

Transgender Politics

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Transgender poses a fundamental challenge to the rigid male/female categorisation which underlies the Western social system. Alternatives, such as those presented by feminist and queer accounts, continue to pay homage to gender binaries. Postmodernism is also problematic, as it fails to account for much transgender experience. The challenge which transgender people present to Western gender binaries is masked by their current social exclusion, which relegates them to the margins and thus nullifies demands for social change. The marginalisation of transgender people can be traced to transphobia, or the fear and stigmatisation of transgender people. The developing transgender movement challenges transphobia and the social exclusion of transgender people. Discourses of citizenship and democracy form an effective basis for an inclusive politics of gender. However, transgender politics is rife with complexity and tension.

Transgender Politics seeks to explore the implications of transgender, firstly for sexual/gender politics and theory and secondly for Western social structure. The thesis aims to usefully inform transgender politics, in keeping with its participative methodology, and locates the main author in relation to the research.

The introduction addresses, firstly, the rationale for the project and the core debates. It then provides an overview of definitions and prevalence of transgender, the development of the transgender movement, cross-cultural and trans-historical contextualisation, and the literature. Lastly, the introduction describes the structure of the thesis.

It is worth noting that some of the terminology in this field is unusual and that I have included a glossary in the appendices. In addition, I would like to point out that the published material which I have used in the thesis can be distinguished from direct contributions by interviewees because the former includes a date and does not include a first name, whereas the interviewee's material includes a first name and is not dated. Lastly, I wish to note that unclear parts of the interviews are indicated by a question mark in the text.

Rationale

Why study transgender? As Weeks (1998) points out, humanity is in the middle of huge social and cultural changes. On a global scale, the majority of people are still struggling with survival issues, environmental devastation is a serious threat, and in many countries economic and social inequalities are increasing. Faced with the enormity of such problems, gender concerns might pale into insignificance. However, gender and sexual relations can be seen as crucial for politics and social structure (see for example Giddens 1992). Gender relations are also in a state of flux and uncertainty (Weeks 1997), informed by processes of democratisation and autonomy (Weeks 1998). One, mostly hidden, aspect of such processes is the transgender movement for social recognition and rights. Transgender social inclusion would explode conventional, binaried, models of sex and gender, leading to expanded, pluralist social structures concerning sex and gender and new ontologies and epistemologies.

Transgender Politics breaks new ground in a number of inter-linking ways: methodologically, politically and theoretically. In terms of methodology, it is the first empirical study to be conducted by someone who did not, initially, identify as transgender in consultation and collaboration with a range of transgender people. It aims, in contrast to much previous research, to avoid appropriation of findings and misrepresentation of 'subjects', includes discussion of the researchers' subjectivity, and sites the researcher as an equal rather than an 'expert'. In addition, the study reveals problems with postmodernist, participative and feminist research methods which can usefully inform qualitative research methodology.

Politically, the study is important because it foregrounds people and processes that have been marginalised by modern Western society. In doing this, it challenges Western gender binaried social structure and attendant ideologies, including academic theory, and subculture as well as mainstream norms. Research and literature on transgender, with the exception of several recent additions, has taken pathologising, individualising, sensationalising approaches or has remained within the realms of cultural or queer studies. Wilchins (1997), Whittle (1998b) and other transgender people have justifiably attacked academia for failing to address the real problems that transgender people face: those of

transphobia and social exclusion. This study aims to address these issues and to theorise them in a way that may contribute to processes of democratisation. Transgender is therefore discussed in terms of citizenship, participation and new social movements. Political conceptualisation is underpinned by use of poststructuralism and is thus more incisive than analysis focusing just on social structure.

Transgender Politics attempts to address the fact that "there are huge swathes of unwritten history, huge swathes of unwritten theory" (Stephen Whittle, interview 1996). Core initial theoretical issues for the research concerned the deconstruction of gender and sexual orientation binaries, essentialism/constructionism debates, and the use of transgression as a motor for social change. These themes permeate the research, with perhaps unexpected implications for current gender theories, which are found to be inadequate for dealing with transgender. The rejection of sex and gender binarisms destabilises feminism, indicating the need for alternatives. Gender pluralism calls for a critique of the traditional feminist line on transgender, yet feminist praxis and ethics remain important for informing gender pluralism. Queer theory is critiqued in another way: transgression implies a mainstream whilst transgender transcends mainstream/subculture separations. Postmodernist and constructionist theory are also shown to be limited. Some transgender people experience gender essentialism: an anathema to constructionists. Moreover, postmodernist deconstruction, when taken to its chaotic, fluid, apolitical, relativistic conclusion, paradoxically invokes categorisation and the development of ethical structures to support diversity. Arguably, the social inclusion of transgender people and processes necessitates a spectrum of gender categorisation that includes but is not bound by simplistic male-female binaries. Spectrum models of gender indicate the need for pluralist gender politics and inclusive forms of gender and sexual citizenship.

Findings have thus led to development of gender theory which moves beyond (but is informed by) feminism and queer theory towards a contextualised, pluralist, multi-sited and multi-levelled analysis. This includes exploration of new forms of essentialism, gender fluidity and multiple genders. A multi-layered model of gender is important for other, related fields. Transgender is linked with the new technologies, and developments such as cybergender and cloning. There is a shared emphasis on body modification and the

proliferation of genders, as well as concerns with post-human subjectivities, politics and ethics.

One of the debates addressed in *Transgender Politics* concerns the tension between structure and fluidity, which I frame as the relationship between structure and postmodernism. Structure can be defined as "a set of interconnecting parts of any complex thing: a framework" (Thompson 1995 p. 1382). Within the social sciences, structure has traditionally meant institutions, and an objective reality for these have generally been assumed (Layder 1994). Constructionists have challenged this, placing emphasis on the structuring of everyday social life and arguing that both this and institutions are constructed. For the postmodernists Foucault (1981) and Butler (1990), constructionism includes the body as constructed. In this thesis, I move from a constructionist and postmodernist position to one which reinstates the importance of institutions and some level of objectivity (as Layder (1994) notes, this does not necessarily mean a return to functionalism or positivist ontologies). This can be framed using Giddens's (1976) structuration theory. However, my approach moves beyond Giddens to encompass both postmodernist constructionism and a focus on the constraints facing individuals at an institutional and social level. I have used the term 'structure' to denote everything that is patterned, relatively static and apparently 'real', including bodies, gender categorisation, institutions and cultural constructs. Structuring occurs at all levels, including the physiological, psychological, social, institutional and macro-social, and deconstruction, fluidity and reconstruction also occurs in all of these spheres. I use the term 'postmodernism' to mean constructionism and the destabilisation of structure. I argue that the dichotomy between objectivity and constructionism is false: paradoxically, both are true, and the movement between them is a fluid and continuous one. I argue that the tension, between living in the world, with the categorisation and material and social fixity this perhaps entails, and living outside of set social and identity structures (if such a thing is possible), is the fundamental issue behind the confusion and complexity surrounding transgender politics.

Related to the postmodernism-structure debate is the debate concerning third or multiple sexes and genders versus the current binary system, or versus a rejection of all gender and sexual categorisation. Another issue concerns essentialism as opposed to constructionism.

This debate is important in modelling subjectivity and relates to concepts of authenticity, which inform transgender politics. Another key debate concerns transgressive identities and politics versus assimilationist or reformist identities and politics. This is particularly apparent in transgender politics, which includes both queer and conservative activists and strategies.

Definitions and Incidence

The development of Western gender categories was formed via the interaction of the state, church, wider society, and, later, the medical establishment (Bullough and Bullough 1993). Many early societies had no clear male-female distinctions. The rigid two sex system was constructed as late as the eighteenth century in North Western Europe, where masculine women and feminine men were previously considered to be third and fourth genders by some (Feinberg 1996) or where a one-sex/gender modal was dominant (Nataf 1996). Western categorisation currently assumes discrete male and female sexes and genders. It often involves a distinction between 'sex', the biological factors (such as genitalia and chromosomes) characterising men and women, 'sexuality' (sexual attraction and arousal) and gender (the cultural and social aspects of the division of the sexes) (Ekins 1997). Sex determination is complex, involving chromosomal, gonadal, hormonal, external and internal reproductive factors as well as assigned sex and gender role (Nataf 1996). Valentine (forthcoming) usefully points out that while the separation of 'sexuality' and 'gender' has been important in developing theory and sexual politics, this obscures the close relationship and overlap between these phenomena in relation to transgender.

Nineteenth century Western categorisation mostly framed various forms of sexual and gender behaviour, including masturbation, homosexuality and cross-dressing, as abnormal. The term 'inversion', defined initially by cross-sexed physical characteristics (in practice, anything non-stereotypical) was framed as mental pathology (Prosser 1998). There were alternatives, such as Ulrich's term 'Urning', a third sex category which covered what is now termed homosexuality, Carpenter's (1912) work on 'the intermediate sex', which equated homosexuality with what is now known as transgender, and Hirschfeld's view that there are an infinite variety of sexes (Bullough and Bullough 1993). Professionals such as Ellis (1928) invented many currently dominant categories, including homosexuality and

fetishism, which were pathologised, and which reconfigured inversion, erasing what would now be called transgender (see Prosser 1998). Hirschfield coined the term 'transvestism' in 1910 (Bullough and Bullough 1993). Disputes about terms continued into the twentieth century, but it was not until the late 1940s that the term 'transsexuality' or 'transsexualism' was first used by Cauldwell (Evans 1993).

Development of the category of transsexuality was preceded by the treatment of intersexuals using surgery, which allowed development of surgical sex change techniques (Evans 1993). The earliest known case of transsexual (possibly intersexual) surgery was Sophie Hedwig's genital masculinisation in 1882 (Bullough and Bullough 1993). Alan Hart changed sex from female to male around 1917. The first recorded MTF was Lili Elbe in 1930, and Michael Dillon was the first FTM to have full sex reassignment surgery in 1949. This was followed by Christine Jorgensen's famous transition in the 1950s (Nataf 1996). The term transsexuality was clarified and defined by 1960s by Benjamin, with the help of the American media, amid continuing disputes within medicine concerning biological versus psychiatric causes of the condition. 'Transsexuality' replaced other terms, such as 'genuine transvestism'. It can be defined as cross-gender identity and a persistent wish for surgical sex-change (Nataf 1996). It is linked with what is known as 'gender dysphoria', a term introduced in 1973 and including at that time transsexuals, transvestites, homosexuals and some psychotics (MacKenzie 1994). Gender Dysphoria is defined in the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care as a person's state of dissatisfaction with socially defined sex roles (Bland 1995). Gender Dysphoria is estimated to affect 1 in 40,000 males (Evans 1993) and estimates of the numbers of transsexuals in the UK range from 30,000 to 80,000 (Morgan 1996a). There are two ways on interpreting transsexuality: as a discovered phenomenon (it always existed) or one which was invented by the medical establishment (King 1987).

Transvestism has been redefined by medics such as Stoller to mean cross-dressing which has a fetishistic (i.e. linked with sexual arousal) element, with no desire for surgery. Transvestites are mostly heterosexual (Bullough and Bullough 1993). The club-culture definition of transvestism involves men dressing as women, frequently for erotic purposes, and this excludes most other cross-dressers. The term 'cross-dressing' covers a complex set of phenomenon, from serious attempts to pass as the opposite sex to comic or

occasional erotic cross-dressing (Bullough and Bullough 1993). The term 'gender blending' is also used. It was coined by Devor in 1989 to mean women living in a partial male role, but has been broadened by authors such as Ekins (1997) to include transsexuality, drag and transvestism.

The term 'intersex' or 'intersexual' describes people with a range of different conditions involving having a mixture, or absence, of male and female physiological characteristics. Intersex conditions are caused by chromosomal or hormonal variations. The main conditions are Klinefelter's Syndrome, Androgyn Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS), Progestin Virilisation, Mixed Gonadal Dysgenesis and Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH) (Kessler 1998). True hermaphroditism, where ovarian and testicular tissue occurs in the same person, is very rare (approximately 5% of cases (Kessler 1998)). Intersex conditions affect between 0.15 (Dreger 1998) and 4% (Nataf 1996, Rothblatt (1995) of the population. Surgery, (known as Intersex Genital Mutilation by the Intersexual Society of North America (ISNA)) has been widely practised on intersex infants and children in most industrialised countries for over forty years, although there are now some moves, for example in Columbia, to legally restrict this. There are an estimated 2000 genital surgeries on intersex children annually in the USA (Intersexual Society of North America 2000). Debates are just beginning concerning the mainstream medical construction of intersexuals as abnormal. This only makes sense within a gender binaried system. Fausto-Sterling (1993), for example, argues for a conceptualisation of gender in five rather than two categories: male, female and three intersexual categories. Pluralist categorisation would normalise intersexuality.

The term 'transgender' is used as both a noun and a verb. It emerged from the USA gender activist communities in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Prosser 1998). As Wilchins says, "Transgender began its life as a name for those folks who identify neither as cross-dressers nor as transsexuals - primarily people who changed their gender but not their genitals" (1997 p.15). This was then broadened to include a wider range of identities and is now used as an umbrella term covering cross-dressing, intersexuality, transsexuality, transvestism, androgyny, drag and a multitude of other 'gender-complex' people including gays, lesbians and heterosexuals who exhibit behaviours which can be seen to transgress usual gender roles (see Raymond 1994). Thus, for example, contributor Simon Dessloch

describes transgender people as those who self-define as transgender, transsexuals, people doing drag, cross-dressers, transvestites, androgynes, third gender and other forms of transgender. Narratives concerning transgender emphasise alliances, plurality and activism. For example, Nataf (1996) discusses the importance of the term: it is more inclusive than transsexuality and unifies people around human rights issues. However, more narrow definitions of transgender are available. For example, Whittle (1998) says "Transgender refers to those people who live or desire to live a large part of their adult life in the role and dress of that gender group which would be considered to be in opposition to their sex as designated at birth" (p. 390). However, later, in the context of an email concerning the Pride March he states that "I'm intending TG as an all inclusive term to represent the whole gender/sex spectrum, including those who identify as all genders/no genders" (Whittle 2000). The term 'transgender' appears to be currently disputed, with attempts to claim the term by some transsexuals, who point out that 'transsexuality' is an inadequate term for their condition, which is gender-related rather than sexuality-related. Other terms used in the same way as transgender include 'trans', 'transpeople', 'transgenderist', 'gender people' and 'transing' or 'transgendering' (as a verb) and 'transgenders' as a plural noun. The acronyms 'MTF' and 'FTM' (alternatives are MtF and FtM or M2F and F2M) refer to male to female and female to male transsexuals. Following the work of Feinberg (1996), the terms 'ze' (to replace she or he), 'hir' (him/her) and 'hirsself' (him/herself) are used in this thesis where third or other sex/gender is taken as an identity or where there is ambiguity, and in a few places I have used both male and female pronouns for the same person, to illustrate fluidity.

Transsexuality is defined as an illness in the third, most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) (Nataf 1996). Unlike other medical conditions, treatment for transsexuality is obtained on the basis of self-diagnosis (Bullough and Bullough 1993) and application of a stringent set of procedures, with psychiatrists as gatekeepers. Transsexuals seeking treatment have to go through the 'real life test' in which they live as 'the other sex' for at least three months and then continue this for a year while they begin hormone treatment prior to surgery (Nataf 1996). Surgery involves, in brief, the following: for MTFs, bilateral orchidectomy (castration) and, usually, the inversion of the penis to form a vagina, plus, frequently, breast augmentation and secondary cosmetic surgery. For FTMs, surgery can involve removal of ovaries, uterus and a mastectomy

(Bullough and Bullough 1993). In a few cases phalloplasty (the surgical creation of a penis) is performed using skin grafts, but this is at present an imperfect procedure and it is not currently possible to construct a penis which is capable of both erection and urination. Types of treatment vary: in the UK many FTMs simply have a mastectomy and take hormones. Bullough and Bullough (1993) reviewed studies of success rates, which despite some variation are found to be good at around 80% for MTFs and 90% for FTMs.

Until recently, transsexuality and other types of what is now termed transgender were organisationally disparate, although in social terms there were overlaps between transvestites and transsexuals, and in medical terms, overlaps between intersexuals and transsexuals. King (1986, 1993) discussed the work of Woodhouse (1989) and Brake (1976), who argued that there are two types of transvestite and transsexual communities: those associated with deviant sexuality and which are locality-based and those which revolve around support and are not locality-based. This appears to have changed with the advent of a more politicised network of people falling under the broader heading of transgender, and the impact of the internet, which enables faster, more complex networking. There is less emphasis overall on support and more on politics, and some of the deviant subcultures have gained greater social acceptance. In addition, several of the people I interviewed have interests in both support networks and deviant sexuality, although their main focus is political activism. King's (1986, 1993) typology of drag (where focus is on celebrating artistic possibilities), transvestite and transsexual (which are more concerned with identity) and a possible third fetishistic community is more applicable, although research showed quite a lot of overlap between these categories.

I have discussed the grouping of people who are concerned with transgender in terms of a community rather than a subculture or a minority group. It would be possible to call this group a subculture if the widest definition of subculture, that of a group of people who have something in common with each other (Gelder and Thornton 1997) is used. However, subcultures are often seen as oppositional, disenfranchised and deviant (Gelder and Thornton 1997), and the majority of transgender people do not identify in this way. Discussing transgender in terms of a community is problematic, however, as the term 'community' is contested (Hoggett 1997) and in addition not all contributors feel that there is a transgender community. Transgender people could be called a minority group, rather

than a community, but findings suggest that for many transgender people there is a sense of connection with other transgender people, as well as shared interests in equality, so despite its drawbacks I have mostly used the term 'community' when discussing transgender people as a group. The term 'transgender community' is used in a similar way to the gay and lesbian communities (see Weeks 1985), in other words, a broad network based on shared interests and identities. As King (1986, 1993) notes, transvestite and transsexual community occurs in diverse settings, and there is no single homogenous community.

The Development of the Transgender Movement

The transvestite and transsexual community first emerged in the USA in the late 1950s in the context of widespread social hostility towards homosexuals and transgender people (King 1986, 1993). The roots of the contemporary transgender movement can be traced to the early stages of the Gay Liberation Movement: the Stonewall riot and the activism this provoked in the USA and the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and radical drag in the UK (see Kirk and Health 1984). The transgender movement also drew on the Women's Liberation Movement and the Black Civil Rights Movement (MacKenzie 1994). Transgender politics emphasise plurality, a rejection of the pathologisation of gender diversity, positive self-identification, choice, inclusion, unconventional gender and sexual identities and critiques of the binaried gender system (see the chapter on transgender politics). It has developed in relation to the older, more conventional transsexual and transvestite organisations (such as the Beaumont Society in the UK) which had rejected being 'out', homosexuality and fetishism in favour of closeted, pathologised models of identity (see King 1986, 1993, Evans 1993, Ramet 1997) (the constitution of the Beaumont Society has now changed to allow homosexuals and bisexuals to join (King 1986, 1993)). Other important influences include the radical feminist attack on transsexuals, in particular the work of Raymond (1980), which led to the damaging exclusion of transgender people from many activist groups but may, according to one contributor, have contributed to critiques of medical stereotyping and pathologisation.

The first USA radical organisations which would now be termed 'transgender' were groups such as the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries which were formed in the 1970s after gay activists rejected transgender people (Wilchins 1997). MTF transgenderist

Virginia Prince founded the Foundation for Personality Expression around 1960 (King 1986, 1993) and the magazine *Transvestia* in 1963; this marked an important watershed in transgender politics and led to the establishment of national and international networks. Initially for heterosexual transvestites and MTFs, these networks broadened in the 1980s to include all transgender people and others (MacKenzie 1994). This occurred in tandem with changes in discourses concerning gender: Rubin (1999) and Prosser (1998) discuss the importance of the work by Stone (1991), Butler (1990a, 1993), Bornstein (1994) and others in opening the way for unconventional gender possibilities. The development of the USA movement was also related to the widespread criticism of, and closure of, university-based gender clinics and the influence of feminist challenges to gender and sexual norms (Bolin 1994). In 1992 Annie Ogborn founded Transgender Nation, a broad-based, inclusive movement which located transgender people's problems at the level of the social and focused on activism rather than support (Wilchins 1997). This was linked with the development of Transgender Menace and Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC): activist organisations based in the USA. The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) was founded in 1993 and by 1996 there were groups in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, The Netherlands and Germany as well as other similar groups in countries such as Japan (Chase 1998).

The influence of American transgender politics on the UK situation is strong. The development of the USA transgender movement preceded that in the UK by several years. Kate N' Ha Ysabet saw the term 'Transgender' as being mostly adopted to keep in line with the Americans. Zach Nataf described the USA transgender movement as radical in a way the UK movement is not. Transgender Menace, Transgender Nation and other groups are involved in direct action, for example picketing events to draw attention to transgender issues. Zach suggested that the momentum is greater in the USA because there are more people and stronger alliances with the queer community. However, it would also seem that the emphasis on equality and social justice as a basis for citizenship in the USA may have had an impact on the way the movement has developed there. In the UK, citizenship models are more concerned with welfare (Roche 1992), and the UK movement has tended to focus on issues such as access to treatment, rather than broader concerns with social justice.

Like the USA movement, the transgender movement in the UK developed through a mixture of grassroots activism and community networks and alliances. The first organisation in the UK was the above-mentioned Beaumont Society, founded in 1967 by British transvestites who had met Virginia Prince (King 1986, 1993). Other organisations included the GLF-backed London Transvestite/Transsexual group, the Leeds TV/TS group, and the TS Liberation group at the ISIS commune (King 1986, 1993). The Self-Help Association for Transsexuals (SHAFT), was founded in 1981 (Kate N' Ha Ysabet) and later split into the Gender Dysphoria Trust and the Gender Trust, with an affiliated group called GEMS (King 1993), which later became Gendys. These developments were followed by the formation of Press for Change (PFC) which is currently the main organisation campaigning for transsexual people's rights. Another organisation, Gender and Sexuality Alliance, has also been involved in a number of important campaigns, has produced the journal *Radical Deviance*, and, like PFC, has a member sitting on the government forum concerning transsexuality. There are many other UK based groups, some of which, in particular Phaedra Kelly's International Gender Transience Association (I.G.T.A.) have an international remit. Others include the Gender Trust (transgender, mostly transsexual) Interchange Counselling Service, FTM Network, Sibyls (a transgender Christian group), Mermaids Support Group (for children), as well as local groups and helplines, for example the Belfast Butterfly club, Northern Concord and the Manchester TV/TS helpline. Transvestite groups have now sprung up in most British cities and there are various special events and clubs devoted to transvestism and to fetishism. Some organisations, such as BM Androgyne and Transgender London are currently dormant due to lack of support. Groups initiated by intersexuals are not established in the UK, although there are support groups for parents. PFC and the charity GIRES, which is affiliated to PFC, actively support intersexual rights. There are also transgender working groups or sections of many gay, lesbian and bisexual organisations (for example Pride and BICON Bisexual Convention) as well as the inclusion of transgender people and their concerns in many lesbian, gay and bisexual groups and publications.

Cross-Cultural and Transhistorical Context

This study is limited in scope and focuses on the Western (specifically UK) situation concerning transgender. I acknowledge the cultural relativity of terms such as

'transgender': the interpretation of transgender in other cultures using Western categories is problematic (King 1993, Rubin 1999). It is, however, important to attempt to contextualise research on transgender politics in relation to other culture's sex and gender systems.

Gender binaried categories framed by their cultural context (see King 1993, Cameron et al 1996, Valentine forthcoming), with alternatives existing in many other societies and historically within Europe (Feinberg 1996), as well as to an extent within minority ethnic subcultures in for example the USA (see Valentine forthcoming). Some non-European cultures could be argued to be transphobic (see Herdt 1994) and it would be a mistake to universalise or to idealise other cultures. However, the range of alternatives to the dualistic Western system is wide and, given Western economic and social hegemony and the normalisation of Western ideologies that this involves, must surely provoke a questioning of the normalisation of the binaried gender system. Cross-cultural gender variance is documented in depth by for example Herdt (1994), Feinberg (1996), Bullough (1976), Bullough and Bullough (1993) and Ramet (1997). There are many studies of culturally specific forms of transgender, for example Nanda's (1990) book on Hijras, texts by Williams (1986) and Jacobs, Thomas and Lang (eds.) (1997) on gender and sexual diversity in the USA, Prieur's (1998) ethnographic study of transgender in Mexico, Garber's (1992) chapter on African-American transgender literature and culture and Kulick's (1998) research on transgender and prostitution in Brazil. There are also various cross-cultural books which relate to transgender but focus primarily on homosexuality, such as Whitam and Mathy's (1991) study.

There was wide variation in sex and gender categories in different cultures prior to colonialism, with numerous forms of transgender occurring (Nataf 1996). Some societies believed in a third sex, while others blended both sexes (Bullough and Bullough 1993) or had other conceptions of gender (see for example Strathern (1994)). Currently, transsexuality is documented in many countries, including all Asian countries and many African countries (Feinberg 1996), Russia, Poland, Spain, Egypt, Brazil, South Africa, the Balkans, Morocco (see Ramet 1997), Mexico (Prieur 1998) and Brazil (Kulick 1998). Transgender has become an international phenomenon, for example transgender issues are covered in the Asian media, and in Latin America alliances are developing between transgender and lesbian and gay communities (Whittle 1998b). The Indian Hijras,

(intersexuals, transvestites, homosexuals and Western style transsexuals), and the Two-Spirit (problematically termed *Berdache* by Europeans) Native Americans, who have many different gender systems are well known examples of what Westerners would call transgender (Nataf 1996). Other examples include the *Mahu* of Tahiti, where some men dress and live as women and the *Pokot* of Kenya, who have three sexes (Bullough and Bullough 1993).

Bullough and Bullough (1993) point out that androgyny, hermaphroditism and gender-crossing are part of many non-Western and ancient religious traditions. Many creation legends incorporate intersex as sacred (Feinberg 1996), and belief in intersex deities and sex/gender transformation is part of the spiritual practice of 26 different African tribal peoples (Feinberg 1996). Gender reversal is a common theme in ancient religion, mythology and ritual in diverse societies although clearly this is culturally specific (Ramet 1997). There are a wide range of gender transformations apparent in religious traditions, in some cases associated with purification, transformation or transcendence. Medieval Christianity included transgender (Ramet 1997). Hinduism has hermaphroditic deities and the belief in the ability of deities to change form at will, includes sex changing (Ramet 1996). Some forms of Hinduism hold androgyny as an ideal to be attained, use male cross-dressing for ritual purposes and include emasculation as part of religious practice (as in the case of the *Hijras*). Some sects of Buddhism include gender changing as part of their religious practice (see Ramet 1996). Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism all teach that people contain male and female principles (Bullough and Bullough 1993). The Islamic world also has had many cases of what could be called transgender, including discussions concerning cross-sex identification by a religious commentator in the ninth century and the social acceptance of this in some instances, for example men dressing as women in some Islamic countries in certain historical periods (Bullough and Bullough 1993).

