies which can now be utilised in social science research. Over the last few decades there has been a rapid growth in the use of and discussion related to visual methods in research across a growing number of disciplines. There is a great deal of diversity in terms of theoretical approach, methodological approach and the ways in which the visual is 'represented' within research. Such is the interest in visual methods that there are a number of journals now dedicated to visual methods including *Visual Anthropology*, *Visual Studies*, and *The Journal of Visual Culture*. This diversity is reflected in this impressive collection of chapters, not only in terms of the range of disciplines, but also through the range of empirical and methodological approaches explored. Authors write from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and theoretical positions including, sociology, anthropology, communication studies, geography, psychology, photography, film studies, education, etc. The handbook is a good starting point for those wishing to venture into visual methodology, whilst also exploring more in-depth contemporary issues at the cutting edge of methodological debate. Given the different backgrounds and authors (some 37 chapters across seven

'sections'), the reader is invited to explore a range of perspectives on these issues.

The first section of this book provides a useful background and overview to the field of visual research and will be a helpful starting point for those new to this approach. It begins with the presentation of an 'integrated framework for visual social research' (Pauwels) exploring the options and opportunities available to those undertaking studies involving visual input and/or output. The challenges of visual research are alluded to from the outset of this handbook and weaved throughout remaining chapters. The nuances of *looking* as part of visual research are explored in Chapter 2, as Richard Chalfen examines how looking is a culturally variable activity, whilst in Chapter 3 Wagner explores the complexities of framing visual studies as empirical social inquiry. Wagner then goes on to examine different approaches to material culture, visibility and visual research.

Part 2 explores issues of visual research which may be more familiar to a broad audience, examining different ways of producing and processing visual data. These chapters are a useful and exciting collection for those beginning to explore the potential cutting edge possibilities for collecting and processing visual data, including anthropological filmmaking, repeat photography, rephotography (e.g. re-photograph things previously documented) and techniques used in the design process. The incorporation of examples, whether as images included in the chapters or as references to visual material (such as the list of anthropological films on page 112) provides reassur-

ance of the potential of these approaches in terms of their final product.

Part 3 revisits some of the central concerns which have been at the heart of debates about research methods for some time, through the examination of participatory and subject-centred approaches. Dealing with such issues as reflexivity, community based approaches, children produced drawings, the photo diary, participatory media production, these chapters highlight the potential of visual methods in challenging ethical issues of power relations, voice and participation in research. In doing so, these new methodologies challenge traditional binaries such subject-object and researcher-researched which are sometimes embedded in particular research practices.

Part 4 brings together a collection of chapters presenting analytical frameworks and approaches. Whilst many students and scholars might be aware of the potential for using visual approaches to collect data, or for the visual to act as data, many feel less confident about making sense of this material. This section offers a collection of chapters to guide researchers through some of the potential approaches.

Part 5 deals with perhaps those less recognised and emerging technologies used in visual research, such as eye tracking, cartography, participatory geographic information systems, visualisation in social analysis and developments in qualitative data analysis software. These technologies can be used in ways to make research more participatory, and can be variously deployed to collect, explore or display data (McKinnon). These chapters blur and confront constructed boundaries between disciplines, for example cartographic practices and geographic component might be grounded in geography but generate visual practices and questions that are relevant to asking questions that might inform studies in other disciplines.

In Part 6, moving beyond the visual, some of the further complexities, challenges and possibilities of visual methods are revealed.

The section begins with a chapter on multimodality and multimodal research, examining the emergence of 'new writing', which is neither linear nor read sequentially, for example through internet websites. The multimodal nature of sites such as the internet is further examined in the chapter by Pauwel, researching websites as social and cultural expressions outlining some of the key predicaments facing anyone using this approach. Batens and Surdiacourt examining the graphic novel, raise important questions about the relationships between image and text. Pink offers an engaging and innovative discussion of the multisensory methodology, arguing that visual images need to be understood in relation to the senses other than sight. This chapter adds important insights about self-reflexivity and the process of image production, which Pink argues is always 'collaborative and situated'. Collectively, this section speaks to some of the shifts in contemporary culture in terms of how individuals, communities and cultures engage differently with image and text.

The text concludes with Part 7 exploring options and issues for using and presenting visual research, including new multimedia opportunities, arts-based research and presentation. This section expands understanding of potential presentational practices and the various media available. Newbury's chapter provides a unique discussion pertaining to visual scholarship, making calls for authors to think 'carefully about images are and how they may be used to communicate ideas and make arguments'. This provides a compelling read for those grappling with the idea of including images in their publication submissions. The chapter by Gran explores the visual in the context of the relationship between social science and legal cases. The last two chapters in this section perhaps provide an essential read for scholars and students across a range of disciplines and methodological backgrounds utilising visual methods. Wiles, Clark and Prosser provide a useful overview

of significant debates and practice related to visual research ethics. Visual resources can be found across many different sites and the final chapter of this handbook attempts to address some of the legal complexities of use of such material.