Ramet argues that “the theme of gender reversals has occurred in all societies since the beginning of recorded history” (1997 p. xii). The same could be said of intersexuality, which is documented throughout history (Kessler 1998). In some cases transgender has been institutionalised and used as a means of stabilising society, in others it has been controlled (through murder, stigmatisation and exclusion, see for example Feinberg 1996). Eunuchs formed an important part of ancient temple cultures in for example what is now

the Near-Middle-East (see Feinberg 1996). Women have cross-dressed and passed as men throughout history, mostly to deal with gender inequalities (Nataf 1996), for instance, the Egyptian Hatsheput (1500 BCE), was a queen who cross-dressed, seemingly to gain power. Male transgender was also common (Feinberg 1996), for example Greek and Roman cross-dressing was used as part of ritual (Bullough and Bullough 1993) and cross-dressing was frequent in ancient Greek theatre (Ramet 1997). There were a large number of European medieval female saints who lived as men in order to join religious orders. In Europe, hermaphrodites were allowed to choose their sex (male or female) at the age of marriage (when young, it was determine by elders) during the middle ages and Renaissance (Nataf 1996). Cross-dressing is documented at various stages of European history (Garber 1992). The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a controversial increase in cross-dressing and impersonation in European literature, theatre and ceremonies marking transitions; this was associated with challenges to the gender and class system (Ramet 1997, Feinberg 1996). In the eighteenth century masquerade balls, popular accounts of hermaphrodites and female cross-dressers and 'Molly Clubs' (where men could meet dressed in women's clothes) all grew in popularity (see King 1986, 1993). This was linked with the emergence of what is now known as homosexuality (King 1986, 1993, Nataf 1996).

Historically, there were many individual cases of transgender in Europe and the USA. For example Cromwell (1999) documents three types of women who lived as men: those who did so for short term gain, those who did so for love and those who identified as men. For instance, 119 women living as men were documented in the Netherlands between 1550 and 1839, mostly soldiers and sailors. Well known cases of women who lived as men for career reasons include Hannah Snell, Mary Ann Talbot and Mary Frith, while women who took male roles in order to have relationships with women include Mary East and Delia Hudson/Frank Dubois. There is at least one documented case of an individual who was 'transsexual' before the term was invented: Maria Van Antwerpen, who felt himself/herself to be a 'man in a women's body', and others, such as Catalina de Erauso and James Barry, lived as men. Cases of men living as women also abound, for example the Chevalier d'Eon (1728-1810) (Bullough and Bullough 1993).

The media and popular culture have been important in the development of modern transgender. This is not only the case for transsexuality, where publicity surrounding

Jorgensen's sex change helped to create a 'transsexual identity' (Bullough and Bullough 1993). The twentieth century saw an explosion of cultural representations of other forms of transgender, as evident in films, music, television and the press. For example, many rock artists and bands have flirted with transgender: Alice Cooper and Kiss, Boy George, David Bowie, Mick Jagger, The Velvet Underground, Blur, and k.d.Lang (see Bullough and Bullough 1993). The *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1972) became a cult movie, and now a show which many people attend cross-dressed. Other films include *Victor/Victoria*, *Girls Will Be Boys*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Cabaret*, *Tootsie*, *Paris is Burning*, *Mrs Doubtfire*, *The Adventures of Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert*, *The Silence of The Lambs*, *The Birdcage*, *The Crying Game*, *Sexe des Etoiles*, *Boys Don't Cry* and many others. Transsexuality is covered in many TV shows, for example Oprah Winfrey and Jerry Springer, is the subject of several TV documentaries and is now included in the popular soap *Coronation Street*. Famous transgender performers include RuPaul in the USA and Lily Savage in the UK. Transgender is also a theme of much literature, including for example Gore Vidal's *Myra Breckenridge*, and in some cases third sex/gender themes are addressed (Garber 1992). It is worth noting that fetishistic cross-dressing is less widely covered by the media and intersexuality is virtually absent from popular media coverage.

The Literature

Various aspects of social theory, including postmodernism/poststructuralism and theories of citizenship as well as feminist and queer theory, are crucial for this research. Literature regarding these will be reviewed and explored in the following chapters. Here, a brief overview of transgender literature (excluding cross-cultural and transhistorical literature, which is covered above), is provided. Bibliographies on the subject are available (Bullough 1976, Denny 1994 and Demeyere, 1992).

Transgender studies as a field is still relatively new, is fast moving and has expanded considerably since the inception of my study in 1995. Key developments since 1995 have been the publication of Ekins and King's *Gender Blending* (1996), which claims to herald the birth of the field of transgender studies, Ekin's (1997) empirical *Male Femaling*, Nataf's *Lesbians Talk Transgender* (1996), and Stryker's (1996) work, *Transgender Warriors* by Feinberg (1996), which provides class and gender analysis as well as a historical and cross-

cultural context for transgender politics, Ramet's cross-cultural collection *Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures* (1996), Prosser's (1996) Cultural Studies *Transitional Matters*, Wilchin's (1997) documentation and analysis of the oppression of transgender people and Chase's (1998) work on intersex. The most recent developments include the publication of transgender issues of the journals *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly (G.L.Q.)* and *Gender Studies*, the book *Reclaiming Genders* (More and Whittle 1999), Fausto-Sterling's *Sexing the Body* (2000), Dreger's (1999) *Intersex in the Age of Ethics* and Williams (forthcoming) *Education beyond Binaries*. These will only be partially addressed because of time and space limitations.

Early studies concerning transgender fell mostly into two camps; medical studies using case-based or positivist approaches, and autobiographical accounts (Ekins 1997). Subsequent bodies of literature developed from within Sociology and Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Queer Studies and feminism. The most recent development is the substantial contribution made by transgender theorists. These will be reviewed in turn.

Studies which relate to different types of transgender and which do not fit easily into the above categories include Carpenter's (1912) study of 'The Intermediate Sex' and Dreger's (2000) important collection of intersex testimonies. Early texts on transvestism include that by Bulliet (1928) and Cauldwell (1956). More recent texts on transvestism and drag include Ackroyd (1979), Baker (1968), Firkham and Heath (1984) and (on transvestism) King (1986, 1993).

Medical

The literature on transsexuality and cross-dressing is heavily weighted in favour of medicalising approaches, which tend either towards psychiatric pathologisation or biological accounts. Early authors include Hirschfeld (1910) and Ellis (1928). The key authors and clinicians include Benjamin (1966), Money (1969), and Green (1969 with Money, 1974, 1987). Their approach is followed by authors such as Person and Ovesey (1974) and a host of other medics including Steiner (1985), Bocktin and Coleman (1992) and Reid (1996). Medics who take a psychiatric or psychological approach include Pauly (1965), Doctor (1988), Brierly (1979), Stoller (1968) and Socarides (1970, 1991). Medics

who have written about intersexuality include Meyerbahlberg (1994), Uehara, Nata, Nagae et al (1995), Unlu, Gultan and Ayec (1997) and Walsh (1995). The medical approach to transgender has been analysed by authors from a range of positions, including Raymond (1980, 1984), King (1986, 1993) and Stone (1991). Denny (1994) provides a medical account from a transgender standpoint.

Autobiographical

There is a long history of transsexual autobiographies. Much less has been written by cross-dressers, intersexuals and other transgender people, although there are exceptions, such as Von Mahlsdorf (1995). One of the classic autobiographies is *Conundrum*, by Morris (reprinted 1997). Recent autobiographies include the following: Cossey (1992), County (1995), Rees (1996), Sullivan (1990), and the photographic collections by Cameron (1996) and La Grace Volcano and Halberstam (1998). Biographies include Clements (1998) and collections of testimonies include Feinberg (1996) and the above-mentioned Dreger (2000). As well as autobiographies published as books there is a wealth of material currently published in community publications, for example *The GENDYS Journal*, as well as on webpages such as those hosted by PFC and ISNA.

Sociological

A small body of sociological, mostly interactionist, work has developed on transsexuality, transvestism and intersexuality, starting with Garfinkel's (1967) classic study of status management, followed by the feminist ethnomethodological research of Kessler and McKenna (1978) and Kessler (1990, 1998), King's interactionist account (1986, 1993), and the work of Hirschauer (1996). Bolin's (1988) anthropological study of transsexual women was important in shifting debates way from a pathologising approach towards a critical and context-specific discussion and was followed by other studies for example in 1994. Newton's (1972) ethnographic work on drag provided a useful contribution. Woodhouse's (1989) feminist study of transvestism utilises ethnographic methods. Bullough and Bullough's (1993) historical, cross-cultural analysis of cross-dressing and transsexuality is socially and historically contextualised, provoking critical examination of the issues. Nataf (1996) conducted interviews with a range of transgender people and analysed these

in relation to postmodernist feminism. Plummer (1995) did research with a range of 'sexually different' people, including transgenderists. A similar epistemological stance to that of Plummer is taken by Ekins (1997) who uses grounded theory to develop analysis of male to female cross-dressers. Related approaches are taken by authors such as Talamini (1982), Feinbloom (1976) and King (as above), who study transgender in relation to the sociology of deviance. Another approach draws on the critical tradition and includes studies by Billings and Urban (1982) and others such as Brake (1976). Other approaches, such as those dealing with policy, are developed by authors such as MacMullen and Whittle (1994).

Feminist

There have been a number of feminist studies of transgender, including those by Woodhouse (1989) (cited above), Decker and Van de Pol (1989), Devor (1989) and Wheelwright (1989) as well as the book edited by Epstein and Straub (1991), which also uses a cultural studies approach. The dominant discourse amongst feminists regarding transgender is that initiated by Raymond (1980, 1994) and developed by others such as Jeffreys (1996), Daly (1984), Greer (1999) and Zita (1992). This approach, which frames transgender people as socially constructed agents of patriarchy, is resoundingly rejected in my findings as well as by transgender authors (Feinberg 1997, Riddell 1996) and others such as Ramet (1997). Queer feminist Butler (1990) takes a different stance, using poststructuralism, but like others erases much transgender (especially transsexual and intersexual) experience. McKenzie (1994) is sympathetic to transgender people but, like other feminists, adopts a constructionist stance which negates the experience of many transgender people. One alternative to this approach is that developed by sex-radical Califia (1997).

Cultural Studies and Queer Studies

Cultural studies has produced a range of representations of transgender, including literature by Epstein and Straub (1991), Garber (1992), and Kroker and Kroker (1993) and media presentations such as the *Witness* exhibition (1998), photography by Cameron (1996) and the work of performance artists including George (1998) and film-makers such as Schutzer

(1998). Ki Namaste (1996) usefully points out that lack of concern that many cultural studies and queer authors show for transgender people, in particular the lack of attention to the realities of living outside of normative sex/gender relations, and the violence and social exclusion which many transgender people face. This is not the case with all studies, however, for example Kirk and Heath's (1984) photographic and textual account of drag and transvestism is grass-roots driven and sympathetic.

Transgender Theory

Prior to 1991, transgender people's voices were mostly absent from academic discussions of the subject (Rubin 1999), although there were various community publications, the first in the USA being called *Transvestia*, which was followed by *Tapestry: The Journal For All People Interested in Cross-dressing and Transsexualism*, *Female to Male: F2M* and many others (see Bullough and Bullough 1993). Transgender theorisation began with Stone's classic *The Empire Strikes Back*, published in 1991, a constructionist account which critiques the essentialism of medical texts as well as the anti-transgender approach of feminists. This was swiftly followed by the work of authors such as Bornstein (1994, 1998), Nataf (1996), Wilchins (1997), and More (1996a-d, 1999 with Whittle), who also take a primarily constructionist, postmodernist position. More recent theorists, in particular Whittle (1998a), Prosser (1998) and Rubin (1999) theorise authenticity, although for some, such as Rubin, authenticity is ultimately seen as a strategy. Other theoretical positions evident in the work of transgender authors include the activist, marxist account by Feinberg (1996), Kaveney's (1999) analysis of transgender politics and the activist oriented work of Chase (1998) and Kaldera (1988).

Structure of the Thesis

The introduction to *Transgender Politics* is followed by the methodological chapter, which explores the complex methodological issues and can be read in tandem with the methodological appendices. Chapter three utilises a postmodernist theoretical framework. It is primarily empirical, describing the ways in which transgender exemplifies postmodernist complexity, fluidity, paradox and pluralism and the challenges this poses to gender and sexual orientation binaries. The following chapter explores transgender and

postmodernist deconstruction in more depth, utilising Butler's poststructuralism and transgender theory as a basis for building a poststructuralist theory of transgender. A critique of postmodernist/poststructuralist approaches to transgender is then developed, focusing on issues concerning embodiment, technology, gender categorisation, subjectivity and social structure. This leads into chapter five, which provides an account of the subjective and social processes of transphobia. Chapter six explores transphobic discourses and includes a case study of transphobic feminism. Chapter seven describes the transgender political movement and agendas in relation to notions of citizenship and assimilationism/radicalism debates. The final chapter summarises findings, explores theoretical and policy implications, indicates areas for further research and concludes the thesis. I would like to point out that the complexities and contradictions present when conducting research in this field provide a major theme for the research, but rather than having a specific section for this I have referred to it throughout the text and appendices where relevant.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview and analysis of the methods I have used in researching transgender politics. This research was unusual in two main ways: my use of feminist and participative methods and the number of problems with established methodologies which the research process illustrates. The difficulties I experienced doing this research can be used to inform discussions such as that of Punch (1994), who argues against the 'conspiracy' in selling the 'neat, packaged' view of the research process. Given space constraints, this chapter focuses on feminist and participative methodologies and the critique which I develop of these, as these are the most important methodological contributions which I make in this thesis. I therefore deal with other aspects of the methodology fairly briefly.

The chapter is divided into broad sections. Firstly, I describe my own location and place the research briefly in the context of the methodologies employed by other researchers in the field. I then discuss feminist methodologies with respect to the overall research process, and participatory methodologies in relation to different stages of the research. I discuss representation and the limits to which it is possible to represent others, particularly given the incredible complexity of the topic at hand. I then provide ethical guidelines for research in what is currently a sensitive area, and discuss issues concerning the research and ethics.

My Standpoint as a Researcher

I am not sure if I am transgendered, as this depends on definition. I explored this issue during the course of the research. I am female bodied and identify primarily as a woman, but I challenge gender norms at times and assume a male identity occasionally. I went through a phase of being transphobic during the research but overcame this. I now see transgender as non-pathological and as socially acceptable, in other words as tenable (see King 1993). I come from a middle class background, am white, and was able bodied until my period of illness (chronic fatigue syndrome, depression) during the research, when I

was incapacitated for over a year and experienced some of the social exclusion which disabled people face. I identified as bisexual and at times heterosexual during my teens and early twenties, then as lesbian for about seven years and subsequently as bisexual/pansexual. I have seen myself as a feminist since my teens, but became extremely critical of feminism during the middle period of the research, and adopted standpoint and postmodernist feminist positions in the latter periods of the research. My ontological position draws on my spirituality, which is eclectic but important for my work. I see my ethical stance as springing from my spiritual practice, as the latter involves reflexivity and concern with non-harm. The influence of spirituality on research practice is discussed in the literature (Lincoln and Denzin 1994).

At first my interest in transgender was theory driven: transgender provided a locus for the debates with which I was most concerned. I was interested in making an original contribution to the field of gender studies and transgender appeared to be a cutting edge topic. Once I started the fieldwork and realised how much social exclusion and oppression many transgender people face, my motives changed and the project became political: one of collaborating with transgender people in order to enable voices to be heard that might otherwise remain hidden from public awareness and one which would assist in gaining social inclusion for transgender people. Like King (1986, 1993), whose views concerning transsexuality and transvestism changed as he realised the extent of diversity and complexity in this field, I changed my views considerably during the course of the research.

I began the research from a feminist perspective, and developed my methodology using primarily standpoint approaches (see for example Reinharz 1992). I realised that research is inevitably political (Punch 1994), so used politically sensitive methods, in particular participative methods, as far as possible. Feminist methodologies became problematic when I realised the extent to which transgender disrupts gender binaries and the issues which this raises for feminism and feminist methods. This is a theme for the thesis as a whole, and it is addressed in particular in the chapters on theorising transgender and transphobia. I fell back on mainstream qualitative methodologies, in particular grounded approaches, but also explored postmodernist research methods. I felt a good deal of uncertainty about my methodology during the research, because my research findings led

to the disruption of the feminist epistemological framework which I had assumed at the beginning of the project. In retrospect, the approach I have taken is best defined as a combination of postmodern, standpoint and postpositivist epistemologies (or theories of knowledge). The tension between methodological approaches, particularly those which view reality as completely constructed versus those which assume an empirical reality as the foundation for everything, mirrors the central debate of the thesis: postmodern fluidity and constructionism/constructionism versus structure and empiricism. The tortuous and complex research process which has characterised this piece of work exemplifies the postmodernism which it seeks to represent. The manifestation of the thesis in an academic style, put together by an individual coming from a particular standpoint, illustrates the structure which both enables, and inevitably limits, what any one person can do.

Methodological Location

The research on transgender politics and postmodernity can be set within the context of the burgeoning field of transgender studies, as discussed in the introduction. There are a number of problems with existing studies, including in particular a lack of empirical grounding or explicitly developed methodologies in many studies, and in some cases unethical practice.

The field of transgender studies appears to be heavily weighted in favour of textually-based accounts, with a few exceptions, such as King (1986, 1993). The most recent cutting edge work has primarily been produced by transgender people using their own life experience and understanding in a way which often utilises methods such as participant observation and literature work but which is infrequently formalised as 'research'. This includes literature by authors such as Stone (1991), Bornstein (1994), Feinberg (1996), Whittle (1996, 1998a), More (1996 a,b,c), Kelly (1987-95), Rubin (1999), Riddell (1996), Stryker (1996, 1998), and Wilchins (1997). These contributions to the field could be seen as standpoint research: in many cases the author explicitly locates themselves in terms of identity and social position and attempts to fairly represent other positions. Perhaps this highlights a problem with much formalised, 'academic' research, which assumes that knowledge production must follow certain methodological pathways. However, it is hard to avoid feeling that there is a dearth of research which has explicitly developed

empirically based methodologies. There are many other pieces of work which are literature-based rather than empirically-driven, for example Billings and Urban (1982), Califia (1997) and Kessler (1998).

Where empirical research has been conducted, it is frequently open to criticism. In some cases the epistemology is undeveloped and unspecified. This is the case with studies such as McKenzie (1994) and Nataf (1996) as well as to a large degree Raymond (1980, 1994). This weakens the findings, although in the case of pioneering research such as Nataf's (1996) (which was produced by an unpaid community member who was working outside of academia), it is debatable whether methodological discussion should be a priority. Methodological sophistication is primarily a concern for the academy, and over-focus on this acts to exclude the majority of the population from contributing to social capital. In addition, empirical research concerning transgender has sometimes been stereotyping or has had negative consequences. For example, Raymond's work (1980, 1994), which used in-depth interviews with a small sample of transsexuals, impacted in a very damaging way on transgender people and also fouled the pitch for later researchers such as myself (this is discussed further in the chapter on transphobic discourses).

'Good practice' for research in the field can be drawn from some of the more recent studies. Some non-transgender authors locate themselves in ways compatible with methodological advances. These include McKenzie (1994), who sees herself as a political ally of the transgender movement and states that she hopes that her work will contribute to the breakdown of rigid gender categorisation. She rejects the categorisation of transgender people as subjects and rigid divisions between herself and the people about whom she writes. Similarly, Califia (1997) discusses her gender identity and motives for writing about transgender, which include a profound discomfort concerning sex role and gender conditioning. My research is informed by the approach of these authors. Plummer's (1995) emphasis on the reflexive representation of multiple voices is also useful in developing my epistemology. Like me, Plummer found his material difficult both personally and politically and thus provoking of reflexivity. I have also found Stryker's (1998) discussion concerning transgender studies helpful: she criticises the cultural studies based work of Garber (1992), which frames transgender and transsexuality as a cultural construction. This can be linked to my emphasis on social structure and 'self-essentialism', or the notion that

there is part of the self which is not constructed. Stryker (1998) argues that transgender studies needs to be more than medico-judicial or moralist discourse and that the active agency of transgender people seeking to represent themselves through a variety of strategies should be recognised. This supports the participative approach which I have employed as far as possible.

Feminist Methodologies

Feminist methodologies have played an important role in my research on transgender and politics. Definitions of feminist methods are diverse (Stanley and Wise 1993), reflecting debates within feminism (Ramazanoglu 1992). I decided to follow Reinharz, (1992) who uses women's self-definition as feminist researchers as a basis for defining feminist research. Central concerns for feminist methodologists include the construction and legitimisation of knowledge and a critique of masculinist epistemologies, including the subject-object divide and claims to objectivity, which hide androcentricity, erase women's knowledge and experience and perpetuate male dominance (Stanley and Wise 1993). Feminist methodologist's rejection of objectivity and the notion of grand theory overlaps with constructionist, postmodern and to an extent post-positivist approaches.

There are debates concerning whether feminist methods are different from other methodologies (Hammersley 1992, 1994, Ramazanoglu 1992), and controversies concerning whether men can identify as feminist and do feminist research (Digby 1998). These debates tie in with my concerns with postmodernity and gender, as discussed in particular in the chapters on theory and transphobia as well in the conclusion. In my research, gender shifting and the adoption of gender standpoints at variance to that ascribed at birth is the order of the day. This raises huge problems for feminist research methods which follow the kind of definition used by Stanley (1990), where feminist research is defined as that carried out by feminist women, about women, for other women. I describe my research as feminist to a degree, in particular because it concerns gender emancipation, the main author (myself) is a feminist, and because the research carries many of the hallmarks of feminist research. These include a questioning of masculinist social structures and ontologies, concern with experience and subjectivity (Denzin and Lincoln 1994), acknowledgement of the political nature of research (Maynard and Purvis 1994),

giving voice, non-hierarchical, egalitarian methods (Jones 1991), acting against oppression (Stanley 1990) and the empowerment of marginalised groups (see Reinharz 1992). In addition, many of the research participants identify as women and as feminists. Where I part company with feminist methodologies is where unitary notions of gender are used. In other words, some of the contributors to my research identify as women some of the time, some used to be seen as men but are now women or vice versa and others inhabit a variety of genders. I myself have identified at times as transgender as well as female. The notion of 'woman' does not describe a single, solid identity, at least in terms of my research, and is therefore flawed. For example, Oakley's (1981) classic discussion of women being inside other women's culture when interviewing them is useless for my work, where identities are non-unitary and complex. Other problematic methods include where power inequalities are linked in a simplistic manner with gender, in other words, where oppression is seen as only due to men or masculinity (see for example Jeffreys 1993). This is disputed by my findings, which again emphasise complexity.

There are different forms of feminist epistemology, which can be categorised into three broad types: empiricism (for example Eichler 1987), postmodernism (Olsen 1994) and cultural and standpoint approaches (Stanley 1990, Olsen 1994). I have already discussed the problems with postmodern methodologies, and have noted that while I draw on post-positivist, empiricist methods, my main concern is with interaction and the construction of gender. I feel that standpoint approaches (Hartsock 1983, Harding 1986, Haraway 1991) provide a useful location for my methodology. Standpoint epistemologies concern the situation of the researcher and researched in their social and historical context, and thus a commitment to partial claims to knowledge and an assumption that knowledge is constructed. They entail reflexivity and a lack of separation between theory and empirical research (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, Marcus 1994). For Harding (1986), the focus is on women's social positions and conducting research as a woman from this basis. Harding claims that research from women's standpoints produces better knowledge, a claim I am obliged to challenge given the assumptions of unitary gender on which it is based. However, it is quite possible to extend standpoint approaches to represent groups other than women, including transgender people. In fact, standpoint approaches are particularly useful for understanding the nomadic positions adopted by some transgender people. Thus, people's apparent gender positions shift and also mean a variety of things, socially, at

different times and in different contexts. The relationship between internal and external gender identities may also change. A person's internal gender identity may be fixed, as in the case of transsexuals, or shifting, in the case of gender transients and cross-dressers. Standpoint methodologies enable description of these positionings, and thus a more accurate picture of transgender people's realities.

Standpoint epistemologies can be seen as post-positivist. Harding (in Maynard and Purvis 1994) argues that standpoint methodologies provide 'strong' objectivity, in contrast to positivist approaches, because they do not mask researcher's hidden cultural agendas and in fact involve systematic documentation of these. This can be linked with Stanley's (1990) notion of "fractured foundationalism", which acknowledges the socially situated, thus limited, nature of knowledge but sees the diverse contributions this allows as a resource rather than a problem. Thus, standpoint epistemologies can be used in a way that recognises hidden or silenced standpoints, including those within feminism (Stanley 1990). Standpoint epistemologies are criticised by Lovell (1996), who argues that the notion of standpoints implies a solidity of terrain which is itself shifting. She argues that the shifting nature of standpoints could lead to postmodernist relativism and individualism. As noted above, the tension this implies, between solid and shifting identities and politics, is central to my research. Lovell has a valid point. Standpoint approaches certainly involve shifting terrain, and the problems of relativism and individualism, in relation to identity construction and politics. However, I feel that it is precisely because standpoint epistemologies allow exploration of these issues that they are useful. Thus, while standpoints are to an extent temporary, they are still real and describable. Following discussion by Maynard and Purvis (1994), I argue that standpoint approaches can avoid the problems of relativism because locality and perspective are monitored in relation to others. Like Luff (1996) I see some notion of a "standpoint" as essential for feminist research, and for my research in a broader sense. It is particularly important for research on transgender, not only because of the diversely positioned identities in question but because of the diversity and contradictions within the communities I am representing. This requires the acknowledgement within the research of the contributor's many standpoints whilst making attempts to avoid privileging one over the others.

Participative Research

The research has drawn fairly heavily on participative methodologies. Here, I will briefly describe participative methodologies, examine the way in which they have been applied at the different stages (moving in rough chronological order) and then discuss some of the problems with participative research which became apparent during the research process, including researcher over-involvement and power issues. Participatory methods were developed in response to concerns about representation (Lincoln and Denzin 1994) and are linked with critical theory, and the development of resistance or alternatives to dominant methodologies. Participatory methods could be seen as post-positivist because people are represented more fully by involvement than by other means. Participative methods overlap with feminist methods in an number of ways. Feminist methods include an acknowledgement of the active involvement of the participants in the research process (Stanley and Wise 1993), and as Luff (1996) notes, there have been many feminist attempts to involve research participants in all stages of feminist research.

Overview of Participative Methods

Participative research is characterised by the research problem originating within the community and being defined, analysed and solved by the community. Its aims are the radical transformation of society and the inclusion of marginalised groups. For example, Bernard (1995), in her participative research concerning Black men and success, emphasises the importance of doing 'research from the margins'. As hooks (1984) says, the voices of people usually left out of the research process are crucial for the research process. In participative research, the researcher is seen as a facilitator, motivator, learner and educator (see Park et al 1993). Participative research can entail involving others in their own interrogative efforts and co-authorship, including the production of multiple-voiced texts (Lincoln and Denzin 1994). The validity of the research should involve evaluation by participants (Park et al 1993). In some senses participative research is similar to qualitative methodologies, especially participative observation. For example Denzin (1989) argues that meaningful interpretations only occur if the researcher immerses themselves in the world being studied.

The research was participatory in a number of ways, in particular because it aimed for social inclusion of marginalised groups, and because transgender people were involved at each stage as much as possible. I as a researcher was fully involved in the learning process. Although it is debatable as to whether the project was initiated from within the communities, it was supported at all stages by participants. Here are some examples:

"Many thanks again, for allowing me inclusion and self-expression" (Phaedra Kelly, July 1998)

"I am delighted to see a new approach to this subject in the form this [research] has taken. I feel that much of the public opinion in this area has been formed by too few, unrepresentative case histories, portrayed by the press and the media who have been more interested in finding sensationalist stories to promote their own agenda and financial interests. I hope that this survey may help overcome the problem that many TSs share with me, the "Catch 22 situation" where to win our rights, we have to "come out". In "coming out" we fail as TSs, becoming merely "former-men" or "former-women" instead of men, or women, as the case may be, in the eyes of the general public" (Annie Cox)

"I feel that this is a really important [project], one that requires publishing, one that takes the debate forward and breaks new ground. Your multilayered model is innovative in seeking to reconcile, not divide, different theoretical approaches, to locate each appropriately, not deny one for the sake of the other" (Pamela Summers)

Other contributors also described the work as being useful and important and said they would help in any way they could. This help was essential: people gave their time, knowledge, contacts and encouragement to enable this project to happen. Several contributors said that it was good to have input from people outside of the community; this was linked with breaking down the "walls of the ghetto". My recognition of the processual nature and multiplicity of the field seemed to be an important factor for some contributors. For others, it was my attempts to operate ethically which gained support. In other, less

frequent, instances I felt that the research was less welcome, given the tendency of researchers and clinicians to build their careers on the backs of transgender people. I was not properly aware of this when I started, and might have avoided the research topic if I had realised this. As it is I consider myself to be indebted to transgender people.

Research Design, Sampling and Access

The research changed very considerably in response to participant's contributions to the design, including specifications for focus. The early stages of the research involved consultation with various transgender people about key issues for the research, and discussion of initial design with several of the participants, including Stephen Whittle, who suggested that I contact what he described as community leaders. I discussed the research with several of these people, including Kate More, Pamela Summers and Mjka Scott, as well as a number of other transgender people in informal contexts, for example at a workshop for transgender people. Early alterations to the focus in response to people's contributions included a move away from purely theory-led research, towards research which would be useful to the transgender movement, and a reduction of the range of methods used, including the jettisoning of a survey.

Initial access to the field was via Zach Nataf's (1996) book *Lesbians Talk Transgender* and my social contacts. I did not attempt to be representative, but would strongly support further, more representative, research, particularly research which includes less articulate transgender people's accounts. For this research, participant observation and consultation occurred with a fairly wide range of people in terms of class, ethnicity, education and other social characteristics. However, the interviews took place with what was to an extent an elite sample, as about 60% of the contributors had considerable experience of activism, unlike many people who 'do transgender'. I justified a partially elite sample because the research aimed to be exploratory and to develop conceptual frameworks, so it made sense to go to people who appeared to be community leaders in terms of their level of involvement in community building and activism. Also, participants generally supported this strategy. Like researchers such as Wicke and Ferguson (1994), I had some difficulties being representative in terms of class and also 'race'. I estimated 14 people to be middle class (a minority of these were authors, academics or artists), 7 to be underclass due to (in

many cases social) disability, and 3 to be working class, or to have strong working class alliances. All of them were white except for one African American contributor. Contributors were largely located in London (11), with others living in smaller urban centres (6 in the South, 3 in the North, 1 in the Midlands), 2 in rural areas and one in the USA. I have listed the contributors, date of interview and broad transgender identification at the time of interview below. At the time of interview 12 of these people were post-operative transsexuals or androgynes, two were pre-operative transsexuals, 2 had undergone some surgery, and 2 were non-operative transsexuals. Seven were transvestites, cross-dressers or non-operative gender transients. One contributor, MKP (an FTM who chose to be represented by his initials) needs to be mentioned at this point. Whilst we did not do a formal interview, so he is not listed below, he did contribute considerably. The interviewees were as follows:

Contributors who wished to be named:

Simon Dessloch	1998	FTM transsexual
Christie Elan Cane	1996/8	Androgyne (now identifies as non-gendered)
James Green	1996	FTM transsexual
Roz Kaveney	1996	MTF transsexual
Phaedra Kelly	1998	Gender transient
Del LaGrace	1996	Hermaphrodyke at that time
Hamish Macdonald	1998	Female to male cross-dresser
John Marshall	1996	Transvestite

Kate More	1996	MTF transsexual
Zachary Nataf	1996	FTM transsexual
Mjka Scott	1998	MTF transsexual
Yvonne Sinclair	1996/8	Transvestite
Alex Whinnom	1996	FTM transsexual
Stephen Whittle	1996	MTF transsexual
Kate Na Y'Hsabet	1998	FTM transsexual

Contributors who wished to be anonymised, or where it was unclear:
(pseudonyms)

Justin Bannon	1996	Transvestite
Annie Cox	1996	MTF transsexual
Penny Gainsborough	1996	MTF transsexual
Ann Goodley	1996/8	Initially intersexual, then MTF transsexual
Joanna/Dave Jones	1998	Transvestite, drag queen
Elizabeth Loxley	1996	MTF transsexual
Meredith Malik	1996	MTF transsexual

Salmacis	1998	Intersexual
Pamela Summers	1996	MTF transsexual

Participant Observation

Participant observation by its definition relies on a researcher taking part in a particular piece of research, with their participation occurring to a greater or lesser extent. I conducted at least 500-1000 hours of participant observation during the fieldwork period, including for example a visit to a gender clinic, transgender community workshops, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride meeting, taking part in a photo shoot of FTMs, various clubs, the TrAnsGENDER AGENDA conference at Oxford University, the Transgender Film Festival, BiCon Bisexual Conference, three Pride events (London Pride march, Brighton Pride, and Hyde Out event in Leeds) as well as collaboration and friendships. Material gained during participant observation includes data from professionals working in the field (in particular, Alice Purnell of the Beaumont Society). It is difficult to make a reliable estimate concerning the extent of participant observation because the research overlapped with my social life. I was fully participant in the research during the early stages, including not just the formal research, such as meeting organisation members and discussing research design, but also in terms of my identity and social life. My role was not very different from that of many of the contributors, who showed high levels of reflexivity, breadth of knowledge and capacity for participant observation. Thus, I found people giving examples and theorising based on their own informal and in a few cases formal research. Many of the contributors were collaborators in a full sense: we shared insights, material, jokes, mutual support, email petitions and so forth. For example, when I first met Kate More, in 1996, we discussed collaboration in detail. Here is an example of a conversation we had following an email exchange:

I: I think we've done that. Yeah. I mean I think this whole thing about third gender and other genders is something that would be good to continue exploring.

Kate: Yes, that's true.

I: But..

Kate: That's certainly in the framework of the third sex papers.

I: Great. Excellent.

Kate: Any ideas would be sort of happily welcomed and, you know, we'll work on that together. That sounds like it would be a good way forward.

I: Right. Okay. "No one looks at the impact of sexuality on gender." Now, this is interesting. I mean I haven't really thought about it very much but..

Kate and some of the others were supportive when I was ill, and collaboration continued when I returned. Levels of collaboration varied: for many participants, involvement in the research was fairly formal and circumscribed. In general, collaborative relationships evolved in an organic way depending to a large degree on the extent of mutual usefulness, rapport and time constraints. The importance of "giving something back" was marked in this research and I feel this is under-documented in the literature. It was normal for me to reciprocate people's time by lending or giving people material, offering advice, for example with a university course someone was doing. In some cases I provided support when others were ill, for example one contributor went through a period of depression and another had a major operation. Reciprocity helped to equalise the relationships and avoid exploitation. For example, Phaedra Kelly wrote to me concerning Eastern European transgender people:

"Something which peaked (sic) my interest was that she said you were involved (sic) with our Drag King Brothers, and by coincidence, our agent in Latvia has just met a female to male Cross Dresser or Drag King, a Latvian Brother, who asks to know how to create a beard. Ineta of course is more involved with trying to get rid of facial hair, and my suggestions come more from theatrical experience, copydex (sic) and false hair. I doubt either are easily obtainable in Latvia. If you would help Ineta to help this brother, perhaps you could send them some written advice or

something? If you have any practical how-to info on it IGTA [International Gender Transience Alliance] could do with it in the stockpile as we do a lot of work with overseas f to ms these days. If you were able to send them some equipment for the transformation, that would greatly ease their burden there"

I responded to Phaedra's request by giving her the things I had bought for myself and subsequently felt unsure about using: a false moustache and materials for putting on facial hair, and by apologising for not being able to do more.

Interviewing

The interviews ranged in length from about 45 minutes (in two cases) to 3 hours (in 4 cases) with an average (mode) of an hour. Five of the interviews were stolen from the boot of a locked car. I repeated three of these and used notes from the others (see appendix 4 for letters to contributors concerning this). I aimed initially to use participative methods for interviewing by checking the themes with interviewees, and stating that the interview was something that we would construct together. I discussed participative interviewing methods with Stephen Whittle, who recognised my concerns about the tension between doing research on particular topics and not imposing my ideas. This tension was apparent in my fieldwork, where the desire to avoid leading too much and thus skewing the interview away from people's interests had to be balanced with openness about my own position. I also found that several participants were used to the idea of being interviewed and did not relate to the idea of constructing knowledge: the concept was cumbersome and seemed somewhat inauthentic, as the interview did focus on a set of questions put together primarily by myself. Here is a small example of my diary entries, which exemplifies some of these issues:

"I think the issue of participative research is something that people find quite hard to grasp: they're used to the interviewer taking the lead - probably there are limits to which the interviewee wants it to be participative. Also, although I said I wanted it to be participative I think at times they took this to be part of the 'patter' rather than a completely open request for collaboration. I think for me, again, there are issues about control and genuinely giving up control" (10 June 1996)

I revised my position, and in the second set of interviews, I did not specify knowledge construction, but I did aim to be sensitive and follow contributor's lines of interest.

The Focus Group

The focus group aimed to contribute to the findings by allowing group discussion, and also to act as a forum for community development. It was designed and organised in close collaboration with several transsexual people, in particular Rachel Webb, Meredith Malik, Penny Gainsborough and Kate More. During the course of this process it moved from being a focus group for my research to being a forum where three transsexual people presented papers (following a call for papers in the transgender press which I organised) and one slot which was allocated for my research. I became ill shortly before the event took place, so Kate More and MKP took over the organisation of the event and it took place without me. The recording equipment failed, so material could not be used directly and I had to rely on reports. The day was a mixed success: it unfortunately led to some conflict within the community concerning radicalism, and also tensions concerning accessibility, as one contributor presented a paper which others felt to be inaccessible. However, it enabled people to meet in a way which facilitated community-building: for example some of the contributors who initially met at the forum have subsequently collaborated in lobbying parliament.

Research Analysis

Research analysis took place in a number of stages. Firstly, I conducted preliminary analysis following the consultative exercise, prior to in depth interviewing. The second, more substantial, stage of analysis took place after the first set of interviews. This involved, firstly, establishing my own analysis of transgender based on the interviews and participant observation. I then did a comprehensive review of all the interview transcripts, searching for themes and structuring these as a basis for secondary analysis. I considered various options for analysis and chose cut and paste using Windows, for reasons of

expediency. Once this stage was complete I began writing, using the findings to drive my use of the literature.

The research analysis was somewhat participative, although as other researchers note (Luff 1996), using a participative approach at analysis stage is very problematic. I checked initial findings with five contributors and the draft thesis with four (three responded) and people gave me useful feedback concerning my presentations of initial findings in the GEMs journal (Autumn 1998) at the TrAnsgender AGENDA conference (Autumn 1998) and the meeting in Hove (April 1999). I did not attempt full collaborative analysis because it was clear from interactions with participants that this was 'my' project and it was up to me to show my capacities by doing the work. For example, MKP told me that he thought that there was a need to prove myself by doing the work mostly on my own. There was also a practical issue of time: most contributors are very busy with their own projects and responsibilities. In addition, collaborative analysis would have been probably impossible, because of the extent of divergence within the communities, plus the practical difficulties of doing this.

Dissemination is an important aspect of the research process (Bell 1984), especially as it questions to whom our primary duty lies. I carried out dissemination via community publications and events, conference papers, academic publications, and a summary of findings which I sent to interviewees (see appendix 6). Feedback from contributors about the summary provoked some minor changes (including improving the description of the development of the transgender movement in the Introduction), but was generally positive, for example:

“This makes very fascinating reading. You seem to have tackled the subject in general and in particular several controversial areas in a methodical and fair-minded way” (Annie Cox)

“I really liked your ‘trans research findings’ meaning I agree with them, feel vindicated, oh it feels good to be right” (Simon Dessloch)

Participatory Research and Researcher Over-Involvement

I experienced a number of problems with taking a participative approach, which led me to adopt a somewhat modified version when I returned to the research after taking time out. As Bernard (1995) notes, time and funding are major issues for researchers using participative approaches, as these are time-consuming and expensive. Problems with time limitations when researching transgender are also an issue, as discussed by King (1986, 1993). The participative approach certainly prolonged the research process, but findings would have been far less substantial if I had taken a traditional stance, and I am not sure I would have gained full access to the transgender community. More serious were issues of researcher over-involvement in the field, particularly the way I ended up taking on things in addition to the researcher role and my over-involvement in the community. After my illness I re-evaluated my position and became more circumscribed in terms of levels of participativeness.

During the early stages of the research I was shocked by the way transgender people had been exploited and misrepresented by many traditional and feminist researchers. I responded by overcompensating. I had transgender tendencies to start with, and my training in feminism's 'personal is political' praxis led me to take a stronger identification with being transgender and with the community. I was hyper-conscious of my power as an academic and a non-transsexual, so tended to erase my own position and concerns in favour of those of my participants. Sometimes this simply meant I gave people too much time and energy, including on social levels. Sometimes I was asked to do things in excess of my role, such as go on helplines, write articles and so forth, and in one case a participant tried (I suspect) to involve me in a relationship with someone who badly needed practical and emotional support with their sex change.

I got caught in political wranglings within the movement at times during the research. For example, the forum which I initiated provoked conflicts concerning assimilationist-radical politics within the movement and also interpersonal conflicts, which led to two people dropping out of my research because they felt I was allied to the person they disagreed with. In another case, I was pressurised to drop an organisation from my sample because the key person had behaved unprofessionally. My omission of this organisation, following

discussions with my supervisors, was necessary for me to gain access to some of the other groups. The conflicts within the communities are discussed further in the chapter on transgender politics. In addition to the above problems, the early stages of the research were complicated by two close friendships I had with transgender people (Rafie Beckett and MKP), whom I had met socially rather than through the research, both of whom I ended up discussing transgender issues with in depth and one of whom I facilitated in making the decision to change sex. This raised difficult ethical issues for me, about the boundaries between friendship and the researcher role (for example, should I use material which came my way because of the friendship for the research?), which I dealt with by discussing with these people. Both of them have stayed friends, and one of them (MKP) has made some direct contributions to the research.

I eventually learnt to deal with problems of over-involvement by taking a clearer personal stance: I was allied with the transgender communities but did not have a primary identification as transgender, I would relate to people as individuals rather than as members of an oppressed minority, the extent to which I reciprocated on a personal level (i.e. by divulging information about myself) was limited, and I had a task to do which prevented my involvement in conflicts or over-involvement in community issues. So for example when I was asked to intervene to argue for inclusion of a certain group in the organisation Press For Change I responded in the following way:

"I'll do what I can. I mean the problem is that because I am supposed to be in a research position there is only so far I can go with being an activist myself, and that's not a cop out"

I found the partial retreat from the community which I had to make extremely hard on a personal level: I really wanted to belong, especially because I had left the lesbian feminist community due to the identity changes which the research precipitated. Eventually I found a balance and developed friendships and collaborative relationships with some transgender people. Friendship with participants (which I mention above) is discussed in the literature (Reinharz 1992). Post-positivist researchers discuss the issue of whether researcher closeness with participants places the researcher in a good position or simply leads to a lack of critical distance. The notion of 'critical distance' is problematic as it privileges

objective knowledge over subjective understanding. However, I actually feel I lacked critical distance at times, and I had to work on this. Despite issues of over-involvement, I see friendship as playing a crucial role in the research at all stages: the research would have been very shallow without the insights gained through my involvement in the community and probably would never have been completed. In practice I did have certain alliances with particular groups and people which at times put me in difficult positions. I feel that in general I managed to maintain a broad and inclusive position, as evidenced by my ability to maintain good relations with a number of transgender individuals and groups despite the tensions between these.

Participatory Research and Power Issues

Another issue which was highlighted by the participative approach concerns power and the research process. This is discussed in the literature, for example Skeggs (1992), who argues that power relations be made explicit. As described above, feminist researchers such as Holland and Ramazanoglu (1994) argue for the devolution of power in the direction of research participants, and others such as Olsen (1994) discuss the way in which research can accentuate power inequalities. However, as Silverman (1989) shows, researchers aiming to change power inequalities may get caught in the web of power. Attempting to escape from addressing power issues is not an option, as this is a denial of responsibility (Ribbens 1989). How, then, is power to be dealt with in research about transgender? One strategy is to be aware of the operation of sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia (see Ribbens 1989, Seidman 1991). This was particularly important for my research, which was specifically about power and politics. However, recommendations concerning the devolution of power were wrong for this research. Harding (1987) argues that participant involvement is not always appropriate, especially when conducting research with more powerful people. This is supported by my methodological findings. Many of my participants were more powerful than me in social terms and in terms of their knowledge and intellectual development. I experienced similar issues to Luff (1996), who did research with members of the moral right. She discusses the problems of power sharing when researching 'up': her participants were on familiar territory, were often older, used to public roles and in positions of social power. In this kind of situation, power sharing may be counterproductive (see the section on participative research, below).

There are other issues to be taken into consideration when examining power relations. As Phoenix (1994) and Luff (1996) say, power relations in research are complex and multilayered:

"The simultaneity of 'race', social class, gender, 'assumed' sexuality and age make it extremely difficult to tease apart the aspects of the interviewer which are having an impact on the interviewee or the power dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee" (Phoenix 1994 p. 56).

My research was further complicated by the very wide 'power spread' among my participants, who ranged from established professionals through to people experiencing long-term disability and severe social exclusion. In addition, there were 'power spreads' in terms of roles held within the different parts of the transgender communities, which did not necessarily tally with the positions held in mainstream society (in other words, some of the people who held considerable social power within the transgender community experienced considerable exclusion from mainstream society). There were issues for me about 'allowing voice' in an equitable way: this was sometimes difficult given the power of the people used to taking public roles. One anonymous contributor alerted me to this issue and talked about certain voices and stories being heard and others being obscured. It would be difficult, he said, for me to find out what was really going on given the propensity to 'party lines' which the community has. Furthermore, I became aware, following interviewee's comments, that "Gender politics itself serves a whole industry, you know there are people who are professionally gendered" (Pamela Summers). These people are, needless to say, very different from many other transgender people. I hope that, by including non-public transgender people, I am able to paint a more accurate picture of the situation.

Participative research methodologies can, I found, be very disempowering for the researcher as well as damaging the research process. During the research I became aware with discomfort of the danger of my becoming a passive, unthinking mouthpiece for articulate individuals with diverse political agendas. In 1997 I conducted a re-evaluation of the research as preparation for returning to my studies. These quotes illustrates the understandings I developed concerning this:

"Facilitation or respect of people's rights to self-determination is important and needs to be adjusted according to the power balance between respondents and researcher (for example being over attentive or concerned about protecting elite respondents is patronising, appears unprofessional and disempowers the researcher)"

"Empowerment research is problematic in two core ways. Firstly, it is based on a false notion of the nature of power. People empower themselves. Other people cannot empower someone unless that person wishes it. The notion that researchers can empower research participants is patronising...this leads to the second point. While the ideals behind participatory research: the minimisation of hierarchy and the devolution of power, are admirable, the fact is that inequality and hierarchy exist...."

Other Problems with Participatory Research

There were problems with some of the approaches discussed in the literature. Lincoln and Denzin (1994) note that participative research can mean training others to engage in their own interrogative efforts, and helping them develop answers concerning oppression. Consciousness-raising is seen as part of the researcher role by some feminist researchers (for example Meis 1983). However, in my research, it was usually (although not always) me whose consciousness was being raised, and I was often the one being trained to do the research, both in terms of discussions concerning research methods and concerning the field. There are many transgender people now engaged in research and in fact at times I felt myself to be in competition with transgender people, rather than enabling them. There are even more transgender people outside of academia who are developing their own understandings. The dubious notion that academic methods are better than others is also found among transgender people. For example, one contributor suggested to me that we train up another, specific, activist in academic methods so that she could contribute to our theorisation of transgender. I resisted this, because I felt that it was imposing a particular mindset on a probably unwilling individual, and it could become a means of exercising power in a negative way.

The problems with participative research, and the awareness that the pretence of participatory research might act to mask inequalities rather than tackle them, led me to adopt a somewhat less participatory approach when I returned from leave. Various contributor's comments concerning the limitations of the community, and problems therein, acted to alert me to the need to take a more assertive research role. At times I had to be really honest both about my limitations and my political remit, which is progressive and inclusive, thus precluding easy co-option by specific sectors of the community. In a sense, I could not avoid the 'me' in this: if the research had been completely participative it would have fallen apart because of a lack of cohesion in the community. Initially my intent had been simply to represent, but I realised that I needed my own opinions: this was the only way I could 'meet' participants intellectually and the only way to avoid getting swamped by conflicting discourses. At times this meant I had disagreements with people, but this felt healthier than trying to be an objective channel. For example, I have an ongoing friendly dispute with Kate More concerning empiricism and postmodernism, in which she accuses me of being an empiricist and a shallow sociologist, and I respond by pointing out the limitations of postmodernism and cultural studies.

Representation

It is important to discuss the research in the context of the crisis of representation (Lincoln and Denzin 1994), as this frames many current debates concerning epistemology and is a major issue for my methodology. I attempted to deal with this issue by including the Other in the research process via participatory methods (see Lincoln and Denzin 1994), but there were still issues which warrant attention. It is important to reiterate the fact that the sample was chosen for the purposes of exploratory research, not representation of all transgender people. I did initially attempt to get a spread in terms of ethnicity, class and age but this clashed with the participant-led sampling techniques and the need to find a sample including the range of transgender people: something which itself is a challenge in terms of access. Discussion with contributors indicates that there appear to be few Black transgender people among the transgender population in the UK, an issue which warrants further research.

My discussion focuses on the issues of whether it is possible to represent people other than oneself and whether it is possible to do this via academic research methods. The first issue revolves around the interaction between my own and other's identities. This was very complex in this research, as my identity and, sometimes, other people's identities, changed. The group I intended to represent was extremely diverse and there were identity overlaps, as well as differences, with many people. For example I shared feminist interests with a large proportion of contributors. In addition, there were enormous differences in levels and types of intellectual development and epistemological stances taken by participants. Some, in particular Kate More, were very knowledgeable concerning for example postmodernism, whereas others were not, or were hostile to it. This was difficult; eventually I had to take my own stance in relation to the different contributors.

The second, linked, issue concerns the way that researchers frequently objectify contributor's lives. As Ribbens (1989) says, all research translates other's lives into terms relevant to another audience, usually a more powerful one, and thus involves power imbalances (as discussed above, in the section of participatory research). This issue is found in many areas of research where members of a dominant group do research with oppressed people, for example women being researched by men (Roberts 1981). Where there is discussion of the Other, this often involves colonisation of the lives of other, marginal people, and the retelling of their lives back to them using a more 'authoritative' voice (Fine 1994). Perhaps such problems can be ameliorated by using an advocacy approach, where the research is done for participants and the researcher involves themselves in, for example, activism (Cameron 1992). A minority of contributors seemed to take this kind of view of the research, particularly people who are socially excluded and who are marginalised not just within the mainstream but also within the transgender communities. However, on the whole such an approach seems patronising and out of keeping with the fact that many transgender people have published their own sophisticated accounts.

Issues concerning representation and appropriation have been a major issue for transgender people, and for me in conducting research in this area, as this quote from the interview with James Green illustrates:

James: It's really hard, it's hard for us, I think, to articulate it as well, because it's so subjective, it's so experiential, and then we are criticised because of our own subjectivity. So we struggle with communication about it, and then, then other people still say, 'Oh well, ? that's, you know, you aren't ? (laughs)

I: Oh well, I'm sorry but

James: But you know it's true. That's what I keep reading in all these texts. You know, and by using certain language, and if we use the language they say we're being reductivist, and if they use the language, well, it's scholarship, you know

I: I'm sorry but I just think that's really bad practice

James: Yes, it's what's, happening, it's what's happening to us

I discussed this issue with other contributors. For example, in an early conversation with MKP he said to me that appropriation is an inevitable part of the research process and does not matter, so long as it is acknowledged and that if I did not write the thesis it would be another five years before he did it. Issues concerning appropriation are discussed in the literature, for example Ramazanoglu (1994) argues that some objectification of people's experience may be impossible to avoid. Stephen Whittle emphasises listening to people, including exploring the subtexts of what they say. Part of this meant being sensitive to participant's critique of the research and their boundaries. For example, in one case, when I was attempting to theorise with Pamela Summers, she resisted this by discussing the way in which transsexuals are often objectified in political debate and used by interest groups for their own purposes. For Pamela, objectification was defined as "possession and removal of the reasonable right of the individual to speak for themselves". It thus involves the denial of individualism and expression only of the collective. I avoided this by ethical and participative methods, but it was impossible not to collectivise to some degree in order to theory build. I was reassured by the following conversation:

Pamela: I mean transparency of what one seeks, but of course the very nature of language itself is you know, what do we do, do we all sit and remain absolutely silent forever

I: I think that's

Pamela: Like ? characters on a darkened stage

I: Yes I think that's the thing. I think it is possible to represent people other than oneself anyway

Pamela: Yeah (affirmative)

Others also contributed to this discussion, which is related to the postmodern-structure debate in that it concerns attempts to transcend the structures within which we live. Thus for example Kate N' Ha Ysabet says "it's like trying to analyse the universe when you're sitting inside the universe, I mean in some ways you have to put yourself outside the universe to actually be able to analyse it fully". This is an issue for epistemology in general, and is probably best dealt with by taking the standpoint approach on which I have drawn and being open about the limitations of the research.