The development of interdisciplinary research, innovations in technology and developments in our understandings of the potential of the visual in research make this text a timely contribution to methodological literature. Technological advances in capturing everyday life (e.g. mobile telephones) and the production of knowledge (e.g. through social media) has prompted researchers to think more creatively about how they study social-cultural phenomenon. This handbook covers a broad range of tradi-

tional and more cutting edge issues all of which seem necessary if research methods are to keep pace with the developments in contemporary society. In this sense, whilst this handbook gives an indication of some of the contemporary challenges and possibilities of visual research, it is a pity the book does not speculate over what other challenges might confront visual methods in years to come. Nonetheless, in bringing together such an impressive range of authors and interdisciplinary issues, it offers a comprehensive handbook for anyone engaging with visual methods.

Dr Emma Rich

University of Bath.

E.Rich@bath.ac.uk

The Psychology of Women

Margaret W. Matlin

London: Wadsworth, 2012.

Reviewed by Jayanthiny Kangatharan

What does it mean to be a woman? What are the attitudes towards women and how do they shape women's lives? Have lives of women in the modern world changed from what they used to be thanks to feminist movements and activism for women's rights? These are the questions that are addressed in the international edition of the academic textbook *The Psychology of Women* by Margaret W. Matlin.

Already in its seventh edition, this book has the same goals it set out to fulfill in its first edition: first, to show the contradiction between investigations on women and gender and popular opinion; second, to include women's narratives of their thoughts and experiences; third, to create an educationally more effective tool for students. The fourth goal is especially close to her heart that is the theme of social justice: motivated by her activism for social justice during the Vietnam War, Matlin expressed the observed degradation of the lives of south-east Asian people in a form that applies to gender. She

clearly states in accord with this overarching subject of the textbook that nobody should feel obliged to decide over women's lives. Major changes in this new edition include, for instance, updated discussions of women in the media, present research about lesbian relationships among Asian American and Latina adolescents, research on sexual harassment and sexual assault of women in the military and also new information about the abuse of women in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

This book is mainly aimed at students of courses on the psychology of women in North America. It is divided into 15 chapters. Consistent with the third aim of the book, each chapter ends with section summaries and review questions. Each chapter also contains several exercises such as demonstrations and false-true statements that encourage readers to critically think about their own attitudes and preconceptions about women in certain situations. This textbook captures research on gender and women in an evident and well-structured manner, which is largely due to its effective organisation that combines life span-developmental order and topical approaches within the 15 chapters. The first chapter

covers general concepts and touches upon potential concerns regarding research methods and biases that can occur in investigations of women's psychology. One such bias, for instance, is the holding of pre-existing emotions about gender issues, particularly in association with studies on women who differ from old-fashioned feminine stereotypes. The second chapter explains how gender-related expectations and behaviour are shaped by stereotypes. Women's development from infancy to adolescence is presented in chapters 3 and 4 while the next nine chapters circle around crucial parts of women's lives before late adulthood such as cognitive and social gender comparisons, physical and psychological health, women and work, and violence against women.

One strong aspect of this book is that, if topically possible, Matlin provides information on not only White women but also women of different ethnicities, and sexual orientations. When dealing with the subject of marriage in the chapter on 'Love Relationships', for example, the subject is considered from both the views of Latina women, Black women and Asian-American women. Moreover, a separate section is devoted to the psychological adjustment of Lesbians and Bisexual women. The diversity of the social category 'sexual orientation' is illustrated through the concept of intersectionality, which places importance on the joint and not separate consideration of several social categories. This is demonstrated in a segment on Lesbian women of colour, in which ways, in which heterosexism is experienced by lesbian women who are Latina, Black, and Asian are considered. Another great example of how different ethnicities are contemplated in this book is the reflection of research on Native American and First Nation Women in addition to that on Latina, Black and Asian-American women when discussing social relationships in older women's lives in the chapter 'Women and older Adulthood'.

What I especially value about this text-book is that it also aims to tackle stereotypes and myths one might have about topics such as the abuse of women, motherhood or gender. This goes with the first aim of the book that it set out to meet. Moreover, in addition to the presented facts and evidence in each chapter, Matlin makes sure that topics are given a human touch by providing accounts of women's thoughts and experiences of women-specific events such as the menstrual cycle in form of quotations.