The issue of false consciousness is important when attempting to represent transgender people. False consciousness is discussed in the literature, for example Maynard and Purvis (1994) argue that people may not be fully aware of themselves and that their experience needs to be problematised. This is a dangerous path to follow, given the way that transgender people are frequently misrepresented and pathologised, for example by feminists such as Raymond (1980, 1994). I argue that, given the context, it is unethical to problematise people's experience too much (although some level of this has become inevitable given the conflicts and divergences between different transgender people and my attempts to understand these). The right to self-define, even if this appears to others to involve false consciousness, can be seen as a fundamental one. In addition, everyone has areas of unawareness. The research shows, I feel, that these areas of unawareness or 'false consciousness' are necessary in some cases for people's well-being and functioning. The

only times they should be disputed are when they impinge directly on other's rights to self-define or if disputation is invited. Also, much useful material would be lost if things which do not fit the researcher's views were simply dubbed 'false consciousness'. Lastly, the notion of false consciousness implies a true consciousness, a problematic issue which is discussed in the chapter on poststructuralism.

Research Ethics

Research ethics are important for research about transgender politics. Other researchers, in particular King (1986, 1993), discuss ethical difficulties encountered whilst conducting research about transgender. King describes, for example, receiving a letter from an apparently suicidal person in connection with the research. I also had to deal with a suicidal contributor at one stage, and it raised issues for me concerning professional and personal boundaries and the extent to which it is possible to support people.

Stanley and Wise (1993) define 'ethics' as a framework of thought concerned with morality and choice and May describes ethics as a set of standards addressing the way values and power relations are dealt with during the research (1993). My own ethical code is that people have the right to self-determination, that people are of equal worth despite differences, and that I attempt benevolence, avoidance of harm and honesty. Ethical issues can be found as a theme throughout the thesis, especially at the end of the chapter on poststructuralism and in the chapter on transgender politics. Ethics are problematic: as Patai (1987) notes, our obligations, intentions and agendas when doing research all intersect and are often contradictory. Moreover, there are different stake-holders in any research situation (Rees 1991). This section is an attempt to clarify some of the issues relating to ethics which were raised by the research. The section starts by discussing the sensitivity of the research before addressing reflexivity, the impact on the field, transparency, protection of privacy, minimisation of hierarchy and avoidance of harm.

Research and Sensitivity

Research in sensitive areas is important in bringing hidden and challenging issues into awareness (Lees 1993). This research is sensitive in that it concerns sexuality and gender,

which are potentially threatening matters normally kept within the private sphere. In addition, the research addresses the construction and deconstruction of both knowledge and identities, which is a difficult area involving the breakdown of traditional structures. It also concerns politics, another area of sensitivity and a particularly important issue for my research, given the controversies and tensions within and outside of the transgender communities concerning political issues (see chapters 3 and 7). Thus, as Lees (1993) says:

"Those researching sensitive topics may need to be more acutely aware of their ethical responsibilities to research participants than would be the case with the study of a more innocuous topic." (Lees 1993 p. 2)

Experience of fieldwork led me to think that the more fluid the material is, the stronger the need for ethical guidelines. Ethics are particularly necessary if innovative research methods such as participative research are used and if category-changing topics are on the menu. This suggestion is echoed in the work of authors such as Weeks (1995a) and Bauman (1992), who discuss the need to develop moral and ethical underpinnings for postmodernism. Ethical guidelines include reflexivity, that the research be useful, transparency, protection of privacy, minimisation of hierarchy and avoidance of harm. As noted above, some of these, are central to feminist research methodologies (see for example Ribbens 1989). I will address these guidelines in turn with respect to the research.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity involves self-awareness concerning my identity as a researcher and my motivation for conducting research. I thought about researcher well-being at the beginning of the research (summer 1995), but despite my best efforts I did take on too much, get caught in trying to put the world to rights and get over-involved emotionally (as discussed above). This unfortunately meant that the thesis was finished late, something to be avoided in terms of the well-being of my department and funders. However, the research is considerably more groundbreaking than many PhDs, and I hope that this will ameliorate problems. As Rees (1991) says, it is not always possible to anticipate ethical (or other) issues.

When re-evaluating my position, I realised that I had been overriding my own needs in a way which contravened ethical guidelines. For example, I was open about my own identity in a way which eroded my needs for privacy, and I was reflexive to the degree where my well-being was affected. This was because I unthinkingly followed feminist and participative research guidelines. Researcher subjectivity is an area which is, I feel, insufficiently addressed in the literature. When reflecting on this, I wrote a piece (below) which addressed the ways in which a researcher must take responsibility for their own subjectivity, although it is important to note that issues concerning subjectivity may emerge during the course of the research and be unanticipated.

"Individual subjectivity is understood to be the prism through which qualitative research is conducted. Therefore it is clear that ethical operating by the researcher is of fundamental importance to the research process and outcomes....the researcher does not have the right to transgress time or other practical constraints (unless this cannot be avoided), to override their own limitations, or to pursue research which is unduly weighted in favour of their own emotional needs. The researcher has a responsibility to identify and deal with these problems separately from the fieldwork, and to an extent separately from the standard research process altogether if and when they arise, and to do this as diligently as they would other aspects of the research. This means, in particular, reflexivity concerning the reasons for doing the research and awareness of ways in which the researcher might be tempted to get emotionally involved in an inappropriate way, for example seeking acknowledgement for their personal identity from research participants. Reflexivity becomes especially important if the field is difficult or new, and the researcher will have to accept challenges and changes to their own consciousness" (Spring 1997)

During my time out, I did the reflexive work which I felt to be necessary. I reconstructed myself in keeping with my arguments concerning the progressive possibilities of deconstruction/reconstruction which are present in this thesis. I realised that various personality patterns, such as low self-esteem, a desire to belong, shame about my class privilege and a tendency to take responsibility for others all led me to try too hard and become ill. When I returned I was able to spot these patterns and stop myself from repeating them. I also took time out in order to work out what my own beliefs about

transgender are, so that I would not constantly be buffeted around by the conflicting and complex views and realities presented by participants, and the conflicts with the feminism from whence I had come. Although this kind of work is not usually acknowledged by academia, I feel it was vital for me to do it. As Lincoln and Denzin (1994) say, science can be used to grow on a personal level. I would, however, strongly advise anyone wishing to do research in an area as challenging as this one to consider whether they wish to go through the difficult and life changing process which it can entail.

Needless to say, the research challenged my world-view in a number of ways. This is echoed in the literature, for example Luff (1996) describes ways in which she was forced to re-evaluate attitudes. This can be healthy but not if it occurs too fast or in damaging ways. I was far more resistant to challenges during the latter part of the research. So, for example in the early stages I struggled to reconcile my feminist attitudes with the sometimes conflicting research findings in a way echoed in the literature (for example Kvale 1983). Later, I became both more critical of feminism as well as more assertive about taking a feminist standpoint when I felt the situation warranted it. For example, here I resist what I feel to be a stereotyping, slightly body fascist comment:

Joanna/Dave: I sort of go for like, 'well I'm a guy, but I can look as equally good as you, maybe better

I: Well it's a particular way of looking isn't it

Impact on the Field

One concern for ethicists has been that research should make some positive impact on the field. Like Lees (1993), I think that research must be useful if it is to be considered ethical. This ties in with findings from the research and with the arguments of transgender authors such as Wilchins (1997) who, as noted above, criticises academics for theory building in a way irrelevant to transgender people. I feel it would seem wrong to spend a large part of my life and thousands of pounds of funder's and my own money doing research which had no use. At the start of the fieldwork I had concerns about doing theoretically-driven research, and whether this was justifiable, but in fact this research has become applied as

well as theoretical as a result of the participant's contributions and the obvious need for policy work in this area (as discussed in chapters 5 and 7). The theoretical aspects of the thesis are intended to enable understanding of transgender politics in a way which will be useful. The importance of theoretical research is reinforced by my findings. For instance, one contributor, when giving me feedback about a paper I presented, emphasised the importance of theory, as, for example, Germaine Greer's oppression of transgender people operates from a theoretical level. This contributor argued that transgender politics needs both theoretical and applied research. The necessity of the research being useful is emphasised by other contributors. For example, one person told me that because the research is high profile a lot of researchers have "jumped on the bandwagon". They end up going over old ground and producing research which is useless. I aimed to avoid this by conducting a consultation exercise and being as participative as possible.

Transparency

Transparency means openness about the research, in particular towards research participants. It includes providing information enabling participants to make autonomous choices, appropriate self-disclosure and clarity about the limitations of the research, honesty and the keeping of promises (Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994, Opie 1992). Transparency includes contending with debates concerning deception and whether it is sometimes inevitable (Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994). I made a concerted effort to provide information about the research to participants in order to enable them to make choices. I sometimes protected other individuals or the research by not stating things, but I avoided manipulation. I provided contributors with briefs of the research, a letter including information about myself and the reasons for the research, and also made contributions to transgender publications, a conference and a meeting for transgender people during the course of the research. When my research material got stolen (as noted above) I wrote to participants involved apologising and explaining. During my leave and on my return I wrote to everyone involved in the research explaining the situation. I re-accessed using the same processes as before. I always attempted to be honest with participants concerning myself and the research. This was facilitated and necessitated by the fact that I was part of a community and needed to have a role which made sense. One exception was where a prior contributor thought that I was a drag king, and when we met informally I let this

stand, as it would have been awkward to explain that although I have done drag I am not a drag king per se.

Protection of Privacy

The protection of privacy means respecting limits to access and attention to confidentiality, anonymity and ownership. This includes the rights of people to refuse or limit participation. It entails a written consent form (see Paget 1991), which I provided for all in-depth interviewees (see appendix 5). I checked concerning use of findings with respondents, including informal contributors. The only exceptions were with participant observation when I noticed something whilst in a social situation but would have felt uncomfortable drawing attention to my research role, and occasionally with retrospective understandings, where I had not realised at the time that what I was doing would inform my research. In the case of these exceptions, I anonymised or excluded findings. However, in most cases (and with all in-depth interviews) I checked whether people wished to have their contributions anonymised or quoted by name and stuck to their preferences. In some cases, this affected people's contributions. For example, one contributor decided after discussion that they would prefer to be quoted by name but that this meant not discussing an ex-partner even though this would have been very pertinent to the research. Prior to the second set of interviews I decided to use a different type of data-checking. Time constraints meant that it was easier to send transcripts to interviewees to be checked by participants rather than blocks of the thesis. I contacted all of the earlier participants to ascertain whether this was acceptable and where it was not (in two cases) I stuck to the earlier agreement. I had a few rejections when requesting interviews. In one case someone felt they had published everything they wanted to say about transgender themselves and, in another case, I suspect someone refused because I identified at the time of access as a lesbian and a feminist. I had three withdrawals after access. Two of these were precipitated by conflicts which arose during the Forum (as noted above). The third participant withdrew because ze thought hir data was out of date, given hir gender changes during my time out. The latter withdrawal was difficult as it had been a three hour interview and took ages to transcribe. In all cases I respected people's rights to withdraw. I include people's corrections to their transcripts in data to be analysed. In one case (Kate

More), the contributor changed data considerably, adding a large amount of material in writing.

Minimisation of Hierarchy

Minimisation of hierarchy entails being aware of power inequalities in the participant-researcher relationship, for example the use of empowering research methods such as letting the interviewee guide the interview (Opie 1992, Ribbens 1989), and attempts to make language accessible where necessary (see Cameron 1992). Research relationships are often characterised by inequalities in power and status (British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Principles). I have discussed power issues above. However, it is worth emphasising that I did attempt to minimise hierarchy, by making my language accessible where necessary, avoiding emphasising my social position as an academic, being supportive where appropriate, disseminating to participants and the wider communities and 'putting back' where possible. So, for example, if participants wanted tapes of the interviews I produced these for them.

Avoidance of Harm

Avoidance of harm means exercising concern for the well-being of participants, in other words ensuring that the participants are not adversely affected by the research (British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Principles). This includes taking care to be sensitive and respectful when conducting research. I was conscious of this throughout the research. It variously meant not probing if the issue seemed too tender, being supportive and empathic, being matter of fact and attempting to not be patronising or assumptive. Needless to say, I did make mistakes, but I hope I was open enough about my position as a learner to enable people to correct me. I did have people pulling me up when I made assumptions, for example in one case I had asked permission to use a phone line to talk about the research with a phone line worker, and made it clear that I did not want to use up too much time because a transgender person 'in greater need' might be trying to get through. The person I talked to told me maybe someone would already be using the phone and I would be the one trying to get through. In other words, that I should not make patronising assumptions about other's needs being greater than mine.

Interviews also entailed the use of sensitivity. I received positive feedback from participants. For example, one participant said that I had done the interviewing sensitively: she was made to feel at ease and there was a good balance of being guided through the material but not constrained. Further guidelines include giving people control concerning the research process and use of findings. I have discussed this in the section on participant research. Avoidance of harm meant on occasion stating my limits (see Opie 1992), at which I started off being bad at and learnt to be good. I did need to set limits on the time I spent with people, the amount of reciprocal support I gave, what I was attempting to do as a researcher and what I could contribute to transgender politics, as well as drawing personal boundaries.

Another area involving avoidance of harm is publications (see Lee 1993). To some extent the researcher cannot be responsible for material once it gets published, but attempts can be made to avoid hijacking by the press as well as to ensure validity and respect for privacy before publication, including the modification of research findings before dissemination. Furthermore, avoidance of harm to other concerned parties is an issue. I experienced huge conflicts between my wish to avoid harming feminism and feminists and my need to represent transgender people who have been oppressed by feminists, as well as to explore the limitations of feminism. My position became easier as I realised the extent of the postmodernist questioning of feminism and saw ways in which my research could be useful rather than deleterious. A similar process occurred concerning lesbian and gay culture and politics, although it is important to note that the relationship between the transgender and lesbian, gay and bisexual communities changed considerably during the course of my research.

Conclusion

To conclude, the research process highlighted problems with both the epistemological positions and methodologies employed. Constructionist epistemologies, particularly postmodernism, were shown to be limited because of their apoliticism, relativism and 'messiness', but were nonetheless important, given the research focus on fluidity, deconstruction and diversity. Feminist methodologies proved useful, if problematic, given

the transgender destabilisation of gender categories. Methodological findings provoked a critique of feminist methods concerning both the feminist reliance on gender binaries and methodological guidelines such as the emphasis on reflexivity, which is shown to be counterproductive in some cases. Participative methodologies were also problematic: the participative approach enabled community empowerment, ethical practice and the collection of rich data, but it also led into problems such as researcher over-involvement and problems with funders and University deadlines. Overall, standpoint approaches, which could be developed to fit a gender-pluralist system, were found to be the most useful methodological approach. In addition, a progressive political stance and strong ethical framework proved crucial for the success of the research, particularly because of the sensitivity and complexity of the topic and the extent of the social exclusion of transgender people.

The research provided a profound and transformational learning process for me on all levels. I became aware of the limitations of postmodernism, feminism and other theories as well as constructionist and empiricist epistemologies and I learnt to use hybrids of these approaches. I learnt about researching in a very sensitive, difficult area with a wide range of people, many of whom have conflicting world-views, and about collaboration in many different ways. I realised the importance of ethical structures when dealing with cutting edge findings using innovative methodologies. Acknowledging and working with my own subjective process was crucial for this research. This included very sharp experiences of the realities of social exclusion and bodily and identity limitations in relation to discourses concerning postmodernism and transgender politics. In addition, the role of researcher subjectivity highlights the ultimate fallacy of objectivist approaches and indicates a need for the development of strategies for addressing subjectivity within academic research, particularly when very complex new areas are being addressed.

Chapter 3: Transgender and Gender Pluralism

Transgender and transsexuality destabilise male-female and heterosexual-homosexual binaries in a number of fundamental ways. For example, Whittle (1996) describes the way in which some transgender people feel themselves to be outside of gender dualities, while others experience fluid or non-male/female identities. Postmodernism would seem an ideal means of theorising transgender. Transgender involves fluid, multiple, complex, contradictory and constructed identities and processes, and destabilises established grand theories concerning gender.

This chapter asks the questions:

- how does transgender challenge binary gender categories?
- how does transgender illustrate postmodernism?

This chapter, then, seeks to describe how transgender identities and politics disrupt the categories that most people take for granted: male and female, gay and straight, and to frame this in relation to postmodernism. This lays the foundations for the following, more theoretical, chapter. In this chapter I briefly discuss transgender in relation to various aspects of postmodernism, and then I focus on how transgender transgresses and supersedes gender binaries and sexual orientation categories. This is followed by a discussion of transgender conflict and contradiction, and analysis of this in relation to the postmodernism-structure binary.

Transgender and Postmodernism

There are a number of ways in which transgender illustrates postmodernity. These include the emphasis which many transgender people place on the technologisation of the body. For example, in interviews, Pamela Summers discussed artificial reproduction as emancipatory, while Ann Goodley noted the importance of cyber-gender explorations,

where multiple gendered identities are possible. Transgender exemplifies pastiche, for example Hamish Macdonald described the first drag kings as gay men who dragged up as hyper-masculine. Irony is also evident in some cases, for example transvestite Yvonne Sinclair said "I used to get dressed up and go out and there'd be like some blokes digging a trench and I knew my petticoat was showing, and I'd get the wolf whistle. And I used to think 'if only you knew'. Oh I had a lot of fun". Transgender is, in many cases, tied to consumerism, for example there is an emphasis in transvestite culture on fashion and the accoutrements necessary to pass as a woman. Context is very important for transgender. For instance, many transsexuals adopt gender stereotypical dress when seeking treatment, despite being otherwise non-stereotypical. Transgender exemplifies excess in some cases, for example the flamboyance of drag. These aspects of transgender and postmodernity will not be focused on in this chapter (or thesis). This chapter will address, primarily, the blurring of gender and sexual orientation categories and, then, contradiction and conflict.

Transgender people's contributions to the research were very diverse. I have placed findings which challenge gender and sexual orientation binaries into broad, sometimes overlapping categories. The categories I have used are: intersex and hermaphroditic identities, third (or more) sex and androgyny, transgender as an identity usually in addition to male or female identities, fluid identities, performance oriented identities, and identities where the emphasis is on the releasing or rejection of bipolar gender categories.

Intersex people are assigned to male or female categories at birth or in early childhood by the medical establishment. Three research participants were born intersex and lived as a boy and as a girl at different times in their childhood. All now identify primarily as women, but as Christie Elan Cane said, some intersex people retain an androgynous identity. Intersex is discussed in the literature (Kessler 1998, Dreger 2000). Butler (1990) argues that hermaphroditism subverts the fiction of gender. Tauchert (1998) suggests that, of all transgender positions, intersex provides the fullest challenge to gender binaries. Given the Western reliance on physiological embodiment as the basis for sex and gender identity this makes sense: it is impossible to argue that male and female are the only sexes and genders, given the physical existence of people born with a range of other physiologies.

A minority of people are born as male or female but identify as androgynous or as third sex or gender. This is discussed briefly in the literature, where Wheelwright (1995) argues that androgynes explode male and female categorisation. Christie Elan Cane, who started life female, had surgery enabling physical androgyny and also identified as third sex at the time of the interview:

"Third gender would be anyone who could not identify as male or female and wanted to basically operate without the constricts of gender. I don't feel male or female, and I say that I'm in the third gender because I can't identify as male or female, and for maybe others would feel both male and female, which is something, I mean when I was still trying to unravel how I wanted to be I wondered whether maybe I could be part of both, which is not how I feel any longer but I sort of went through several stages along, trying to express and figure out how I felt, but now I feel that I'm neither. I can't relate to male or female" (Christie Elan Cane)

Alex Whinnom defined third sex people as those who feel themselves in the middle ground between male and female or who identify as both at different times. Clearly this overlaps with androgyny and intersexuality. A minority of respondents defined as third or other sex. For example, Simon Dessloch, a FTM transsexual, said that he accepted himself as neither totally male or female. He was not simply a man without a penis, but he was not a woman either. Rather, he felt himself to be in-between, or neither, or both, or third sex. Joanna/Dave Scott identified as a transvestite and a drag queen. Ze did not see himself as third sex but as an 'in-betweenie'. Ann Goodley and Kate N' Ha Ysabet raised the possibility of many sex and gender identities rather than simply a third sex. Some of the other participants supported this, for example Ann Goodley said "If they want to be a third gender, that's OK, or a fifth or sixth". A few participants discussed 'third space' as opposed to 'third sex or gender'. This seems to have emerged initially as a concept from the work of Bornstein (1994) and is echoed in the literature, for example Nataf (1996) argues that the third gender category is a space allowing articulation of various gendered identities. The concept of 'third space' relates to notions of gender as constructed and all gender as being a 'space' or process, rather than fixed. This is linked with the work of cultural theorists, for example Garber (1992) argues that 'third sex' is a space rather than a term in itself.

Garber (1992) notes the way in which third sex/gender positions have been assimilated into either side of the gender binaries, or erased, so that transvestites, for example, are not seen as third sex. The erasure of third sex/gender seems particularly marked with respect to transsexuality. There appears to be a difficult relationship between transsexuality and non-binariied or multiple sex/gender positions. Most transsexuals clearly identify as their assigned or chosen sex. Suggestions of third or multiple sexes are rejected by the majority of transsexuals. For example, in Monro (2000) I document third or multiple sex identities and call for civil status for third or other sex people. My paper provoked a response from Watson and Hitchcock (2000) who argue that another category would complicate matters and that most transsexuals could not comprehend such a category. Thus, whilst non-male or female space or a third gender position is discussed by some people as characteristic of the transition period, this could be seen purely as a time of transition rather than an identity in itself. Kate More described the transition period as space of ambivalence, linked with transsexual identification. The majority of transsexual people seek to establish themselves in their assigned gender and may distance themselves from transsexual as an identity. However, in some cases people who contributed to the research identify fully as transsexual men and women and there has been, according to Kate More, some discussion of MTF and FTM as identities in addition to female to male and male to female transsexuals, particularly as activist stances. Other identities, such as MTM (male to male, to describe a female to male transsexual's feeling that he was always male) have developed more recently but whether these identities are different from male or female ones remains unclear. Importantly, a minority of transsexual and other authors consider transsexuality to be outside of or beyond duality. Cameron et al (1996) see transsexuality as an in-between place outside of gender duality, while Stone (1991) suggests that " A transsexual currently occupies a position which is nowhere, which is outside of the binary oppositions of gendered discourse" p. 295). Findings showed that the transsexual position remained problematic:

"because we're back to that inside/outside paradox; people with beards and bald heads, and no penises, of course some of that's the same with MTFs, the incompleteness, but FTMs also change their voices, so they pass perfectly in the street, but in the bedroom... but with MTFs you can be perfect, but people believe the voice, the inside when you have every other proof you need (Kate More)

Fluidity is a common theme for many of the contributors to the research. For example, Stephen Whittle said "I think that fluidity is one of the things that the transgendered, transsexual community is about, it's about fluidity and boundaries and therefore we start to play in a stream that we actually understand and we know". Fluidity is characteristic of the transition phase of transsexuality. Zach Nataf, for example, discussed the gender fluidity he experienced during the early stages of his transition. He said that he felt more like a man some days and more transgendered other days, and that this depended to some extent on who he was with. Other contributors discuss this further:

I: So in terms of fluidity in gender identity do you see the sort of trans state as being a thing in itself.

Hamish: Yes.

I: Can you explain a bit more about that.

Hamish: I would say that someone is transitioning from FTM or MTF, through actually choosing to favour one or the other, of two polarities. That is a gross generalisation because I know that also people will also see themselves as favouring rather than dismissing one lot and taking on the other. In as much as the great world outside is going to see someone as either male or female, and they're generally not going to tell people at the bus stop, "Well actually I used to be female but now I am male." Whereas gender fluidity is where people at the bus stop or in the shop who think you are a boy until you ask for a newspaper or think you are a woman until you actually buy your pint of milk. That kind of thing

For some transsexual authors, such as Bornstein (1994, 1998) gender fluidity remains an important feature of identity. Bornstein (1994) suggests that accepting gender/sexual orientation binaries entails cheating oneself of the possibility of gender fluidity and exploration across a range of genders. Fluidity is also experienced by other transgender people, including transvestites. While interviewing Yvonne Sinclair I was taken aback by her ability to shift from 'male' to 'female' voices effortlessly. Watching my transvestite

friend Rafie drag up was educational: there was a point when 'he' suddenly became a 'she', with disconcerting shifts between genders occurring at times. For example when out at a queer disco she was approached by some butch dykes who wanted to try on her wig. Wigless, Rafie looked like a butch dyke himself, and the dyke wearing his wig suddenly became femme! Dressing up for transvestites is more than skin deep, however. Both John Marshall and Joanna/Dave Scott described it as catalysing a personality change, and Joanna/Dave also saw it as self-expression: "People can have different genders from day to day depending on how they are feeling". Butch dykes who cross-dress as men, whether or not they identify as drag kings or simply transgender, as was the case with Hamish, experience similar gender fluidity to transvestites. Hamish saw fluidity as state in itself, not simply a state of transition and he described the sense of disorientation which he sometimes felt due to the ever-changing gender nuances and expressions he experiences. Others, notably Phaedra Kelly, identify as transient or fluid per se:

Phaedra: Yes, its about a discipline of duality with an open mind. without changing sex with hormones with pills with injections or surgery, living one's dualism as much as possible. If I am Phaedra, I allow elements of Bruce through, and there is no self-hatred or self-loathing going on. If I am Bruce I allow elements of Phaedra, it's horses for courses, but like the transvestite, and to some degree the transsexual living full-time, I live with a separate identity. I have accepted my separate identity as well.

I. So you move between the two?

Phaedra: I am not saying that I am, er, well I suppose that I am, in a sense an androgyne all of the time, except that occasionally I transform in order to define it.

I. Right, what do you mean by that?

Phaedra: Well when I transform to Phaedra it's total, it is as total as it can be without hormones and surgery, the voice changes, the mannerisms change the appearance changes. It's from head to toe and it is also a meditative thing, it comes

mentally and spiritually as well. So other people can feel it, they are aware of my femininity, that is what I am doing today at that particular moment

For some transgender people, the deconstruction of gender categories is a political ideal which is implemented via assumption of fluid or non-male or non-female identities. This can be linked with Utopianism. Transsexual authors such as Bornstein (1994, 1998) and Rothblatt (1995) have argued for the dissolution of the gender binaried system and the replacement of this with a diverse continuum of gender possibilities. Bornstein (1994) describes how ze prefers not having a gender identity (but will take one temporarily as a retreat and to gain some privacy). These discourses are reflected in the findings. Christie Elan Cane identified as androgynous in a political way, linking this with the need for social change concerning gender. While some other contributors consciously do 'gender fuck' as a means of challenging social norms.

Some people envisaged a future where discrete male-female categorisation is broken down. I have termed this 'gender pluralism', although this provokes universalism-pluralism debates given the way in which some contributors envisage the abolition of gender or in one case just one gender:

"If people just said, people are individuals in the physiological as well as the mental sense, some can reproduce, some cannot, I think that would be it. But I think a lot of problems would be solved. The world would be far better off if everybody was of one sex" (Salmacis)

For Hamish Macdonald, future ideals involved people just being people and genitals just being genitals. Hamish was influenced by Marge Piercy's (1979) book *Women on the Edge of Time*, which involves non-gender-specific pronouns. Ze suggests that this would allow children to grow up without being forced into categories. Similarly, Christie Elan Cane and Kate N' Ha Ysabet hoped for a society where people were able to not identify by gender, with Christie arguing for alternative genders if it was impossible to eliminate gender altogether. Zach Nataf pointed out the importance of not assuming people's gender, and that a polite request for this information or a willingness to accept ambiguity could replace the imposition of categories. Nataf (in More 1996b) suggests a future where a loss

of male/female status is replaced by various categories, including MTF, FTM, hermaphrodite, pansexual and so on. In the interview, he said:

"I think it is desirable to start breaking down, especially the binary category of gender. I mean in a way it's like ... the same kinds of things have happened around race previously and notions of racial purity and keeping people separate and keeping people from mixing and missing the whole point of we're a part of one human race kind of thing"

This contrasted with the views of many other transsexuals, who envisaged the binary gender system continuing, but it is supported by findings from some of the other contributors. Ann Goodley argued that "our society has the possibility of accepting all genders, just as we accept all forms of music". She, like others, saw gender as a continuum. A trend towards diversification was supported by participants such as Kate More, who suggested that there would continue to be two sexes and that there would be complexification, enabling people to skate over the divide between the two more easily. Others also discussed a movement towards diversity:

"But if you're talking about fluidity and stuff, then I suppose I am trying to work towards fluidity. I'm scared of being fluid. I have lots of areas which I'm not fluid about. I'm very stuck around all sorts of things. But I suppose the ultimate thing is to have, not the ultimate situation is fluid, the ultimate situation is to have the option of being fluid....the thing is we're moving to gender to a much softer and more loose, but finely grained, gendered system of valuing people" (Kate Na H'Ysabet)

In terms of how this complexification might manifest, respondents emphasised agency, diversity and gender as performance. Christie noted that you could have a man in a suit at one end of the spectrum and a woman in a ball gown at the other, but that position on this spectrum would not really matter and that extremes would probably merge over a period of several hundred years. Part of this trend would be the disassociation of clothes from gender. Hamish envisaged gender becoming either non-existent or something that people play with, for example drag king and drag queen where gender characteristics are

exaggerated for fun rather than being 'someone's reality'. Kate N' Ha Ysabet saw gender as a game and likened it to religion in terms of choice concerning engagement with it. She envisaged gender becoming mass marketed, in a similar way to unisex in the 1970s. Both (main) sexes would wear gendered clothing and probably makeup at times. This could lead to greater diversity rather than homogenous gender, as gender would become more a matter of personal preference rather than a set category. Agency was also emphasised, with Hamish noting the importance being able to not have to make a choice as an option. Zach remarked: "You can like some gender expressions more than you like other gender expressions but that's a matter of taste". Others discussed a range of potential options concerning gender:

"Well I mean I think that it is possible to get rid of gender to some extent. Of course it depends on how you define gender. I mean I would tend to define gender in terms of not all the little bits and pieces that make up gender, like active, passive, weak and strong but in terms of putting them together into one package you have to have one packet which you were born into and you have to have that package until you die. I think that could easily be and will be gotten rid of. I think like in the past or maybe even in the present it's more like a set menu 'A' or a set menu 'B' and I see the future more like an a la Carte menu and you can make your own choice about what you can have for starters, for main course or dessert or whatever, or if you're going to have a dessert you can have dessert as a starter or a starter as dessert or just three desserts or whatever" (Simon Dessloch)

Transgender and Sexual Orientation Categories

Transgender problematises sexual orientation binaries in a number of ways illustrative of postmodern deconstruction and fluidity. Some transgender authors, such as Rothblatt (1995), have discussed the way that homosexuality and heterosexuality are based on a gender binary system and argue for diverse, individualised sexual orientations. Findings support the problematisation of sexual orientation categories by authors such as Rothblatt (1995) and Plummer (1995).

This section will outline the transgender challenge to sexual orientation binaries on the physical and micro-social levels, and will also explore the use of destabilised gender for sexual purposes and the sexual implications of moving beyond rigid gender categorisation. An attempt to address debates concerning the primacy of sexuality versus gender will not be made here, although it is worth noting that participant's views on this were varied. I will also exclude description of the sexual orientation changes that transsexuals go through. However, it is important to note that these changes themselves destabilise sexual orientation categories as fixed, because many transsexuals change sexual orientation when they change sex. Kate More discusses this:

Kate: What I've said here about no one looked at the impact of sexuality on gender and the other way round. I mean that relationship between gender and sexuality is ...I don't know. Obviously to some extent gender defines orientation. And the signifiers [signs] that we've been talking about are really the only thing that distinguishes sexuality, so in a way you could say the logic of gender can take apart a rhetoric of sexuality. And, sure, I think there's a lot of homophobia from the gay community towards transsexuals... Because of that unseen sort of stuff about changing genders; deconstructing sexuality and stuff.

I: Yeah.

Kate: It's sort of like pulling apart your identity

Transgender destabilises sexual orientation binaries on a number of levels: physically, in terms of sexual activity, and socially. I will look at these first and then explore the ways in which destabilisation of sexual orientation and gender categories is used as a means of sexual expression. The transgender physical destabilisation of sex, and by default, sexual orientation binaries, was brought home to me when I attended an exhibition of Del LaGrace Volcano's at the 1998 Transgender Film Festival. Del displayed photographs of his and other phalloclits, which resemble small penises entwined in labial lips. Likewise, post operative MTF transsexual's genitals are described as different to born women's by Yvonne Sinclair (although this obviously depends on surgical technique). Such genitals disrupt sex binaries and traditional sexual orientation categories. It follows that

transgender people do not necessarily have sex as men and women in the conventional way. As James Green says:

"First of all I never had sex as a woman, and I will never have sex as a man. You know, it will always in that sense be other. And I cannot pretend that I'm not a transsexual male" (James Green)

As well as provoking sexual alternatives to those sexual practices usually thought of as gay and straight, transgender destabilises the categories of gay and straight in terms of identity and wider social interaction. As Zach Nataf said, "Once you've realised how unfixed gender is already, and sex, then sexuality, you know, gets thrown up [for questioning], you know it's just open". In some cases, sexuality was pinned down to rigid definitions despite discrepancies, as in the case of Annie Cox, a pre-operative MTF transsexual who identified as a 'woman who loves women'. In other cases, people described the categories as limited. For example John Marshall noted that some people disputed his bisexual self because when he dragged up he only felt attracted to men. Sexual orientation binaries thus do not fit the plethora of identities raised by transgender. The transgender destabilisation of heterosexual and homosexual binaries is discussed in the literature, for example Rosario (1996) describes a study of the partners of gay FTM transsexuals. They were reported to be happy with their partners having vaginas, which implies that there is not necessarily a link between physiology and sexual orientation. This destabilisation of binaries may also be linked with changes in the transgender communities. For example, Stephen Whittle describes a move away from gender/sexual orientation definitional structures in the transgender communities, giving the illustration of someone who looks like a lesbian but defines as male and gay getting sexually involved with a cross-dresser dressed, perhaps, as a bunny girl.

The scrambling of sexual orientation binaries is evident in some of the transgender narratives. For example, Kate More says:

Kate: I used to hold that my head loved women and my body men, which made me a sort of lesbian too, and fitted in really well with a gender melancholy writing of trans, or enabled a strange Kristevan one. But I think I'm being too literal with my

desire, the relationships with women I've been in love with have certainly been qualitatively different from those with men, for a start because I tend to adopt one woman for long periods and flirt with several men. My relationships with women are part children clinging to each other, sometimes mothering each other, and part forbidden transgression, as if we're lost siblings, twins even, testing the incest taboo, though we never seem to want to actually break it. It enables us both to be dangerous and bad, when really we're quite tame, I guess it's incest because gender difference is significantly less believable with trans-people, one bases relationships elsewhere

I: That's really interesting.

Kate: The only space I don't occupy, I think, is bisexual. And yet in every way taking gay, lesbian, straight, whatever into consideration. Taking all three roles that would make me bisexual I suppose

This fluidity of sexual orientation causes problems for sexual minority communities based on discrete sexual categories, although in some cases transgender has been subsumed within (or is an important part of) gay or lesbian subcultures. One major issue concerning transgender and queer subcultures seemed to be one of confusions in communication. For example, More (1996) discusses how MTF transsexual and camp gay signals conflict, disrupting the delicately cross-gendered discourses of the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. This was illustrated by Joanna/Dave Scott's experience of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride: "My hair was fairly thick and long and bushy then, and I went down in Doc Martins, jeans, false boobs, makeup on, all the dykes were fancying me until I opened my mouth. And then they thought 'Oh my God it's a bloke, ugh!" However, it was not just a case of signification being destabilised. As More (1996a) says, transgender implodes the divide between gender and sexuality, causing problems for, for example, a butch lesbian separatist who meets another butch who identifies as a man.

In some cases, the use of gender as a means of exploring or expressing sexuality is apparent. This occurs particularly, but by no means only, amongst transvestites. It involves transgression of sexual orientation and gender categories in a way illustrative of

postmodernism. Gender play specifically for sexual purposes was done by some of the transgender people who contributed to the research. This involved the assumption and enactment of gender identities or roles on top of the usual identity, adding another layer of gender possibilities. In some cases gender play took place within sexual orientation based subcultures without disrupting those subcultures because it was confined to the bedroom or SM (somasochism) and fetish scenes. The SM scene supports gender fluidity in the form of transvestite fetishism and gender play in a sexual context. Califia (see 1997), for example, discusses gender play as part of the SM sexual repertoire. Gender play can be found on the margins of some lesbian subcultures. For example I met a lesbian who dragged as a man and has sex with women as a man, and another who had several male sub-personalities which she used for sexual purposes. However, neither of these women identified as transgender. In other cases gender play was part of transgender subculture. For instance Yvonne Sinclair described autoerotic desire and activity based on transgender behaviour: 'To see an erect penis poking out from very pretty knickers, a frilly petticoat, and there it is, this woman, a woman who's got a prick and bollocks'. Another contributor expressed his gender identity via his sexuality, by dragging as a woman and seeking other transvestites to have 'lesbian' encounters with. He said he felt more 'lesbian' with transvestites than with born women.

The destabilisation or fusion of male-female categories appears to be linked with the broader area of taboo sexual proclivities. The extent of transsexual prostitution, (as evidenced for example by the cards left by prostitutes in London telephone boxes) indicates not only the economic pressures many transsexuals face but also a (presumably) male fascination with transgender. Similarly, the internet presents various forms of transgender as a commercialised fetish. Ann Goodley described transgender desire as due to historical adulation and fear of hermaphrodites but also as linked to homophobia:

"That same society will undoubtedly pay a great deal of money to go to a night-club and see chicks with dicks, and pretend that they wouldn't dream of doing such a thing. There's a certain amount of fascination. If you look at the pornography of transsexuality, that stuff sells like nobody's business, and it's quite obvious that it has fascinated a great many men, and a certain amount of women, because it allows the unforgivable; that in looking at the chick with the dick, she can pretend that

she's not a lesbian, because she might be looking at the breasts and think it's OK because it's got a willy. A man might get away with thinking he's not a homosexual because he's looking at the breasts"

The possibility of diversification is a strong theme emerging from the findings concerning sexuality and transgender. It appears that transgender opens up options for sexual expression as well as providing a confusing array of possibilities. For some transgender people, gender categories are linked with sexual desire (Stone 1991, Bornstein 1994) and only seen as necessary as part of an erotic repertoire (Nataf 1996). Here, the focus is on dissonance and eroticisation of the 'other' (Stone 1991, Nataf 1996). Thus, transgender desire, in its varied forms, transgresses both heteronormative sexual categorisation and lesbian, gay and bisexual categorisation. Zach Nataf likens this to either a minefield or a chocolate box:

"If you then open up something on the other person about their own gender position where they've not actually had that kind of question about themselves before, that gives them access to more material for desire and different ways of being sexually with you and with other people, they can then take that into a situation with a non-transgender person and open that up for everyone, so it becomes, in fact it can be a gift"

A trend towards diversification of sexuality can be linked with Kate N' Ha Ysabet's understanding, which was that sexuality becomes less important; a personal choice, once 'you stop doing gender in a big way'. She saw sexual preference as then being based on desire or not for particular sexual organs, and she also envisaged the majority of the population becoming bisexual. Others, such as Stephen Whittle, saw desire as becoming less based on genitalia and appearance and more related to personality or 'essence'. However, transgender sexual expression does appear to be striated or structured in various ways according to the gender identities of those involved and subculture (as well as mainstream) norms. For example, Hamish Macdonald described gender play on the lesbian SM scene:

"Its like if you look at SM, you can get girls to play at boys, but getting a boy to play at girl is almost impossible. I'm talking about boy dykes and girl dykes. A femme will play at boy, but getting a butch or a boydyke to play at femme is almost impossible. And I don't know why that is, but I think it's kind of interesting. I think it's probably connected for me to the fact that my gender identity influences my sexuality, but my sexuality doesn't actually influence my gender identity. It's not because I fancy women that I'm a boy, but....the other way around is more true to me"

Another interpretation of this could be that, historically, men have tended to drag up as a means of losing status, while women have cross-dressed to gain status (Bullough and Bullough 1993). Butches and boydykes thus refuse the status loss associated with femme.

Categorisation and Conflict

One of the major themes to emerge from the research is the extent of divergence and contradiction within the transgender communities. Aspects of this are also discussed in the chapters on transphobia and transgender politics. As noted above, contradiction is typical of postmodernity. It also links with the postmodernism-structure debate, as much of the conflict concerns fluidity and diversification of genders. This section addresses, firstly, contradiction and complexity at the level of individual identities. I then look at conflict concerning definitions, including the tensions between transsexuals and other transgender people, hierarchies, other tensions within the transgender communities and tensions concerning intersex and third sex.

Research contributors described and in some cases expressed a number of complications or mixes of gender identity. Physical/gender role juxtapositions were prevalent, for example four of the transsexual women whom I interviewed were preoperative and two of these were not sure if they would have surgery or not, but they all identified as feminists and as women. Annie Cox explained this as caused by the complex factors contributing to her gender identity, and defines on the basis of an eight digit scale (anatomical, genetic, endocrinological, psychological, brain, emotional, spiritual and social sexes). Interestingly, contradiction is consciously taken on as part of identity in at least one instance: Simon

Dessloch when discussing the book *Third Sex Third Gender* (Herdt 1994) used the quote "two opposites confronting each other without resolution" to explain how he often felt. In addition to complexities in identity at any one time, gender careers are often complicated, as this quote illustrates:

"I have one close friend who ... when I first knew her she was into gender fuck and didn't identify as transsexual at all and actually was in a relationship with a transsexual as a boy. And then, next time I met her was several years later by which time she was on the brink of surgery. And partly because she'd been through the system, was very into traditional femininity. In spite of being bisexual" (Roz Kaveney)

Gender variations are endless. Kate More, for instance, noted that she had met MTF transsexuals who identified as male, and also knows of people who have changed back to their original sex. Kate N' Ha Ysabet did drag king as a preoperative MTF transsexual and was sometimes read as an effeminate man. I talked to Diane Torr, a drag king who also drags as a man dragging a woman, and to a genetic woman who passed well enough as a drag queen to be included in the book *Men in Frocks* (Kirk and Heath 1984). Kate Bornstein (1998) discusses 'femme to femme' as another variant (women who consciously do femme roles) and Kate More noted k.d. Lang's portrayal of the transsexual Christine Jorgenson and asks whether it is possible for non-transsexual people to convincingly pass as transsexual?

Gender fuck is perhaps the epitome of gender contradiction. Gender fuck is extremely contentious within the transsexual community because of its radicalism/reactionism, which many transsexuals find threatening to assimilationist campaigns for transsexual rights. Gender Fuck can be defined as the performance of conflicting gender signifiers:

"Well, androgyny is the third sex, and then gender fuck is the nth sex. It's like if you think of the line of man or woman, then there's a line going across it with androgyny and gender fuck, and you could have those possibilities, because for me androgyny is neither masculine or feminine and gender fuck is both masculine and feminine. So if I have a penis and big tits that's gender fuck, if I wore makeup and

butch clothing that's gender fuck. And what's quite interesting is that androgyny is acceptable because there's a reason for that, but gender fuck isn't, because people go, 'Oh ? OK,' but with gender fuck its this thing of 'Shit, I'm getting two sets of signals' and it feels like you're having a drum and bass mix on one side and classical music on the other and you're going 'Oh my God which am I going to listen to?" (Kate N' Ha Ysabet 1998).

In addition to gender career complications, chosen gender variants and gender fuck, gender performance sometimes inadvertently produced discrepancies in normative gender binaries. This is the case with non-passing transsexuals, and with others at times. For example Hamish Macdonald described how wearing feminine clothes at a family wedding caused him to look like a transvestite. This is different from gender fuck in the sense that it was not chosen as a means of challenging social assumptions concerning gender, but rather was an attempt to cope with imposed social norms. In this context performance became less of a 'gender game', as dubbed by some participants, and more of a survival strategy.

Findings demonstrated tensions between many of the groups currently becoming subsumed under the umbrella term 'transgender'. Bromley (1995) discusses the way in which transgender as a term tends to mask differences, and findings supported this. As noted in the introduction, the term "transgender" itself is disputed. In addition, according to Simon Dessloch, not all transsexuals identify as transgender. It would seem from the interview with Yvonne Sinclair that some transvestites also reject the term. Other groups which could be termed transgender disputed the application of the term. For example, the Order of Perpetual Indulgence, a group mostly of gay men who drag as nuns, is described by Bornstein (1994) as transgender, but in fact I observed that this was a contentious issue within the Order, where drag is seen as a 'gay' identity by many rather than a 'transgender' one. In addition, some people moved between different transgender categories. In Joanna/Dave Scott's case this was between drag queen and transvestite, but other areas of fluidity are apparent, for example Phaedra Kelly mentioned the continuum between transvestism and transsexuality.

One theme evident in some of the findings is the transsexual rejection of transgender identity, particularly in relation to transvestism. Some transsexuals, in particular Annie

Cox, saw transsexuals as being very different to transgender people. Annie described transgender people as being motivated primarily by a non-conformist sexuality, for example transvestism and fetishism, while she saw genuine (sic) transsexuals as being motivated by gender dysphoria. This was atypical of findings, but the concern to distance from transvestites was echoed by some other contributors, including intersexual Salmacis, who felt that the public equation of transsexuality and transvestism was damaging the image of transsexuals and intersexuals. Some respondents simply said that transvestism was different to transsexuality and there was a need to make a distinction, but Yvonne Sinclair and others, including one transsexual, argued that transsexual's distaste for transvestites revolves around a rejection of transvestite sexuality. If this is the case it can be traced to the sexphobia discussed in the chapter on transphobia and discourses, as well as the medical pathologisation of fetishism. John Marshall said that there was less hostility towards transsexuals by transvestites, and a tendency towards admiration, as they are seen to have gone the whole way, but this was contradicted by Roz Kaveney, who discussed transvestites being 'sniffy and dismissive' about people who opt for surgery. This was illustrated by one transvestite contributor's description of transsexuals as false and sexually dysfunctional.

Other conflicts revolve around surgery and passing. Bornstein (1994) notes that there is a hierarchy concerning surgery. Roz Kaveney observed that some transsexuals condemn each other for not being proper transsexuals and that this linked to passing. This is related to a more general system of inequality within the communities. Zach Nataf explained the hierarchies:

Zach: And then there's the sort of hierarchy between transsexuals and transvestites and transvestites are really down on transsexuals; I'm thinking of MTFs in particular.

I: Right, okay.

Zach: Because there are, you know, the certain sort of, again, privileges as heterosexual men who are married with children and, you know, have straight kinds of jobs in the community and live in the community in a particular way but then

cross-dress. And are, you know, terrified of being outed probably and don't want to associate with transsexuals because, you know, and don't want to associate with lesbians, and gays, well, there's those kinds of things. And then there's a hierarchy of who's had the surgery (laughs) and people who've decided not to have the surgery; who passes, who doesn't pass, you know, who switches back and forth and is a different gender every day.

I: Yeah.

Zach: You know, there's a kind of basic cattiness. (laughs)

I: (laughs) Yeah.

Zach: I mean, it's less so, I think, amongst FTMs because most FTMs haven't had surgery, that's the difference

I: Sure. It's so difficult. Yeah.

Zach: And the ones who have tend to disappear. I mean, that's not strictly the case. But then, you know, .. for some there is some competition between transgenderists and transsexuals

There are various other tensions within the transgender communities, which are also discussed in the chapter on transgender politics. For example, conflicts exist between transvestite organisations (Ekins and King 1996), particularly concerning the Beaumont Society's earlier exclusion of non-heterosexual and fetishist transvestites. There are disputes between butch lesbians and others who may identify as transgender but do not identify as transsexual and those who identify as transsexual. For example, Hamish noted the use of the term 'pretenders' by FTMs for transgenderists and says that she/he has no right to use the name Hamish. Salmacis discussed conflict between intersexuals and transsexuals: she suggested that some transsexuals are against intersexuals having surgery as adults, yet fail to activate against infant surgery. She argued that "when they (transsexuals) say, 'well it's OK for us to have surgery as adults because we want a proper body, but not

for you because it's a form of mutilation, to me that's hypocritical". In addition she described an instance where she was made to feel she should identify with shamanic traditions because of her intersexuality, when all she wants is to be 'normal'. Elizabeth Loxley discussed the differences between MTFs and FTMs, with the latter tending to be more individualist and assimilating into the mainstream. Some MTFs described FTMs as being sexist and dominating and I witnessed at least one MTF transsexual indulging in female supremacy at the expense of FTMs and men. I did not notice direct sexism from FTMs myself, except that I felt distinctly cold shouldered by one or two FTMs, perhaps because I am a woman and tend to alternate between 'butch' and 'femme'.

Findings indicate a set of tensions around third sex, intersexual and androgynous identities. This links to an extent with the ambivalent status of 'transgender', which is explicitly related in the USA to third sex/gender by Bornstein (1994). Conflicts within the UK take a number of forms. Conflict seems to be partially due to social sanctions on third or other sex/gender identities, which are experienced as extremely difficult or impossible to maintain in a society which recognises only male and female. Salmacis and Christie Elan Cane discuss the social stigmatisation of such positions, for example Salmacis says: "Third sex marks you out as a freak". This is related to the linguistic erasure of third sex/gender. Zach Nataf and others discuss the limitations of a language which has no pronouns for third or multiple sex positions. These issues are explored further in the chapter on transphobia, subjectivity and social structure.

Another area of tension around third/other sex/gender concerns the relationship between intersexuals, androgynes and transsexuals (who are dominant within the movement). Intersex people are only just beginning to gain credibility within transgender studies and the transgender communities. This is evidenced by the publication of Chase's (1998) work and the inclusion of intersex people and themes at the TrAnsgender AGENDA conference at Oxford University in the Autumn of 1998. Generally, intersex tends to be erased or sidelined. For example in the literature Bornstein (1994) suggests that androgyny retains binaries because of the separation of male and female qualities and attempts to balance them. Findings suggest that some transsexual people deny the validity of third sex or other non-male or non-female identities. Pamela Summers argued that intersex is a transitional state, as everyone ultimately ends up as either male or female, and thus it is not an identity

in itself. She also described third sex people as coming from a place of strength in comparison to transsexual, and as not having lived without civil liberties-transsexuals currently occupy that third space and do not have civil liberties. While the latter is clearly evident, findings suggest that her other points are not. Intersexuals and androgynes do exist long-term, and they have no civil rights and do not start from a position of having these. Moreover, Christie Elan Cane experienced gender dysphoria in the same way as transsexuals, only moving in a different direction. In addition, some transsexuals see taking a third sex position as actually being necessary for gaining civil rights (for example More 1996). Christie criticises transsexuals for rubbishing the third sex and for reinforcing the gender binary system. It appears from discussion that rejection of third sex identities is mostly about defending the social identities and the political gains of transsexuals, although this statement will clearly be contentious and is not representative of the views of many contributors. Third and other sexes are problematic for transsexuals. As Kate More says:

"Mmn, well I think that as I said, the third gender moment is actually forcing trans-people to have a fluid identity. There's a paradox as well, because if you're neither, fixed in ambivalence, then you're always going from one to the other, and I don't think it's quite as straightforward and dynamic as that, that you're always being buffeted by things that are happening, by other states-like orientation. But also the idea that if you're trying to construct this female gender identity, as a performative thing, rather than having a 'natural' thing, then also that's a good way of making it fluid as fixing it just never works. You're always being pushed off your perch, and you'll never look feminine if you're behaving as if you're trying to be feminine, so...."

Other common themes to emerge from the findings concerning third and other sex/genders are the danger of third sex ghettoisation, problems with rigid codification of genders and the issue of possible reinforcement and normalisation of the gender binary system by creating a category for people who did not fit this. Stephen Whittle, for example, discussed the problems associated with using third sex as an umbrella term which risks erasing difference within the transgender communities. Thus, third sex can be argued to be problematic as a term even for intersex people, given the inclusion within this category of

various conditions. In addition, third sex conditions form a continuum rather than a distinct category, with some conditions being more noticeably not male or female than others.

A couple of respondents saw third sex/gender as a useful category for intersex people but not otherwise. Thus, for example:

"It (third sex) doesn't say a lot to me, because its kind of non-definitive in a way, it's like everybody was a bit weird, according to anyone else who fits into one or the other. It has got a slightly; for me, it's got a sort of dustbin sense to it, even though I know people would use it for themselves. I also think that unless you are talking about intersexed people I wouldn't really think it necessary or appropriate because it implies that there are only three possibilities" (Hamish Macdonald)

Despite problems, findings indicates that third sex/gender, or multiple gender categories, could form a valid basis for identification. For example Phaedra Kelly sees the term being used by many people and rejected only within certain sections of the transgender community, including, she says, some third gender people who do not want to identify as such.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the fluidity, complexity and contradiction which are exemplified by transgender plurality in the face of an overly rigid gender system. Research findings provided evidence that transgender problematises sex/gender binaries at the level of identity in a number of ways: gender binaries do not correspond with intersex or hermaphroditic identities, third or multiple sex identities and some aspects of transsexuality (although this was contentious), and contradictory or fluid identities. Sexual orientation binaries are also shown to be destabilised by transgender because of their predication on male-female binaries. There is considerable conflict and diversity concerning transgender.