The most inspirational part of the book was the last segment of the last chapter 'Moving onward', in which Matlin encourages women to think about feminist issues by, for example, subscribing to a feminist magazine such as the *Ms. Magazine* or *Canadian Woman Studies* or by visiting various websites on feminist activism. The list on how to speak out and how to become involved in feminist activism is endless. Matlin clearly shows that we can help to lead future change in the right direction by becoming thoughtful and committed activists through our joint fight against negative representations of women.

Whilst this book shows that women's lives have improved significantly on an economic and social level over the last century, the process of moving towards equality has only just begun. As Matlin points out, across the globe, women rarely have sizeable number of seats in national legislatures. Thus, women are a long way from equality regarding official positions in national governments. Therefore, more campaigning needs to be done and more awareness needs to be raised to ensure fully equal political, economic and social rights for women all over the world. Thus, as long as there is no social justice in this world, women cannot stop fighting. We can all get there when we become part of the solution.

Jayanthiny Kangatharan

University of Brunel.

Jayanthiny.kangatharan@brunel.ac.uk

***Handbook of International Feminisms:
Perspectives on Psychology, Women,
Culture and Rights***

**A. Rutherford, R. Capdevila, V. Undurti &
I. Palmary (Eds.)**

London: Springer, 2011.

Reviewed by Nollaig Frost

In the *Handbook of International Feminisms* the editors, Rutherford, Capdevila, Undurti and Palmary, bring together a broad range of readings that explore the history, context and politics of feminism and psychology, and feminist psychology, around the world. The editors of the book, and many of the contributors are keen to remind us that 'feminist psychology' is a term that they broadly define, in order to acknowledge that the discipline of psychology may or may not be institutionalised in many of the regions that are represented in the book. The book discusses not the practice of feminist psychology as such but the extent to which feminist scholars working under the broad umbrella of feminist psychology are aware of and informed by developments outside their local contexts. It does this by asking contributors to write from their own definition of feminism as it has emerged in their regional context. This results in the contributors writing of many forms of feminism, co-existing, and sometimes competing, with national contexts, and goes a long way to illustrating one of the book's key aims to 'tackle universalisation, overcome isolationism, increase international communication, forge transnationalism and enrich understanding of the challenges and exhilarations of the feminist process as it is being enacted all over the world' (p.3).

Whilst the contributors are drawn from all around the world, the editors express their regret at losing representation from several countries along the way. However, the resulting collection provides an interesting and broad international span with perspectives from Turkey as well as from Western European countries including the Spanish State, Nordic Countries, Britain, Eastern

European Countries and from Canada, the US, South Africa, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Brazil, Israel and China. Although the focus of the book is on feminism in psychology, disciplines from which authors write range from Psychology through Philosophy, Pedagogy, Women's Studies, Human and Community Development, Psychiatry, Behavioural Sciences, Migration and Society, and Technology; a span that in itself illustrates another of the book's aims: to analyse beyond gender and to include intersecting formations of class, caste, 'race', ethnicity, sexuality, sexual orientation, religion and politics to consider how they affect women's lives.

The Introduction informs us that few instructions were given to each author in an effort to allow for the plurality of meanings brought to feminist psychology around the world. Instead a set of questions was constructed and authors invited to address all or any of them. Authors were invited to consider topical, methodological and or theoretical themes that characterise feminist work in their region, and how this came into being, whether or not a self-conscious feminist psychology has developed in their region, factors that have given rise to feminist work in the region, factors than have inhibited or enhanced the influence of feminist work, the nature of any relationship between organised women's movements and feminist 'psychology', the institutional status of feminist psychology, and places of work of feminists in psychology. With such an array of foci available to authors many choose to draw on the history and development of feminism, and in some cases psychology itself, to consider its place in their region. This results in the book presenting multiple perspectives on women's lives, and ways of understanding women's lives, across the world. It is, therefore, likely to be of interest to a diverse audience that includes activists, researchers, academics, therapists, NGOs and advocates. The outcome is that the book can be used to access detailed information on the history of feminist work in a partic-

ular region and as a source from which to gain overall insight to the variety of challenges and triumphs that individuals have celebrated in bringing feminist work to where it is today. As the editors point out in their Introduction, the focus on psychology also means that not all kinds of feminist work can be reflected in his volume. However, they usefully highlight that in efforts to attend adequately to differences between women, issues such as exclusion of an issue of sexuality in one region, such as of lesbian feminism in Britain, contrasts with the complete lack of focus on women's sexuality at all in most non-Western countries. With such insight questions are raised as to the possibilities for the development of new feminist interventions within psychology.