The plurality which transgender illustrates is shown framed within postmodernist theory. Thus, the challenge to male-female gender categorisation which transgender poses can be

contextualised within the work of the (what can be interpreted as) postmodernist transsexual author Bornstein (1994, 1998) and who argues that it is time to dissolve gender binarisms. Likewise, contributor Kate More saw the production of binaries as being linked to processes of modernism and fragmentation, and questioned the 'realness' of binaries even at the physical level. This corresponds to some of the emerging non-transgender discourses concerning gender. For example lesbian therapist JoAnn Loulan argues that there are thousands of genders (Linn 1995). However, whilst gender plurality might seem to fit neatly into postmodernist discourse, there are in fact major problems for such an analysis. The further exploration of postmodernism and transgender theory, and its critique, form the basis for the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Theorising Transgender:

Butler and Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism and postmodernism are important for theorising transgender, as they provide a means of understanding the fluidity, diversity, complexity and constructedness of gender pluralism. The work of Judith Butler (1990, 1991, 1993) is crucial contribution to poststructuralist gender theory. The key concept underlying Butlers' work is the view that sex, as well as gender, is a socially constructed phenomenon. Biology is not an inevitable fact, but rather is constituted by the society in which we live. Poststructuralism can be related to the 'strong constructionism' discussed by King (1993), where gender categorisation is seen as constituting the subject, with no underlying reality to identity. Poststructuralism has been adopted by transgender theorists such as Wilchins (1997), Stryker (1995) and Prosser (1996), and expanded in order to provide a means of understanding the fluid, multiple possibilities presented by transgender. However, there are a number of fundamental problems with the poststructuralist analysis of transgender, which indicate the need for alternative models.

This chapter asks the questions:

- what are the key facets of poststructuralist/postmodernist transgender theory?
- what are the problems with poststructuralist transgender theory?

The notion of 'queer' can be seen as a sub-theme in the discussion about poststructuralism and transgender. Butler's work is considered to be of central importance to the emergence of queer theory, including the writing of transgender (drag, cross-dressing) as transgressive (Prosser 1998). However, a critique of Butler in relation to transgender has emerged (Prosser 1998, Namaste 1996, Whittle 1998), focusing on the limitations of queer.

Thus, this chapter aims to explain poststructuralist transgender theory and to provide a critical analysis of this. It begins with a brief overview of Butlerian poststructuralism and a critique of this in relation to transgender, focusing on queer theory. It then explores

various aspects of poststructuralist transgender theory. Central concepts include the performative construction of sex and gender, the body as a form of self-expression, the transgender displacement of heteronormativity, the disruption of the links between sex and gender, technologisation, and the destabilisation of empiricism. The chapter then addresses transgender subjectivity and the continuum model of gender. I then examine some of the criticisms which can be made of poststructuralist transgender theory, including the erasure of the body and the need for gender categorisation, the denial of the essential self, issues concerning technologisation, the tendency to overlook the impact of social structure on sex and gender and the need for categorisation as a basis for identity politics. I conclude by proposing a model which utilises but does not rely on poststructuralism as a basis for transgender praxis.

Psychoanalytic theory is an important influence on poststructuralist theory. I do not attempt to address psychoanalysis in relation to transgender, as this is done elsewhere (Prosser 1998, More 1999). Discussions of subjectivity in relation to gender and sexuality are frequently dominated by psychoanalytic accounts (see Jackson 1996). This chapter aims to indicate alternatives.

Butler and the Poststructuralists

Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) develops her analysis of gender via Foucault, Freud, Derrida, Lacan and the French feminists. Her work is situated firmly within poststructuralism, which includes a range of theoretical positions, all of which to an extent follow Saussure's use of language to place the subject (individual or individual's sense of self, see Jackson (1993)) as constructed, precarious, contradictory and in process (Weedon 1994). Butler draws on Foucault (1981), whose constructionist approach foregrounds the production and organisation of differences through systems of representation, social practices and ideology (Fuss 1989). Butler argues via Foucault that the subject is constituted through discourse/discursive practice (discourses are meaning systems and means of organising the social world. These hang together to form discursive fields (Weedon 1994)). Discourse and discursive formations are produced via repetition of ideas and acts, (Lechte 1994), which become naturalised (or seen as normal) at both micro and macro levels. Social prohibitions, which take a symbolic form, are incorporated by the individual on a psychic

level, so that they become part of the fabric of the individual's self and are felt to be innate (Butler 1990). This occurs via the early psychological development of the child as well as at later stages (Butler 1997). Identity develops through processes of signification (or the use of signs conveying meaning, for example language or clothing). For poststructuralists and postmodernists there is no autonomous unitary self, and while the experience of identity is a reality this is due to the power exercised on the subject via discourse: there is no separate consciousness (Weeks 1995, Plummer 1995). The body is also seen as lacking any inherent existence. For Foucault, the body is inscribed, 'written', by events and ideas. It is not a subject of the self but a historical site of subjugated knowledge (Stanton 1992), a site where disciplinary strategies are articulated (Armstrong 1987). Modern Western subjects experience a split between 'inside' and 'outside' and this is inscribed on the surface of the body (Stryker 1995).

Following Foucault (1981), power dynamics can be seen as crucial for the production of identity. As Alcoff says, the mechanism of hegemonic power is 'the construction of the subject by a discourse that weaves knowledge and power into a coercive structure that "forces the individual back on himself (sic) and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way"' (1995 p. 415). Power itself has no central substantive content, but occurs through repetition linked to knowledge via social institutions (Lechte 1994). It is constantly disputed via competing discourses; subjectivity is therefore a site of conflict (Weedon 1995). For Foucault, power operates productively through the heterogeneous micro relations that form social life (Sawicki 1991).

Butler contributes to the poststructuralist analysis of gender developed by feminists such as Weedon (1987) and Henriques et al (1984), who highlight the fluidity and constructedness of the category 'woman' and 'femininity' (in Stacey 1993). Butler argues that gender binaries are discursively produced and that sexual categories constructed through language and repetition support the regimes of heteropatriarchal power (1990) (patriarchy has various definitions but can be seen as the force which defines the personal and institutional power exerted over women by men (Coppock, Haydon and Richter 1995)). Butlers' analysis of patriarchy builds on constructionist interpretations of sexuality, where the role of gender power and inequality in creating sexual categories is examined (Weeks 1989,

Gagnon and Parker 1995). However it extends constructionist analysis through the refusal of any authentic sex and gender expression:

'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler 1990 p. 25).

Butler's work marks a crucial departure from the work of earlier feminists. Following de Beauvoir (1953), second wave feminists developed an analysis of gender based on the separation of biological sex and socially constructed gender. Thus, the body is seen as a 'given', where as gender is the mutable result of our social conditioning. This separation of sex from gender is the hallmark of much feminist thought. However, it is problematised by the work of Butler and other poststructuralists, who argue that biological sex, as well as gender, is constructed. Poststructuralists argue that the body is not simply 'there', it is composed of a network of effects caused by socio-political forces (Fuss 1989). Butler introduces the notion of performativity, in which sex and gender are performed rather than innate, and are constituted via the repetition of acts in a way that makes them seem natural. She utilises Foucauldian notions of the body, but fuses these with theory drawn from psychoanalysis. For Butler, repression of homosexual desire is seen as forming not only an individual's sexual identity but also his/her sex and gender (Butler 1997). Following Butler, Prosser describes how the naturalisation of sex/gender and heterosexual binaries occurs through the processes of signification. It is the oppositional positioning of sexual orientation gender categories which makes this possible: representation of heterosexuality as foundational or natural (Prosser 1998) means that alternatives become constructed as abnormal or deviant. Prosser describes how for Butler the body and corporeal materiality is illusory: a psychic projection, and it therefore ceases to be a discernible referential category. It is only through the intrapsychic processes of denial and exclusion of homosexual and incestuous desire that awareness of the body occurs (Butler 1990). Thus, the body and the sex have no substantive existence, but are rather a 'variable boundary', regulated within a field of sexual and gender norms.

Critical Analysis of Butlerian Theory in Relation to Transgender

Transgender is central to Butler's analysis of gender in *Gender Trouble; Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (1990), where she sees gender parodic practices such as drag exemplifying performativity and resignifying the body beyond the binary framework. This is framed as queer, and as a strategy for disrupting heterosexual norms and thus challenging hegemonic discourse.

Research findings evidenced the existence of gender parody. Some of the contributors played with different gender identities in a self-conscious way. For example when walking through town one day with Kate N' Ha Ysabet she commented on how people do not know how to read her and that she likes to confuse people by wearing a skirt together with masculine clothing and facial hair. I noticed the reactions of shopkeepers when shopping with her and her gender does seem very challenging for people. However, I found that substantiation for Butler's notion of gender parody comes primarily from cross-dressers: transvestites and people doing drag rather than from transsexuals or other transgender people. For cross-dressers, gender is detached to an extent from biology. For example, John Marshall noted how he moves between different personalities, with the personality being constructed via the process of dressing up. Joanna/Dave Scott described this:

Joanna/Dave: Yeah. When it comes to gender how do I define myself? Hm... I would say I mean I'm not, I'm not a trannie, I would say. I would say that I am more a drag queen I would say I am more, say in-between, in-between, inbetweenie

I: What, in-between drag and TV?

Joanna/Dave: Well, inbetweenie full stop. You know its sort of a case of that's how I can be, that's the way I tend to come across, I don't come across as your archetypal trannie, I would say I come across as more sort of like, its a performance, its all my way of acting, it's sort of like, you're going out you're putting on a show, you know?

I: Yeah, yeah but it's not like drag either

Joanna/Dave: No, no. It's not like that. I am the show.

I: I'm interested in the sort of bit in-between the two (transvestite and drag queen). I mean how do you switch, is it just the clothing or is there a mind-switch that goes with it?

Joanna/Dave: It's one of those things. As soon as, it's not, once the makeup's on, and then the wig goes on, then it's a complete character change, or can be. Um...It's quite scary actually

I: It's like a different person, is that what you mean?

Joanna/Dave: Yeah. Cause it's sort of like (Joanna's) taking over, all right, it's not their fault (?) all of a sudden you're switching from one to the other

Butlers' analysis thus can be seen to work for transgender as far as drag and cross-dressing goes. However transgender theory parts company with Butler once non-dimorphic physiological identities come into play. There are a number of problems with Butler's poststructuralism in relation to transgender, centering initially around her use of the notion of 'queer' and parody as transgressive. This provokes a discussion of the usefulness of queer for transgender people. There are other issues which are problematic with poststructuralism when this is applied to transgender. These include embodiment and the essential self as well as a tendency to overlook the operation of power at material and social levels. However discussion of these points will be preceded by an exploration of the way in which poststructuralist theory has been used by transgender theorists and possible extensions of this, as these criticisms also apply to some forms of transgender theory. Here, I will focus on Butlers' framing of transgender as queer.

Butlers' notion of gender trouble; the destabilisation of gender binaries via transgression, is very problematic for transsexuality. Firstly, Butler argues that it is only possible to subvert the gender binary system from within the processes of repetitive signifying (1990), which for Butler does not include bodily alteration. She therefore sees cross-dressing as radical

and, in her later work (1993), transsexuality as reactionary. Transsexuality is in fact written by Butler as reinforcing of heteronormative constructions of gender, (Whittle 1998, Prosser 1998, Namaste 1996), in a similar way to the transphobic work of Raymond (1980, 1994). This view is related to Butler's understanding of drag as an imitation of constructed femininity providing an outlet for ungrieved object loss concerning sexuality rather than gender (1997), which can be seen to write out transgender peoples' experience of gender dysphoria. Her stance leads to the erasure of transgender peoples' material experiences, as exemplified in her analysis of Venus Extravaganza in the film *Paris is Burning*, where she ignores the transphobic motivations for Venus's murder, reading it instead as due to misogyny and racism (Prosser 1998). As Prosser says, transsexuality highlights the limits of Butler's queer feminism. Prosser counters this by developing a psychoanalytically-based theory of embodiment.

The problems with Butlers' analysis of transgender reflect the wider difficulties associated with queer theory and politics in relation to transgender. Queer theory involves a critique of sexual orientation categories, with some writers arguing that these are oppressive in the same way as heterosexuality (see Richardson 1996). Queer praxis draws on the claims of sex radicalism to disrupt heteropatriarchy via transgressive sexual practice. However, queer theory appears to operate a paradox. It simultaneously seeks to undermine the binary codification of 'reality', which forms the basis of modernist thought (Whittle 1996) and reinforces these categories through its reference to them. This mirrors the movement beyond, yet constant reference to, sexual orientation and by default gender categories. As Plummer says:

"The newly emerging 'Queer Theory' is an attempt to get beyond the gendered and sexual practices of the social world, yet it continually harks back to those categories which it seeks to undo; male, female, straight, bisexual. What seems to be sought is a world of multiple gendered fluidities - a world at home in a postmodernist cacaphony of multiplicity, pastiche and pluralities that mask the death of metanarratives of gender which have dominated the modern world" (Ken Plummer 1996 p. xvi)

Transgender problematises queer praxis in a similar way to binary based feminism insofar as it disrupts the gender and sexual-orientation binaries on which queer theory is based

(see Whittle 1996) to the extent that the term queer becomes destabilised and loses cohesiveness. In other words, terms such as 'gay' and 'heterosexual' make little sense in the context of shifting, fluid or multiple gender identities. While it could be argued that the term 'queer' relates precisely to such problematisation, if queer goes full circle it becomes fluid or heterosexual, so loses meaning. As discussed above, gender binarisation is crucial for current models of sexual orientation and it is on these that the notion of 'queer' relies. Thus, More (1996a) argues that inclusion of transsexuality in queer wrecks sexuality based praxis. She suggests that queer theorists avoided tackling the implications of transsexuality for gender polarity until Hausmans' *Changing Sex* (1995). This text further illustrates the way in which transgender highlights the limitations of queer, and is therefore ignored by queer academia. Thus for example the space between binaries is often overlooked, but as Stephen Whittle said, this space is an important place for transgender people.

The use of queer theory, including Butlers' work, is clearly problematic in relation to transgender. The paradox concerning the relationship of queer theory to the categories which it seeks to supercede provides an uneasy framework for theorising transgender. Queer itself is a contested term, and, when defined not in the sense of gay/lesbian/bisexual sexual orientation categories but rather as confrontation of oppression and the inclusion of all oppressed groups (Weeks 1995) it becomes more useful for transgender people. Thus, queer is defined against normal (Warner (1993), in other words, it is oppositional to the mainstream. The term 'queer' originated in the first wave of the GLF (Gay Liberation Front), which included transgender people as central figures, and emphasised transgression of hegemonic gender and sexual orientation norms. Although early gay liberation theory was fragmented, it included a struggle against the sex role system which views male and female as mutually exclusive categories (Seidman 1993). Hawkes (1995) discusses the queer scrambling of binaries and the transgressive threat to heterosexual hegemony which this poses. Displacement of the continuous self and performative, processual identity replace rigid categorisation, rendering the latter meaningless. Research findings support this transgressive model of queer. For example Zach Nataf discussed queer as the acceptance of a range of sex, gender and sexual orientation expressions. People who transgress binary genders are queer and the common basis of identity is the use of queer as a form of self-identification as well as resistance to oppression. Queer was important to

Zach, as he does not wish to live as a heterosexual. Others saw queer as enabling fluidity of categorisation:

Hamish: Queer is a good, it's a positive, it's a progress from 'lesbian and gay and bisexual and transgendered',

I: Progress in what sense?

Hamish: Progress in the sense that people can be fluid with their sexualities and their gender by using the definition 'queer'. If someone who has been having relationships with women for 25 years and has a one night stand with a man, it doesn't mean she has to stop being a dyke. But there are people who would say she is not really a dyke because she's had a one night stand with a bloke. Where as if she uses the term 'queer' ain't anybody going to tell her she's not queer. Because she had a one night stand with a man. So it gives people freedom to move around a bit, the sexualities (Hamish McDonald)

This definition of queer as transgressive includes transsexuality enables Butlers' analysis to be extended to transgender once the body is seen as part of the performance and rigidly gendered models are released. Thus despite the problems with queer praxis, it provides a home for transgender on both theoretical and social levels when it is defined as allowing of marginalised identities. The paradoxical, post-binariied yet still binariied process can, perhaps, provide both theoretical and social space for both sexual orientation and gender fluidity, and, moreover, relate to the postmodernist/structure tensions which are central to this field.

The reading of transgender as transgressive raises another important critique of queer praxis. Transgressive queer is extremely contentious within the transgender, and especially, transsexual communities. While transgender is defined in some circles (Bornstein 1994) as the transgression of gender norms it is also an umbrella term covering transsexuals and others, some of whom seek to assimilate within the mainstream. The notion of transgression excludes or is resisted by transgender people who identify as heterosexual and assume conventional gender roles (see Prosser 1998). In addition, the social exclusion

of transgender people means that for some, for example Salmacis, the term 'queer' is far from reclaimed and is experienced as extremely oppressive, because she has been termed a 'freak' during the course of sexual and emotional abuse. These people have either not reached a stage in political and social organisation where queer can be reclaimed as a positive term, or they identify in conventional ways and thus view the notion of 'queer' with suspicion. Moreover, queer as transgressive is a limited political stance. Kate More and I discussed this:

Kate: Another thing I'm worried about queer is that there isn't a praxis. You know, there's just no political praxis whatsoever, so I mean it could very easily go either way.

I: Yeah.

Kate: And it wouldn't .. you know, it could be very easily taken over, it's very damaging I think in many ways.

I: Yeah. I mean that goes back to what we were saying about reactionism and stuff like that. I mean if the basis for queer is transgression of social norms .. well, if there's no value or ethical structure to that, you know, what on earth are we left with? I mean it could be anything, couldn't it?

Kate: Well, we wouldn't have a society, would we?

The limitations of transgression-based political praxis are discussed in a number of other contexts. For example, queer politics/theory can be seen as vanguardist, and may also be linked with the erasure of Black gay experience which can occur within gay culture (see Seidman 1993). In addition, Abu-Lughod (1993) argues that resistance is often closely linked with support for power structures. Following Foucault, she sees resistance as always linked with power. While manifestations of resistance can be used to understand power structures, this resistance should not be romanticised. This relates perhaps to another transgression-related critique of queer, found among the writings of feminists such as Richardson (1996), who argues that queer practices such as 'chicks with dicks' fail to

challenge heterosexuality as a social institution. Queer praxis remains a contentious issue within feminism (see for example Parnaby 1993).

With respect to transgression and queer it seems, therefore, that definition of queer as transgressive of social norms is flawed. Pamela Summers saw the bipolar itself as creating a context of opposition, also in relation to gender. Context appears to be crucial for understanding the radical-reactionary divides. For example Ann Goodley suggested that some radicalism is useful in provoking social change but that too much causes a backlash. Hamish Macdonald noted the problems of equating transgression of heterosexist norms with emancipation. This could be unethical, as not all 'straight' values are bad. I feel that both the extent of transgressiveness and the political effects of this depend on context: no grand theory is available.

Contributors evidenced a wide variation of attitudes towards queer, from sharp critiques of queer to Christie Elan Canes' view that both feminism and queer are 'somewhere along the road' but are unnecessary if gender is abolished. Simon Dessloch envisaged transgender politics as perhaps uniting and replacing queer, bisexual and other categories. More suggests the inclusion of transgender and replacement of bipolar gender models with a continuum of gender oppression and the synthesis of transgender and queer theory (1996a). Zach Nataf mentioned tolerance of difference and equality as part of queer politics and theory. This model of queer, which emphasises diversity and emancipation, and includes transgender as part of this, was evident in queer politics around 1996, especially with the inclusion of transgender in Lesbian and Gay Pride. However it is unclear to what extent queer politics now is sexual orientation category-based versus transgression-based. In addition, queer can mean transgression as oppositional or emancipatory and based on diverse self-definition. The latter interpretation arguably extends to include heterosexual. If this diversity-enabling, emancipatory model of queer is used, it provides a great deal of space for transgender, as it includes not only lesbians, gays, bisexuals and pansexuals but also heterosexuals. However, at this point it may implode on itself, losing the defining characteristics which marks it out against the mainstream. Thus, gender and sexual pluralism may replace the polarities of mainstream and subculture.

Poststructuralist Transgender theory

Poststructuralist theorists of gender posit the body, sex and gender as fictitious; constructed through social processes occurring at macro social, micro social and intrapsychic levels rather than having an essential reality. How have transgender theorists used and contributed to post-structuralist gender theory? Transgender theorists who could be described as post-structuralist, although I do not know if they would describe themselves as such, are Sandy Stone (1991), Susan Stryker (1996), Kate Bornstein (1994, 1998), Kate More (1996a-d, 1997, 1999), Zach Nataf (1996) and Jay Prosser (1998). As Steven Whittle (1998b) says:

"In the context of inadequate theory, the new trans community has constituted its analysis after Stone, refusing to categorise itself as a class or a problematic (sic) third gender but seeing itself as 'a genre, a set of embodied texts whose potential for productive disruption of structured sexualities has yet to be explored'" (Whittle p. 391, citing Stone 1991 p. 296).

Poststructuralist transgender theory has a number of key characteristics: sex as constructed; performative and processual rather than fixed; the body as a technologised commodity; the destabilisation of empiricism; the disruption of sex as well as gender; the plurality of gender binaries; gender beyond duality and the spectrum model of gender. These points will be examined in turn.

Sex as constructed

Kate More described transgender identities as performative and as processual rather than as categories. Following Butler, she understood sex and gender as constructed and as occurring through signification. Sex difference was seen as a masquerade and male and female signification was seen as created through this. For transsexuals, sex and gender were seen as not simply naturalised, rather sex was a literalisation with awareness of the other sex being suppressed. Kates' views are echoed in the work of other transgender people, for example "Gender is not what culture created out of my body's sex; rather, sex is what culture makes when it genders my body" (Wilchins 1997 p 51). Stryker (1996) uses Butler's notion of the performative, arguing that although the body is less easily mobilised

it is, like clothing, sex roles and so on, performatively constituted. She argues that it is necessary to examine the role of the visible surface of the body when using Butler's (1993) concept of materialisation (the discursive production of the corporeal subject). Transsexuals manifest identity through the appearance of the body, which can be 'read' in order to deconstruct identity, and they obtain objective existence for the corporeal self through manipulation of the flesh. Unconscious desires are seen as externalising themselves and framing the subject via the medium of the body. In addition some post-structuralist transgender theorists discuss the concept of 'inside and outside'. For example Kate More argued that third sex is not a real internal identity but is potentially a strong identity from the outside (socially).

The body as a commodity

For Stryker (1996) and Cameron et al (1996), transsexual bodies are the realisation of the body as image and commodity, and transsexuality is one practice among others which offers the means for reconfiguring subjectivity. Thus, "sex reassignment surgery could be seen as just another form of body modification along with piercing, branding and tattooing" (Nataf 1996 p. 55). In this context, transgender is seen as a means of self-expression. This can be linked with Foucaults' extension of aesthetics: art enables subjective transformation and the reinvented body can be a work of art with emancipatory potential in its dislocation of dominant discourses (Venn 1997). Such a model is echoed in the writings of feminists such as Lorraine (1993), who sees aesthetic activity as serving to integrate the individual and society. I discussed body modification as a form of self-expression with Zach Nataf:

I: Oh right. Well, I said something about ... now don't quote me on this because I can't remember exactly what Stryker and Cameron were saying, but the idea was transgender as, changing body as a performance.

Zach: Yeah, okay. ... I mean, this is ... it opens up a lot of, the idea is the freedom to do with your body whatever you want to do, kind of thing and the fact that people have been having plastic surgery for all sorts of reasons.

I: Sure.

Zach: Cosmetically. All sorts of kinds of plastic surgery for cosmetic reasons for years and as long as you have the money, you can do it.

I: *Yeah.*

Zach: I mean, Orlan has sort of changed that, in that she's changing her body as artistic expressions, you know, as a sort of social I don't know ... confrontation about what is aesthetic and what is real

Technologised bodies

Transsexuality is seen by Stryker as the possible harbinger of future subjectivities and intersubjectivities, given current trends towards technologisation (1996). Along with cyborgs, cloning, and cybersubjectivity, it offers unprecedented opportunities for the reconfiguration of identity. It can be linked with hybridisation of ethnicity, achieved both physiologically and culturally (Anzaldua 1987) and via new information technologies (see Hammonds 2000). Technological advancements serve to extend the possibilities for modification, including not just surgery, but also genetic engineering (Nataf 1996). Some transgender theorists, for example Stone (1991) and Nataf (1996), discuss transgender in relation to cyborg identities (hybrids of human and machine). Nataf (1996) draws on notions of shifting, hybridised, monstrous bodies as envisaged by Haraway (1991). Nataf also discusses morphing. Morphing involves changing gender and species changing when in internet virtual reality and allows enormous amounts of freedom to experiment with identity, including the creation of new gender categories and the disruption of traditional identities (see for example McRae 1996, Wakeford 2000). As Stryker notes, the delinking of sex and gender does not necessarily mean reconfiguration into male or female identities: new configurations are possible. Plant (2000) discusses notions of posthumanity and cyberpunk as linked with the destabilisation of patriarchy, as these include queer praxis and rebellion against all systems of morality. New technology, specifically the internet, enables the scrambling of genders, time/space location and the boundaries between 'real' and 'virtual'. All identities are seen as being constructed, and the notion of identity is resisted in favour of anarchic, ongoing process. It is important to point out that Plants' use

of queer theory and endorsement of reactionary politics can be criticised in the same way as Butler's queer theory, in other words it valorises transgression, may reinforce the categories it seeks to problematise, lacks an ethical base and erases peoples' experience of self especially where this is not deemed 'transgressive'. Critiques of queer theory are of course also relevant to the work of transgender theorists who draw on it.

The destabilisation of empiricism

Transgender, especially transsexuality, provides a challenge to the use of empirical reality as a basis for the construction of identities and epistemologies because that which we took for granted, the sexed body, can now be radically changed. As Weeks (1998) says, new technologies challenge the fixity of our sense of our bodies and subjectivity. Stryker (1996) argues that: "Transsexuality offers a dramatic instance of the temporal instability of the flesh. It sets embodiment in motion" (no page number), allowing creative change and the manifestation of subjectivity in time/space. Stryker likens transsexuality to the atomic bomb: both explode materiality as the basis of meaning. This heralds a crisis of epistemology, as empiricism is the basis of Western thought. It forms a crisis of narrative (see Haraway 1992) and can be linked with the transition into the postmodern condition (Stryker 1996).

The disruption of sex and gender

Stone (1991) discusses the way in which transsexuality offers a means for disrupting hegemonic discourses of gender and sex. Transsexuality acts as a literalising metaphor, displacing the symbolic order. As Shapiro (1991) argues, it makes the processes of gender explicit and exposes the way in which we are all 'passing' as sexed and gendered subjects. As Kate More said, transsexuals are tropes (metaphors), with difference from genetically sexed males and females but this difference hidden by signification: even passing transsexuals displace conventional understandings because they are not what they appear to be.

An important aspect of poststructuralist transgender theory is the delinking of sex and gender. This reinforces in some ways the poststructuralist feminist departure from 'sex as

given, gender as constructed' assumptions. However, it goes beyond the conceptual frameworks of poststructuralist feminists such as Butler (1990, 1993), who relies on the binary gender system as a basis for theorising at the same time as repudiating it. For transgender theorists following Stone (1991), the sex/gender link is seen as arbitrary, with some connection, but the links being constructed rather than innate. Cameron et al (1996) see transgender as potentially destabilising the links between sex and gender. As Stryker (1996) says, transsexuals defy the Western sex-gender equation by bringing subjective desire into manifestation through the body. There is a dislocation of the cultural positionings and discourses concerning sex and gender, for example someone with a vagina can identify with the position 'he'. As shown in the chapter on transgender and gender pluralism, this decoupling of sex and gender is amply evidenced in research findings, with people assuming gender identities in fluid or contradictory relationships with their biological attributes and with those who have had surgery changing not only their sex but also gender identities in varied ways. Stryker (1996) notes the importance of the shifting standpoints characteristic of transgender subjectivity.

A plurality of gender binaries

Another aspect of poststructuralist transgender theory draws on Butler's (1990) discussion of the way in which the categories 'man' and 'woman' currently subsume dissonant gender features. This is useful in building transgender theory beyond sexual dimorphism. If male and female categories are to be rejected, as some respondents (in particular Christie Elan Cane) suggest, dissonant gender features would be foregrounded rather than hidden, resulting perhaps in a wider spectrum of gender. Gender would be constituted by the play of signifiers freed from the body. This possibility echoes the multiple, fluid genders found in cyberspace. Gender would become a process rather than a noun, (see Ekins 1997) and identity would be produced via the Derridean processes of difference and deferral (Weedon 1994). Kate More discussed the need for differential signification as a basis for desire, with attraction constructed out of producing difference and denying knowledge of the self. This echoed Natafs' (1996) comment that, freed from the social imperative to 'do' gender, people might use gendering as a form of sexual expression rather than a set identity category (see the previous chapter). Nataf (1996) discusses the way in which, for some people, gender is only a tool of the erotic; allowing polarity as a basis for attraction and acting as a means of

communication without any essential basis. Dominant discourses portray female as passive, male as active (Fausto-Sterling 1993a). However, freed from their ties to particular sexes, these polarities would operate as a fluid form of communication.

What would happen if transgender became the norm? Findings suggest that a more finely grained system of polarities would emerge, based on similarity or difference (Roz Kaveney) or active/passive attributes (Simon Dessloch). This is echoed in the literature, where sexual preference and butch/femme (Bornstein 1994, Bercowitz 1995) are suggested as possible gender polarities. For example Holmes (1998), who is an intersex person married to an MTF transsexual, explains their relationship in terms of the butch/femme dynamic. Hamish Macdonald and I discussed the play of binaries:

I: Its like you said earlier about there being a number of dualities, because a faggot playing a butch bloke is a polarity.

Hamish: Its because it ain't what he is meant to be.

I: Yes its like a butch dyke playing a sissy girl.

Hamish: Or a femme doing drag king. Yes its complicated for me, finding language to kind of pull stuff together

Gender beyond duality

Poststructuralist transgender authors, in particular Stone (1991), Bornstein (1994) and Cameron et al (1996) describe transsexuality as a place outside of duality. This can be linked with some discourses within queer theory, for example Seidman (1993) discusses queer celebration of liminality, or the spaces between or outside of structures of gender and sexual orientation. It is also found among some feminist theorists, for example Wittig (1992) argues that 'a new personal and subjective definition for all humankind can only be found beyond the categories of sex' (p. 109). Discourses concerning liminality are becoming increasingly common among transgender people, for example Jennifer Miller, a bearded woman and a performer, says "I live in a very liminal place. 'Liminal' means an

'in-between' place' (Feinberg 1996). Interestingly, once named, liminality becomes a space which transgender people can inhabit (see Prosser 1998). As Whittle (1998) says, quoting Stone, transsexuals' counter-discourse needs to come from outside of the binaries of gender. This corresponds with the arguments of De Lauretis (in Alcoff 1985): the discursive production of the self means that the only way to understand this is from outside. The relationship between binary gender and the space outside of it is discussed by Kate More:

"I think that we need to somehow manage language to break down that bipolar opposition and recognise that actually both of these, FTM and MTF are products of desire. The question all of this asks is, is the transition fixable, is there a third space or sex. And yes, this'll surprise you! Because I think the subject's important, I'm going to say I think there is a third sex position. As I said, I tested out androgyny and it failed because people always attributed me to one sex or another. So third sex isn't a social, a signifying possibility, in the here and now. However I think that there's a 'third sex' moment, not so obvious with FTMs, but MTFs usually have it. And it has to do with looking or being performatively incomplete...but about third sex, I think that there's a third sex moment of ambivalence outside of categorisation, but produced by the logic of it"

The notion of a moment or space outside of categorisation provokes a contradiction: How is it possible to understand the constructed self from within that self? This contradiction is echoed in the findings. Kate More noted that it is possible to argue that transsexuals are the only people who know what male and female are, because they know they are not simply male or female. However, the issue of whether it is possible to exist outside of gender remains contentious. Postmodernist feminists such as Flax (1990) discuss the way in which we are embedded in our current social positions, making the search for a point outside of these very problematic and the search for an absolute truth impossible.

Continuum and spectrum models of gender

Although continuum models of gender are not necessarily poststructuralist, I will discuss gender and sex as continuums here because poststructuralism contributes usefully to

development of theory in this area, in particular by deconstructing sex and gender binaries and by allowing the delinking of sex and gender. Some of the contributors to my research discussed sex and gender as continuums. As Ann Goodley said:

Ann: I see the main problems being that society and indeed children, in other words all of us, are programmed to only see in black and white, in monochrome. A concept I actually see as a rainbow, or many shades of grey, I prefer to see it as a rainbow, that's more positive, the grey areas are actually the technicolor colours between black and white. I believe that there are elements of all the colours in everybody, but that people knee-jerk into one column or the other quite often in Western patriarchal society. And I think that's damaging.

I: I'd like to ask a bit further into that if that's OK

Ann: Surely

I: Um, it sounds as if you're saying that it's not a rigidly gendered binary system?

Ann: No I'm certain this division isn't on behavioural, biological or spiritual levels, if there is such a thing, but on all levels. In terms of personal identity it's one of the ways in which each of us defines ourselves and is defined by other people that forms a portion of a very complex mosaic that makes a person

Some of the literature supports the spectrum model of gender. Tauchert (1998) suggests that the binary system is imposed on this continuum and rigidly policed in order to maintain differentiation. Contributors discuss this further. Kate More suggested that 'Gender is a strategy to create an identity out of a continuum of sex, so what we could be doing is producing a bipolar opposite to get an identity and become coherent human beings'. For Nataf (1996) this means that the third sex is not seen as a set category but rather a space, which is differentiated according to cultural context. In poststructuralist terms then, the middle space can be constructed as socially viable through signification in the same way that 'male' and 'female' are. This does not need to disrupt the existence of male and female as identities; it simply provides a wider spectrum. If a continuum model

was criticised for replication of the binary system (as the two extremes are male and female) a model utilising a spectrum of sexes and genders could be used instead. This would be substantiated by findings in Feinbergs' (1996) work, where one contributor describes sexes as a spectrum.

Hermaphroditic identities can be conceptualised as part of the sex and gender continuums or spectrums using the literature. Rothblatt (1995) discusses what she terms 'gender continuum theory'; a shift away from bipolar sex/gender categories towards a multiplicity of genders. For Tauchert (1998), hermaphroditic identities are seen as the archetype within which male and female fit as lesser aspects of a whole. Phaedra Kelly discussed androgyne envy, and I have noticed this phenomenon among some non transgender-identified people. It seems that the possibility of containing both sexes within one person is desirable both in terms of individual identity and as an erotic possibility. Perhaps this could be likened to Freuds' concept of polymorphous perversity; the undifferentiated bisexual/pansexual drive, (see Firestone 1971), if this was adapted to be non-homophobic and extended to include physiological sex as well as sexual orientation. Blocking of the possibility of a sex and gender continuum necessitates the exclusion of hermaphroditism and intersex as possibilities on both individual and social levels. I would therefore argue that the widest, hence most theoretically and politically useful, model of gender possibilities is that provided by Tauchert:

'It is a model which takes the intersexed subject as the normative human subject, to which all embodied subjects conform to some degree. Applying this model would engender a cultural model of embodied subjectivity that excludes no embodied subject from cultural normativity; that is, the model allows that nature does not make mistakes, but that gender is morphologically realised in more ways than our current binary dimorphic cultural frame allows us to recognise' (Tauchert 1998 p. 8)

The main concepts developed by poststructuralist transgender theory can be summarised as the following: sex and gender are socially constructed and processual, rather than fixed. Notions of naturalness and essentialism are rejected. The body and gender are separated from each other and are both considered to be mutable. The body is seen as a commodity, and it is possible to modify it using technology. New technology presents a range of

gender options, including surgery, hormones, cybergenders and genetic engineering. There is a possibility of further developing a gender continuum or spectrum, including the development of a more finely grained system of gender polarities. It may be possible to move beyond sex and gender categorisation, but this is problematic, given our embodied identities. These changes are seen by some as challenging the empirical basis of our reality.

The Critique of Poststructuralist Transgender theory

The developing poststructuralist transgender theory raises a number of issues. Before proceeding with an examination of these, I would like to note the theorists I have labelled 'poststructuralist' do show awareness of issues concerning social structure and corporeality. I have dubbed them poststructuralist as they utilise poststructuralist theory most heavily, and in some cases do not conceptualise the problems inherent in poststructuralism, although awareness of these is evident in their writings.

I start the section by critiquing the transgender poststructuralist and postmodernist erasure of the body and emphasis on technologisation. I discuss the need for gender categories on a social level before moving on to examine the challenge to the decentered, constructed self which transgender poses. I then discuss identity politics and social structure.

The erasure of the body and empirical reality

Stryker (1996) notes poststructuralism and postmodernism's tendencies towards erasure of the body. However, Butler's work fails to deal with transsexuals' experience of sexed embodiment (Prosser 1998) and it seems that some postmodernist transgender authors, such as Bornstein (1994, 1998) do not fully explore this either. Research findings underline the importance of physicality. Research participants discussed the varied ways in which the body affects and limits their expression of gender identity in a way which does not support the notion of the body as a socially constructed, fictitious thing. For example, participants mentioned the limits of surgery and the high rates of complications, the effects of hormones and the impact of stature and appearance on 'passing'. Transgender also involves factors such as aging, as discussed by Hamish:

'Physically I am changing because of my age, and I am physically changing in ways which I thought would result in one set of reactions from the world outside, which seem to be resulting in another. I thought that as I aged, the female, biologically female person changes in skin, changes in body fat you know, getting bigger, I thought that my passing would be harder, now what I have actually found out and experienced is that I pass more now. Now I don't know what I am passing as, I know that I used to pass as a young boy, as a teenage boy, Now I don't know whether I am passing as an older young man, but I am passing more and getting less people saying "Oh sorry ma'am" Now there could be several factors to that, one that I could be showing more confidence in myself in terms of not giving a damn about how people really do perceive me. My not being self-conscious about my masculinity, It could be a reflection of the world giving less of a damn, but I don't think the world has moved on that much in the last few years. I don't know, I am probably in a state of transition in terms of my age physically, which does impinge upon my age emotionally' (Hamish Macdonald)

Biological accounts of transgender are available, for example Le Vay (1993) argues that transsexuality indicates the existence of some biological factors. The possibility of a biological factor in transsexuality is mentioned by some contributors. For example Salmacis and Kate N' Ha Ysabet both discussed gender in terms of 'bodymaps' (the nervous system) and Kate More mentioned the Swaab study (Zhou, Hofman, Gooren and Swaab 1995) which provides evidence for biological determinism. Kate More generally rejected empiricist accounts, but did refer to biology on some occasions, for example she discussed the impact of hormones on transsexuals' transitions: "once people have had testosterone jabs they change so dramatically".

Biological accounts of gender are very problematic. Biological determinism is rejected by most second wave feminists, who have analysed the way in which biology has been used to justify unequal sex roles (Wajcman 1991) and for whom constructionism is crucial. However, biologicistic arguments can in fact be used in favour of gender diversity. Rothblatt (1994) and Bornstein (1994) both discuss the absence of empirical evidence for absolute male/female differences, while Kessler (1998) documents the wide range of intersex

conditions occurring naturally among the population. This challenges both dominant, two-gendered biological determinism and feminist discourse. Genetic anomalies demand a broader view of sex. "What is called for here is to develop an account of sexual differentiation which permits the existence of intermediate states" (p. 371). Biological arguments for gender diversity and equality are mirrored in the wider literature, for example Hrdy (1981) uses empiricist methods to argue for female equality.

The use of biological accounts and empiricism conflicts with the anti-empiricism of authors such as Stone (1991) and Stryker (1996). Stryker's discussion of transgender as disrupting 'reality' fits in with broader narratives concerning the crisis of rationality and subjectivity which is associated with poststructuralism. However, as Braidotti (1991) argues, this crisis can be seen simply as an expression of the will to carry on exploring new theoretical ground, rather than a final position.

The technologisation of the body

Another, linked, area of problems with the emergent transgender theory concerns the technologisation of the body. Critiques of technology include that by Baudrillard (1994), who argues that transsexuality fetishises the body. The body thus altered becomes assumed as the locus of identity. This reinforces the empiricism which Stryker sees disputed by transsexuality, in other words, instead of technologisation of the body leading to a shift away from people basing their identities on the body and the material world, it increases the focus on these. The notion of technology extending a postmodern aesthetics of the body is also problematic: postmodern aesthetics can be seen as masculinist (Newman 1993) because historically, aesthetics have been based on male experience and a binary system.

There are various approaches to theorising technology and the body. Technology can be seen as evolutionary: increasing our capacities (Davis-Floyd and Dumit 1996). Such thought is developed by the early second wave feminist writer Firestone (1971), who sees the source of women's oppression as based on biological differences and advocates extra-uterine technology to free women from the burden of motherhood. An example of evolutionary technology is the use of new reproductive technologies to support diverse

types of family, including lesbian and gay families (Klein 1984). Alternatively, technologisation can be seen as regressive. This stance is linked with the critique of masculinist science, which can be traced back to the 1970s (Wajcman 1991). Thus for example Wajcman describes debates concerning the masculine domination of science and technology, while Farquar (1996) discusses feminist ideas of reproductive technologies as harmful. Feminists after Firestone (1971), such as Hamner (1985) and Meis (1987) see reproductive technologies as a form of patriarchal domination and exploitation of women, removing their unique source of power (Wajcman 1996). This is linked by Farquar (1996) with right wing fundamentalism: both assume a 'naturalness' about reproduction and the categories of female and male and both fear the loss of traditional forms of motherhood.

An alternative interpretation of new technology involves rejection of both utopian and dystopian models and interprets the possibilities presented by technology as allowing both emancipatory development and horrific abuse (Davis-Floyd and Dumit 1998). This type of analysis is developed by feminists such as Sawicki (1993). Following Foucault, Sawicki suggests that new reproductive technologies form the most recent wave of disciplinary technologies, both controlling subjects and creating new sites of resistance. Thus, for example, Adam (2000) argues that cybertechnology does not necessarily expand the control of elite groups, but can enable connection of, for example, groups of women. Harding (1991) argues that science is political, not value free and that science contains both progressive and regressive tendencies.

Analysis of technoscience can be expanded by arguments for a science based on women's values, including intuition, harmonisation with nature and compassion as opposed to the domination and control of women and nature which typifies masculinist science (Wajcman 1991). The notion of 'women's values' is problematic, given the poststructuralist and transgender deconstruction of 'woman', but I feel that the need for these values remains. I borrow from Coppock, Haydon and Richters' (1995) argument that the validity of technology depends on whether it helps women. Here the issue is whether it helps all people, and the wider environment, without harm to others. There is a danger of medicine eclipsing other solutions (Sawicki 1993), and of technological development being located in unequal social and material relations (Wajcman 1991). For example, while genetic engineering may widen gender possibilities, the risk is that this will serve to accentuate

existing inequalities. Technology is already being abused, for instance in the uses of amniocentesis to pre-select and abort female foetuses in India, while drugs such as Depo-Provera have been disproportionately used with women of colour (Wajcman 1991). There is thus a need to examine the social structures and norms underlying technological development in relation to transgender. 'Science leaves itself open to manipulation by regressive social forces to the extent that its institutions do not acknowledge and grapple with these contradictory internal features' (Harding 1991 p 308). Borrowing from Sawicki (1993), the issue is how to devise progressive struggles over definitions of needs and the ways these are met.

Interpretations of technology vary among transgender people. Stryker (1996) discusses the desire for power over the material world as precipitating transgender and the destabilisation of binaries. This desire for power could easily be interpreted as hegemonic technoscientific discourse. Not only does it typify the dominating position found in masculinist science, but it also indicates a desire for transcendence which I feel could lead to denial of the lived experience of ordinary people, including of course transgender people. Such a stance needs, I argue, to be tempered with a healthy dose of ethics and social awareness. This is present in the writing of some transgender people, for example the work of Feinberg (1996). What is interesting is that for transgender people the use of technology is spread across sexes and is leading to unexpected forms of gender and sex identity. For example, Wilchins (1997) documents the use of surgery by one person to retain the head of their penis as well as having a vagina created, while, as noted above, contributor Christie Elan Cane has used surgery to become androgynous. Feminist arguments about technologisation as a feature simply of male power collapse in the face of this multiplicity of sexes. However, concerns about technologisation and power remain. As Hill (1996) notes, the possibilities presented by technologisation present a paradox: although technology springs from militarism and capitalism, it provides transformative possibilities which need to be shaped according to ethics.

Gender categorisation

A further criticism of poststructuralist transgender theory concerns the need on a social level for gender categorisation as a means of communication. Several authors discuss the

possibility of eliminating gender (Lorber 1994, Connell 1986, Stacey 1999). Haraway (1992) for example argues that feminism must resist male/female categorisation and still erupt in 'powerful new tropes'. Some of the research contributors explored and in some cases advocated 'a world without gender'. However findings also indicate the use of gender signifiers to communicate gender as being crucial to transgender people. For example Penny Gainsborough discussed the importance of successful gender communication for her social position.

One research finding concerning categorisation relates to the importance of linguistic categories for non-male and female identification. It is hard to see what could be beyond linguistic structures, as reference to these provides a means of interpreting experience and constructing narratives. Bornstein (Day 1996) describes a feeling of being 'splattered' or 'floating' when gender duality goes. I personally experienced this when confronted by people whose sex I could not ascertain, or whose sex and gender were juxtaposed. Steven Whittle (1998c) described the challenge of theory building when the language is simply not there. For me, it was not just a case of a lack of pronouns, it was that a whole area of cognitive patterning was absent. The part of the psyche that recognises intersex, transsexual and other transgender identities was barely developed. Given the lack of discourse, Bornstein's 'floating/splattered' space was one of direct experience: it was not possible to cognitively organise my perceptions in the usual manner and I was forced at times to experience being with transgender people directly without much of the discursive patterning which usually occurs during social interaction. Bornstein (Day 1996) interprets such experience as non-pathological altered states of consciousness.

Hamish suggested that the solutions to confusions about transgender identity lie perhaps in a return to childlike innocence and non-intellectualisation of gender. He discussed the reaction of his small niece to his transing. Up to the age of about three, his niece referred to Hamish as a 'woman' and a 'he' in the same sentence. This ceased as the grip of the social system hardened. This finding seems to support the view that when someone has non-intellectual direct experience of non-duality, gender categories cease to have relevance. However, I argue that on a social level we do need categories in order to relate, and, like King (1993), that categories are real even if they are constructed. As Shapiro (1991) says, transgender reveals the extent to which gender is constructed but also the way

in which gender categories form a crucial framework for our existence. This is echoed in feminist literature, for example Rubin (1992) discusses the importance of identity categorisation for organising at individual and social levels. Rubin usefully points out that these categories however are permeable and that what is needed is tolerance of diverse means of categorisation. I feel that the creation and adoption of new terms and gender categories is central for gender politics, particularly categories which will act to socially include intersex people, androgynes and other non-male/female people and which will support gender pluralism. As Kate More (1996a) says, binary structures are not integral to language. Third sex/gender and other categories, such as intersex and androgyne, need not therefore be doomed to remain forever outside of social acceptability. There are many forms of socially accepted, linguistically supported transgender cross-culturally and transhistorically (Feinberg 1996). This shows that it is not gender categories themselves that enable gender inequality, but rather the power structures to which they relate.

The essential self

Another criticism of poststructuralist transgender theory is that research findings in some cases indicate the possible existence of a core, or essential, self. Essentialism is defined by King (1993) as the "presumption of an underlying reality behind appearances" (p. 6). The notion of an essential self, which is present in many transgender narratives, conflicts with the work of poststructuralists such as Butler (1990, 1997), who see the self as entirely constructed (including the person's sense of agency). For example, Alex Whinnom described his experience of gender as innate and not linked to his upbringing, while Christie Elan Cane experienced an essential sense of gender which is neither male nor female. Similarly, James Green discussed his experience of having an essential self, which was more than his body, and noted that such experiences are common among people who suffer injury, for example severe paralysis. Contributor Pamela Summers strongly supported my arguments for an essential self when she read my research summary. These findings are supported in the literature. Transgender authors such as Cameron et al (1996) describe the experience of maintaining a personal identity despite shifts from one speaking position to another. I personally experience an essential self, which I used as a central point whilst deconstructing and reconstructing my identity. I argue that research findings suggest that for some people transgender demands a point of reference which is not

physical or social, in order for people to maintain their sense of self during sex and gender changes. The notion of self essentialism is however contentious within the transgender communities. Some people experience themselves as having no essential self, although it is important to point out that the concept of agency does seem to be crucial for all contributors.

Theorising the essential self is problematic within established theoretical frameworks. The notion of a soul was rejected from academic discourse during the Enlightenment, and both religious pre-enlightenment and psychoanalytic accounts of the self are liable to be sexist and homophobic (see for example Segals' (1994) critique of psychoanalysis). However, it may be possible to reform these discourses in a way which supports gender and sexual diversity. Discourses which can support gender diversity include psychosynthesis (Silvester 2000), which includes a transpersonal element and models a soul or sense of self which is constant and authentic, and different from the mutable and socially constructed persona (authenticity is defined by Weeks (1995a) as being true to the self). In addition, discourses which support the notion of an essential self can be developed from Symbolic Interactionism (the 'I' that reflects on the 'me') (Manis and Meltzer 1972), phenomenology (Rubin 1999) and some branches of feminism (Fuss 1989). Fuss discusses an essential self which can change and still remain a central point for the subject. Transgender authors Whittle (1998) and Rubin (1999) have begun to theorise the essential self. Whittle discusses the self as both subject to social construction and as a core which is essential and gendered. The core self is felt to be authentic, allowing a base for identity building and politics. Rubin utilises phenomenology to model an essential self, but sees the development of an essential self as ultimately being strategic rather than 'real'.

An extension of discussions about the essential self concerns the experience which some people have of an energetic 'body'. One contributor, a woman who does not identify as transgender, described experiences of subtle-energy gender-changing. For example she cultivated awareness of a penis, which she described as part of some types of shamanic practice. Another contributor, a female bodied transgender person, experienced energetic orgasm while using a strap-on dildo during penetrative sex. Authors such as Anand (1991) describes the importance of subtle energy fields in a wide range of different cultures and spiritual traditions. Notions of subtle energy fields are also present in some forms of

Western complementary medicine (see for example Gerber 1996). However, the implications of subtle energy for gender theory have not been explored. Another, related area which has not been theorised concerns the issue of reincarnation. One of the participants, Annie Cox, discussed transgender in relation to her belief in reincarnation and this is echoed in the literature (Bornstein 1994). Annie suggests that gender dysphoria occurs because people who have changed sex between lifetimes got 'stuck' between sexes. This conception could lend itself to pathologisation, but does potentially offer a new theoretical slant on gender. The notions of reincarnation and energy fields are particularly difficult to address within a Western empirical or a poststructuralist framework, but their existence within transgender peoples' narratives indicates that these issues warrant further investigation.

Other aspects of subjectivity, including the libido, are also left unresolved by a poststructuralist approach. The notion of an essentialised libido ties in well with the self-essentialism which many transgender people experience. The libido is important for transgender politics, given the erasure of sexuality in the dominant discourses concerning transgender, both within the transgender community (with the exception of authors such as Bornstein (1994, 1997), Wilchins (1997) and also the transvestite and fetish scenes) and in the juridico-medical system. Sex liberationism (Reich 1962 and Marcuse 1970) is unfashionable, given the current dominance of Foucault (1981) and poststructuralism within gender studies. However, sex liberationism is a powerful force which has fuelled queer and transgender politics.

It is probably impossible to prove the existence of an essential self from within the confines of embodied and socially constructed 'realities'. In addition, such notions are perhaps the precinct of personal belief systems, and a matter of personal choice. However, it can be argued that while Butler and other poststructuralists account for the psychic constitution of the self, they fail to satisfactorily explain notions of self-essentialism. It is not enough to dismiss these as false consciousness (see the chapter on methodology). It is also possible to argue that, as Sawicki (1991) says, poststructuralism provokes consciousness-raising and can thus be useful, but can also be damaging, and that this is linked with a failure by poststructuralists to address the essential self. This is because people who are going through major identity change need a strong sense of self, and the

idea that the self is completely constructed can be destructive to this. Therefore, whilst I do not argue for the definite 'reality' of an essential self I do argue that it should be included as a possible part of models of a gendered self.