Despite its emphasis on flexibility of meanings the book is divided into Parts, each categorising the chapters within it as either: 'History, Politics, Context', 'Experience' or 'Specificity'. The editors point to the challenges and overlaps in constructing these categories and I would concur with them that many of the chapters would sit easily in more than one Part. However, with the editors' proviso that the 'grouping

should be regarded as extremely provisional' (p.12) the emphasis on 'analysis of historical and political contexts' of Part 2, 'overt reflexivity' in Part 3 and 'thorough engagement with specific issues' in Part 4 allows readers to turn to the part of the book that is likely to be of most relevance to their interest without resorting to simply seeking cross-regional comparisons.

Overall this book works well to 'illuminate the diverse forms that feminist psychological and social scientific work takes around the world' (p.4). The contributions work to provide a detailed history of feminism and also to inform us of the uniqueness of concerns and positions of women in different regions around the world. As such the book will be of interest to feminist scholars of all disciplines but also to researchers with interests in the influence that history, geography and politics have on the lives of those who both construct and live within cultural and institutional frameworks of everyday life.

Nollaig Frost

Middlesex University.

n.frost@mdx.ac.uk

Notes

Notes



The British
Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

ICC
7-9 May
2014

Annual Conference 2014

International Conference Centre, Birmingham

Our **conference themes** are:

- Psychology and war
- The psychology of family, parenting and caring
- The psychologist as expert
- New directions in human neuroscience

Plus '**General**' category for work outside the above themes.

Deadlines

- oral presentations, workshops and symposium submissions
– 27 October 2013
- poster presentations
– 7 January 2014

Our keynote speakers for 2014 are

- Professor Sir Simon Wessely
King's College London
- Ben Shephard
Military and Medical Historian,
Oxford University
- Susan van Scoyoc
Independent Practitioner
- Professor John Aggleton
Cardiff University
- Professor Marinus van IJzendoorn
Leiden University



Registration will open on 2 September 2013
For further details see www.bps.org.uk/ac2014

Notes for Contributors

1. All papers and submissions for the Agora section will be peer-reviewed.
2. Copies of all submissions should be sent by email attachment (in Word format) and/or three hard copies to the Editor (or Assistant Editor where specified). A separate cover page should be provided with the title of the paper, the author's names, their institutions, addresses and email addresses clearly marked. Authors are also invited to provide brief biographical information. Manuscripts should have the title clearly marked on the first page, and pages should be numbered. However, authors' names should not appear on the manuscript itself.
3. All figures should be of reproducible standard. References should conform to Society style, which is similar to the American Psychological Association (APA) system. The Society's *Style Guide* can be downloaded from www.bps.org.uk. (From the home page go to Publications/Policy and guidelines, and then General guidelines and policy documents. Select 'Society editorial style guide' from the list of documents.)
4. Papers should be between 3000 and 6000 words long, and submissions for the Agora between 200 and 2000 words. An abstract of up to 150 words should be provided with papers, however, no abstract is needed for Agora submissions.
5. Book reviews and reviews of research papers will normally be commissioned by the relevant Assistant Editors. Anyone interested in reviewing books or research papers should contact the Assistant Editor directly.
6. Authors should avoid the use of any sexist, racist, heterosexist or otherwise discriminatory language.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the organisations or institutions that they work for.

Please send all correspondence to:

Jane Callaghan
Division of Psychology
Boughton Green Road
Northampton
NN2 7AL
Email: editor.powsr@gmail.com *OR*
jane.callaghan@northampton.ac.uk

Contents

- 1 Editorial
Jane Callaghan
- 3 *Keynote Address*
Cultural cisgenderism: Consequences of the imperceptible
Natacha Kennedy
- 12 *2012 Postgraduate Prize Winner*
Assimilation or invisibility: Lesbian identity, representation and the use of gender-neutral terms
Rebecca Swenson
- 20 *Keynote Address*
Gender and BDSM revisited: Reflections on a decade of researching kink communities
Meg Barker
- 29 *Article*
Young women's constructions of risky health practices: A Q-methodological study
Ruth Cross
- 40 *2013 Undergraduate Prize Winner*
Discursive constructions of UK swingers' self-identities and practices in a culturally gendered mononormative context
Stephen Symons
- 47 *2013 Postgraduate Prize Winner*
ADHD: 'Because you're worth it'. The marketisation of ADHD to adult women
Helen Winter
- 56 *Article*
Should I stay or should I go? Intersectionality, feminist methodologies and research on/with others
Megan Chawansky
- 63 *Commentary*
The construction of Gender Dysphoria at 'Classifying Sex: Debating *DSM-5*'
Zowie Davy
- 69 *Event Review*
POWS Craftivism Workshop
Kirsty Budd, Paula Singleton & Lucy Thompson
- 73 *Event Review*
Interfacing with older LGBT citizens
Helen Owton
- 75 Book Reviews