Identity politics

There is another set of problems with poststructuralist transgender theory, which centre around the difficulties decentred subjectivities pose for identity politics and the absence of analysis of power at institutional and relational levels. Poststructuralist transgender theorists such as Halberstam (1994) envisage a cessation of identity politics, given the dissolution of fixed identities and the shift towards gender as a process. However, this is problematic. As Weeks (1995a) says, radical pluralism and progressive individualism rely on an autonomous, authentic subject and agency as crucial. Who is the agent or subject of a politics of subversion if identities are deconstructed? (Seidman 1993). Poststructuralism, in destabilising identities, can be seen to erode the basis of an emancipatory politics. Pamela Summers discusses the way we are bound by the structures that support us. "This is the problematic of not having a place to put the lever to move the world. We can't be outside the world, we are within it and this is what the world says". This finding is supported by feminists such as Modleski (1993), who argues that poststructuralism is the precinct of privileged intellectuals, and by transgender theorists:

"What is left to organise around if we don't use identities? While postmodernism has been largely unable and unwilling to apply itself to the nitty-gritty of social change, you and I don't have that luxury. We have a movement against gender oppression to mount" (Wilchins 1997 p. 85)

Butler would argue that poststructuralism, including the problematisation of identity, is necessary as a basis for an informed politics (see 1997). Deconstruction of bodies and identity is not to refuse those terms but rather to displace them from contexts where they are used oppressively (1992). Weeks (1998) suggests that a postmodern model of the self does not entail dissolution of the self, but rather, reflexive construction of the self. Nonetheless, I feel that the political use of poststructuralism must involve not just deconstruction but also the restructuring of identities and social structure. Thus, for

example, Pamela Summers noted the need to have a place of leverage for effecting social change as opposed to the decentered self, which is politically ineffectual. This line of argument is supported by the work of authors such as Richardson (1996), who argues that while postmodernism and poststructuralism may highlight the fluidity of identities, there is a need to ground this knowledge in material conditions, in other words, social change. Identities are understood to be constructed, but used strategically. For example, Hirshauer (in Hirshauer and Mol 1995), a hermaphrodite who identifies politically as a constructivist-feminist, sees sex as performed locally and as context-based rather than a characteristic of individuals. This provides a useful parallel with the work of Black feminists (Combahee River Collective's 'A Black Feminist Statement' in Alcoff 1988) where identity is taken as a locus of action.

Structural analysis

Following Weeks (1995), Siedman (1993) and Burkitt (1998), I argue that there are problems with poststructuralism as a political force. Poststructuralism is not in itself progressive; it needs to be tempered with ethics (see Weeks 1995) if it is to be politically efficacious. Seidman (1993) argues for a shift in debates concerning identity away from both poststructuralism and identity politics, towards a structural analysis. Burkitt (1998) provides a useful critique of Butlerian and semiotics driven poststructuralism. He argues that a socially and historically contextualised analysis of gender which deals with power relations is necessary. Debbie Weeks (1995) critiques the use of postmodernism in theorising ethnicity: postmodernist celebration of choice and difference fails to tackle inequalities concerning the availability of choice about identity for some people and not others and the commodification and appropriation of identities. Findings support this, providing evidence that there is concern to engage with social structures at all levels and to use postmodernism/poststructuralism only where it is useful in deconstructing inequalities. Zach Nataf discussed the importance of principles, including respecting diversity, in the face of the postmodern breakdowns in grand narrative. Pamela Summers argued that, given the impossibility of conducting politics outside of the very systems that oppress us, what is crucial is democratic debate. Pamela Summers and I discussed poststructuralism:

Pamela: It's a very disempowering view of the world. Again, it's very useful, to draw our attention to the fact that reality is a social construction. Very very helpful indeed, particularly in a society, particularly in UK society in 1998, where we've had, we're recovering from 20 years of a very particular truth theory which is essentially the production line scientific theory, which is then made potent by having financial value added to it, so that we see for example in education the whole of education has been reduced by defining people by what they know and defining what they have to know in order to be considered to be a successful person, right from the age of like 4 onwards, you know, and there are like all of these notions

I: Yeah, so it's kind of like it's useful in exposing the constructedness as a kind of consciousness raising thing?

Pamela: Yes

I: Is that what you're saying?

Pamela: Yes, yes it is. And the it's at that stage one can say 'yes that is true, things are constructed and how we see things is not as an absolute truth, you know, but as a construction'. So we can then move on and say 'so what construction would we like?'

I: Um (affirmative) Yeah. Which is incredibly, potentially incredibly empowering, isn't it?

Pamela: Yeah incredibly empowering. And for me then the next step after saying 'so what construction would we like?' the answer, 'well whatever it is which makes us happy, and which makes everyone happy' so that we're back to, like, the golden rule, and 'do as you would be done by' and that kind of thing

Conclusion

Poststructuralist accounts offer many useful insights into transgender, in particular the discursive production of sex and gender, and provides a means of beginning to theorise the areas beyond the structures of 'male' and 'female' via the notion of freeing of gender and sex signifiers from the body. However, it is clear from the research findings that there are a number of important problems with poststructuralist models of the body, technology, subjectivity, identity politics and social structure. Poststructuralist transgender theory lacks grounding in lived experience and analysis of social structural inequalities. It raises a paradox: 'reality' is constructed, but at the same time it is necessary for our existence. We cannot escape reference to the structures we seek to transcend, even though we can reconfigure our bodies, forms of sexual expression, language and social institutions. Therefore, active engagement with these structures in a politically progressive manner is necessary.

Given the problems associated with a poststructuralist analysis of transgender, it would seem that a wider basis for theorising this field is necessary. As noted above, in going beyond the constructions of sex and gender, transgender theory paradoxically illustrates the need for structure, at physiological, social and ideological levels. The project then becomes one of deconstructing that which is oppressive and reconstructing in ways which allow greater self-expression and self-determination. This appears to entail the dismantling of finite male-female categorisation and the construction of spectrum notions of gender as well as understandings concerning gender fluidity. The body becomes the location for the self (Ekins 1997), seen by Stryker (1996) to lie between an 'inside' self and discursive production and to be potentially mobile, multiple or strategic. It provides a site for reconfiguring experience through active engagement with the world (Radley 1995). There may be some level of 'self-essentialism', which can be understood from Psychosynthesis, Symbolic Interactionist and phenomenological perspectives. A 'weak constructionism', fusing a notions of an underlying orientation with an understanding that social meanings vary, can be developed (see King 1993), and gender and sexuality can be seen as the result of a combination of essentialist and constructed processes (see Feinberg 1996, Bullough and Bullough 1993). Political praxis occurs through processes of reflexivity, which enables political apprehension of the self as a process enabling social change (de Lauretis

1986). Agency is thus possible but the subject is also placed within certain discursive configurations (Alcoff 1988), which affect the way in which agency operates and possibilities for progressive political change. Transgender destabilises dominant discursive formations of sex and gender. This calls for expanded sex and gender possibilities and social change in order to support this.

Chapter 5: Transphobia, Subjectivity and Social Structure

In the previous chapter, I argued that postmodernist approaches to transgender fail to deal adequately with structural inequalities. This chapter aims to describe these inequalities, focusing on the operation of transphobia at subjective and institutional levels. It is linked with the following chapter, which addresses transphobic discourses. I define transphobia as, firstly, phobia (in other words, fear or aversion) (Simpson and Weiner 1989) concerning transgender and transgender people and secondly, discrimination-both overtly and institutionally-against transgender people and transgender behaviour. The term 'transphobia' is used in a similar way to 'homophobia', or the stigmatisation of homosexuals. Transphobia can be related to processes of social exclusion, defined as the shutting out from society, from privilege or from consideration ((Simpson and Weiner 1989). It is also linked with the experience of oppression, because it involves denial of equality (see Allen 1994). There are divergent definitions of oppression (Humm 1989); here I use the term to mean the exercise of power in an unjust, burdensome or repressive way (Simpson and Weiner 1999). This chapter and the following one also relate to issue concerning citizenship, a topic which will be addressed in the chapter on transgender politics. The chapter does not attempt to utilise labelling theory in analysing transgender, as this has been done by King (1986, 1993).

In this chapter I argue that transphobia can be traced to unconscious processes of identity formation, and to the social institutions with which these processes are linked. Transphobia has profound consequences for the lives of transgender people, who are denied many of the basic human rights which most others take for granted. Several transgender people (for example Steven Whittle (1998b) and Riki Ann Wilchins (1997)) have criticised the lack of documentation concerning the social marginalisation and oppression of transgender people. This may be linked with the more general tendency for social policy to erase issues concerning sexuality. Carabine (1996) discusses the way in which social policy developments tend to accept heterosexuality as normal and thus reinforce it, whilst constructing anything else as abnormal. Sexuality is constituted by social policy, for

example legislation such as Clause 28, as well as through implicit assumptions and behaviours. Carabine notes that social policy is also a site of contestation concerning sexuality, for example the lesbian and gay reclaiming of gender. Her understanding of sexuality and social policy can be applied to transgender, as the processes are similar and transphobia is intrinsically linked with homophobia (see the chapter on transphobic discourses).

The questions addressed in this chapter are:

- what are the subjective processes underlying transphobia?
- how does transphobia operate at an institutional level?

I would like to point out the difficulties with describing transsexual people as being oppressed by transphobia (which were flagged up by one of the contributors to the research): not all transgender people experience this. In particular, transgender people who adopt alternative lifestyles or who identify as being members of a subculture may take pride in difference and not experience oppression. One of the issues is that of treating transgender people as a group, as the experiences of transsexuals and transvestites, intersex people and androgynes are very varied. Another issue is the problem of discussions of transgender exclusion promoting victim mentality, while a further issue concerns the further marginalisation of transgender people through the naming of them as particularly oppressed. We are all, to a greater or lesser degree, subject to oppressive, as well as liberatory, discourses and structures in diverse and interlocking ways, and I would like to set the discussion within the context of wider class, 'race', ability, age, sexual and gender inequalities. Clearly these oppressive forces affect transgender people, for example Zach Nataf notes that racism affects the transgender communities in similar ways to other groups. My aim in this chapter is to explicate the processes of transphobia so that it can be challenged and changed: once greater equality is achieved discussion of oppression will lose relevance.

Transphobia operates at micro and macro levels in a number ways and contexts. I will begin by examining the way in which transphobia is currently constructed at the individual

level and how this relates to transgender. The chapter will then address the way transphobia operates in different social contexts, starting with those institutions and forces which seem most crucial to the exclusion of transgender people. I pay particular attention to medicine, as the findings emphasise the importance of this, especially for transsexuals and intersex people. I conclude the chapter by exploring transphobia in certain minority groups.

Identity and Social Exclusion

The self is a crucial locus for transphobia. I will draw on the work of Sibley (1995), who develops an analysis of the way in which oppressive practices are located in the psycho-social development of subjectivity, in order to develop understanding of the subjective processes behind transphobia. These include fear of ambiguity and difference, as well as anxiety concerning people whose boundaries are fluid or more expanded than mainstream individuals.

Sibley utilises postmodernist and psychoanalytic accounts of the self in developing an account of exclusion. He focuses on 'opaque' types of exclusion: those which are taken for granted and thus conceal social control and structures of inequality. These forms of exclusion hide the experience of marginalised groups and privilege the standpoint of white, usually male, heterosexual, able-bodied Westerners. Sibley applies analysis of the self and social exclusion to spatial marginalisation; I apply his analysis to gendered exclusion.

Sibley uses psychoanalysis, especially object relations theory, to analyse the way in which certain types of difference trigger anxiety and the exclusion of those seen as different. Following Klein and Kristeva, he notes that infant development relies on the erection of boundaries between the self and others, and the projection of undesirable attributes, particularly dirt, disease, sexuality and disorder, onto others in order to safeguard the sense of self. The development of the self involves the construction of 'good' and 'bad' objects: we disown, stigmatise and disassociate ourselves from 'bad' objects.

According to Sibley, the construction of certain social groups as disorderly and transgressive legitimises persecution of people in these groups. It is linked with social

distancing and the creation of images and stereotypes which signify low status, for example in the cases of sexual minorities, homeless people, minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities. Socially excluded groups are constructed as 'different' by the dominant culture, which defines them via their bodies, constructs their bodies as undesirable, ugly or sick, and attempts to locate them 'elsewhere' (for example the placing of people with mental disabilities in institutions). Thus, the creation of boundaries which occurs at a psychic level is mirrored in the development of social boundaries, which are experienced as acutely painful by those who are excluded, but are rendered invisible to the included.

Sibley's analysis is relevant to transgender people, who are socially constructed as 'other' and stigmatised. Many transgender people are physically different, may have had or be having surgery, and may or may not pass as men and women. In addition to stigmatisation on the basis of physiology, many transgender people face discrimination because they belong to minority sexual groups, or in the case of some people, especially transvestites, their transgender is linked with marginalised forms of sexual expression. Furthermore, findings show that some transgender people experience depression, largely due to the exclusion which they face, and this further contributes to their marginalisation.

Ambiguity as a basis for exclusion is central to processes of transphobia. Transgender involves ambiguity and the blurring of boundaries, including one which is fundamental to Western society: the boundary between male and female. Sibley argues that social categorisation is not inevitable, but that most societies exhibit a need for discrete categorisation. Problems occur when categories are mixed or ambiguous. This creates anxiety and attempts to exclude that which is ambiguous. The self is paradoxically constructed in relation to this ambiguity, which continues to be present:

"(Hovering) at the borders of the subject's identity, threatening apparent unities and stabilities with disruption and possible dissolution" (Sibley 1995 pp. 80-103).

People in Western societies are conditioned to believe that there are only two genders, with no ambiguity, and automatically assign everyone they meet as 'male' or 'female'. When someone does not fit these categories, they are confused, because as Kate N' Ha Ysabet explained, it challenges their gender assumptions. Literature substantiates the view that the

disruption of rigid male/female categories is threatening for people (for example Anon c 1998). People's difficulties with gender ambiguity and non-male/female identities were evident during the research. For example, at a gender clinic which I visited, androgynes were described as problematic because of the social discomfort they provoke. I also noticed people attempting to fit androgynes into male or female categories, for instance one of my respondents describes an androgyne as 'she' because this person used to be a woman and has a female sounding voice. The need to categorise seems to be very fundamental to the way humans function as well as being entrenched in linguistic structures. MKP described the human inability to see gender as other than a rigid binary: people are read as either male or female.

Transphobia, and the exclusion of that which seems ambiguous and 'threatening' is socially reproduced via culture and conditioning. Kate N' Ha Ysabet used the metaphor of a 'virus' to describe this process, which she saw as socially transmitted:

Kate: What happens is that as actually, it's all about power and about safety and one of the things about people going , saying, people in terms of, the people going 'I feel unsafe about gender, so I'm claiming you to fit my gender assumptions' Remember on the tape I was talking, about expectations and about assumptions and hope and about the differences and implied barriers on expectations and things?

I: Yeah

Kate: And that was, to recap, was people saying 'I'm unsafe, so I expect you to reach my expectations so that I feel safe'

I: So do you think that that's where a lot of the pressure around gender performativity comes in?

Kate: Yes. It's um a virus, being passed down the generations. It's called patterns in counselling, it's called 'memes' by Dawkins, it's called all sorts of things. But basically the virus is passed down the generations, whereby each generation abuses their children into fitting, making themselves feel safe and beating them to make

themselves feel safe. And you get, and then because, if you keep going, that happens with parents and children in society. I define, I'm a man and you're a woman, OK?

I: OK

Kate: I know that I'm a man because you're a woman, right. Because the diff, the more masculine you become the less masculine I feel. I define my masculinity in relationship to you. So if women start acting like a bloke men feel really insecure, because, how can they prove that they're still men?

Another issue which may provoke fear in people is the way in which transgender people can experience, or have experienced, both sides of the gender divide. This relates to Sibley's arguments about categorisation, because some transgender people are less rigidly categorised than mainstream individuals and this can be seen to trigger fears, for example, as shown above, the fear of boundary dissolution. In addition, transgender is linked to power issues. For example, Salmacis said that people find hermaphroditism very threatening because they think a hermaphrodite knows something that 'normals' don't. This was substantiated by Phaedra Kelly, who said:

"Well there is androgyny envy throughout the world, there always has been. They call it 'penis envy' and then they decide that is unequal so they call it 'vaginal envy' or something like this. Finally we are coming down to realise, I think that the premise of one of my books that never got published was that there is androgyny envy, everybody wants a holiday in someone else's body and the one of the complementary gender always looks best. The other man's grass is greener, except it ain't"

In addition, transgender provokes anxiety because of cultural fears concerning sexuality, disease or 'abnormality' and ambiguity. This can be illustrated by examining the way the medical establishment controls intersex and non-stereotypical forms of transgender (see below). It would be naive to assume that medics are exempt from the fears that affect the rest of us. Dated but telling evidence of subjective bias comes from Rosario (1996), who

discusses Richard Green's (1967) observation that (mostly male) clinicians are 'paralysed by emotionalism' when confronted with MTF transsexuals because of their own castration anxieties. Anecdotal evidence suggests that mental health practitioners find transgender individuals among the hardest people to deal with, because of the issues that they provoke. This may be one of the main reasons why there is a dearth of provision of counselling and support for transgender people. The importance of the subjectivity of mental health service providers is recognised in the therapeutic world, where therapists and counsellors are required to undergo many hours of therapy themselves before offering services to others. However, in the case of transgender the dominant theoretical models themselves are transphobic, leaving practitioners without a map to guide them through their own learning process. Thus, the processes of transphobia at the level of individual practitioners and the discipline as a whole impacts on the construction of transgender by the medical profession, the provision of care to transgender people and wider social norms concerning gender.

Analysis drawing on poststructuralism (as developed in the previous chapter) provides a further means of understanding the exclusion of transgender people. Seeing gender as constructed does free us from being bound by rigidly categorising gender systems. However, this also causes profound discomfort, as it exposes the constructedness and fluidity of our existence. As Due (1995) says, most of us would prefer not to have this knowledge; it is too threatening to our limited identities. In addition, findings suggest that the containment of conflicting sets of discourses within an individual's psyche may provoke anxiety. Discomfort concerning the expansion of awareness which transgender provokes is relieved by the realisation that gender constructions are necessary and that an expanded awareness and possibilities concerning gender can be based on an ethical, agency-based principles. Poststructuralists such as Butler (1990, 1993, 1997) do not argue for the dissolution of gender altogether, rather for increased reflexivity, or self-awareness, concerning the ways it is constructed. Borrowing from Weeks (1995a) it is possible to argue that an ethical framework is crucial given the constructedness of human experience: old guidelines, based on seemingly 'natural' categories, are dissolving and the only alternative is an ethics and politics of equality, the right to self-determination, non-harm and caring for others. In addition to allowing for gender diversity and equality, such an ethics enables people to choose to an extent how aware they are of the constructedness of gender. People may choose to adhere rigidly to traditional norms concerning gender in

terms of their own identity and beliefs. This only becomes a problem when it is imposed in a normative, oppressive way on others who are different. Likewise, the imposition of expanded, fluid gender categories on people would be oppressive if this did not include set, 'stereotypical' identities as valid choices.

Transphobia and Social Structure

Transphobia is prevalent in a wide variety of social contexts. Here I will focus on social policy and social structure. Here, I use the definition of structure developed by traditional sociologists: social institutions (see Layder 1994), but I also include language and some other aspects of culture. Research findings indicate that both institutions and cultural processes are important to discussions concerning transphobia.

The most important institutions in relation to transphobia will be described, starting with those that appear to be the most influential. Language and the bureaucratic structures which are based on it are central to processes of transphobia. Economic exclusion is another important factor. Violence and exclusion from certain social spaces is crucial, as are the legislative and medical structures which underpin the western construction of gender. Other contexts where transgender people experience transphobia include relationships, the family and education as well as some other minority groups.

Language and Bureaucracy

English and many other languages automatically erase transgender, as they have no non-male or non-female prefixes or titles and no currently acceptable nouns for people of fluid or non-male or non-female gender. Gender categorisations in language create transgender people as 'other', preventing them from having the option of exploring and living middle ground identities or, as Alice Purnell says, from fitting into the gender identity they feel they are if they do not pass. This is especially apparent in the stigmatising use of 'it' for gender-indeterminate people, which objectifies and infantilises the person in a transphobic way. Both Zach Nataf and Christie Elan Cane, as well as several other contributors, see the lack of language for transgender identities is a major problem. It is difficult to discuss

alternatives to male and female when there are no words. I have attempted to counter this by the use of pronouns 'hir' (him/her) and 'ze' (she/he), as discussed in the introduction.

Attitudes to linguistic categorisation varied amongst contributors. Salmacis saw the categorisation of gender through language itself as causing the oppression of transgender people:

I: Can you say a bit about what you think about gender categorisation?

Salmacis: Yeah, I call it heterofascism. Gender categorisation can be best described as a large machine with lots of pins that dig into the sense of self and tear the mind to pieces. And in my situation, having been 'surgically treated' as a child, to me I see it as a more malicious act than most people in an {intersexed?} condition would. I see a lot of malice behind it.

I: Can you explain a bit more about that?

Salmacis: This desperate element on the part of normals, that's men and women in an absolute anatomical sense, to try and define people almost exclusively against their will, and if they do fit that category, and if they are comfortable with that category, to make them either starve to death or to stuff themselves up with steroids, in order to conform even further

The lack of language for non-male and non-female states can be seen as part of the entrenched cultural resistance to non-male and non-female identities which Chase (1998) describes and which has been noted as crucial by Kessler (1998). Oppression and exclusion occurs via erasure: the complete denial by men and women of the existence of people of other genders, which means that these people and processes are rendered socially non-existent. Some authors, in particular Rothblatt (1994) argue that it is categorisation itself which creates oppression, and that this is linked with heteropatriarchal forces particularly male desire for control over female reproductive processes. However, as shown in the previous chapter, systems of categorisation are necessary for social and identity functioning. Other authors, such as Feinberg (1996) discuss the creation of third sex

pronouns, but these have yet to be adopted within wider society and, as noted above, the possibility of such change is contentious even within the transgender communities.

Bureaucracy is another major area where discrimination against transgender people is evident. This is clearly linked with the linguistic erasure of transgender, as shown by this quote:

So what happens if we get rid of gender, completely? You cannot tell the differences between genders. Therefore how can you discriminate against people if you don't know what gender they are? So therefore it all disappears. For example if you removed sex information off birth certificates, or sex information off anything, all the forms have male/female, male/female. They don't ask what your race is. They might put it on a monitoring form, but if you remove it all completely. OK you can do it with weight and you can do it with body shape but ultimately it come down to 'well I think you're a man' or 'I think you're a..' And it really exposes the xenophobia (Kate N' Ha Ysabet)

Christie Elan Cane described the difficulties ze had had with hir passport and with all other official forms, which demand categorisation as male or female. Ze is refused access to vital services unless ze compromises and accepts categorisation as a woman. These findings are echoed by Zoltar, another androgyne, whose name 'panicked the DSS computer' when ze refused to accept Ms/Mr as a title (Wheelwright 1995).

Economic Exclusion

Employment patterns vary widely among transgender people, with various instances of supportive or tolerant employers reported in the press (for example, Pink Paper 2000). However, economic exclusion is an issue for many transgender people. Unemployment is a major problem, particularly for transsexuals, intersexuals and androgynes, many of whom subsist on disability or other benefits because they are unable to find work. In 1989, 60-80% of transiting transsexuals were unemployed (European Parliament Session Document 1989-90). According to Alex Whinnom, job loss for anyone who comes out as transsexual is very likely. Many of the contributors have faced sackings and job discrimination

because of their gender status. For example Christie Elan Cane lost hir job and cannot now get a job because of hir gender status. Zach Nataf argued that economic exclusion is the biggest problem facing transgender people and Kaveney (2000) discussed the 'glass ceiling' which those transsexuals who are professionally successful frequently seem to hit. This is a lower ceiling than that faced by many others (for example women) because of the high levels of stigmatisation of transgender, and the lack of legislation concerning employment rights. Transsexuals who avoid this 'ceiling' tend to have transitioned late, when they are already professionally established. Findings suggest that transvestites usually remain unaffected, because their form of transgender takes place in private and remains hidden. There are however some situations in which transvestites face heavy discrimination, Alice Purnell noted that legislation prevents transvestites from working in positions of governmental sensitivity because of the dangers of blackmail.

The economic exclusion of transgender affects many aspects of transgender people's lives. For example Israel and Tarver (1997) link the exclusion of transgender people to increased rates of homelessness. Since the case of P the main employment problem may be empowering transgender people to take up the right to work (Gender and Sexuality Alliance letter to DFE 1988), as cultural exclusion is so heavy that many are prevented from doing so. This is evidenced in findings:

Simon: Yeah, and those of us who go ahead anyway, I mean sometimes I do feel like I am reduced to a kind of non-functional life

I: Right

Simon: And the functional life is almost not within my grasp, whatever that means

I: Whatever that means, yeah

Simon: Well basically making a living and having that, the independence that comes from that

I: I mean it does, clearly an issue for a lot of transsexual people not working, and I'm wondering just how much the labour market excludes people who are transsexual

Simon: I think it depends on as usual who we know and stuff like that. I think if we have certain kinds of connections or certain kinds of qualifications, or experience or knowledge or something like that, you can get around. But if you don't then you're basically just kind of excluded in a way. and if you can be kind of made to fit in, but the question then is how that affects you as a person, if you have to fit into something that you just can't fit in and won't fit in (Simon Dessloch)

Exclusion from the labour market appears to be due not just to cultural prejudice, but also to the challenges which transgender poses to a system based on a rigid sexual division of labour and entrenched gender inequalities. Kate N' Ha Ysabet raised this issue when she discussed sexism in the labour market: She said that she identifies as a woman but is socially classed as a man. If she has surgery and then gets a job as a man is she pulling the system to pieces, as "I am sitting here pretending to have a cock because you're paying me, you believe that me having a phantom penis means I am worth 30% more pay?". Inclusion of transgender people would disrupt gender inequalities in the labour market, for non-transgender as well as transgender people.

Social Space, Violence and Abuse

Access to social space is problematic for many transgender people in a number of ways, particularly where they are visibly different from conventional women and men. This is not always the case, for example one transvestite contributor has been out dressed up in broad daylight without experiencing harassment, but this was in an urban student environment. There is considerable evidence for the spatial exclusion of transgender people. For example, Christie Elan Cane described how hir movements are severely restricted due to lack of social acceptance of androgynous people, while John Marshall noted that he does not go out as a transvestite until after dark. Many transgender people also experience social rejection, for example Whittle (1999) discusses his experiences of exclusion from social events due to his transsexuality.

For many transgender people being in public space is linked with experience of violence and abuse. Zach Nataf described instances of murder, for example the case of Brandon Teena in the USA. John Marshall stated the need to keep transvestism hidden because of the danger of violence and vandalism of property while Alex Whinnom noted that the problem with coming out as transsexual was that 'all the local kids come around and put a fire bomb through your letter box'. Roz Kaveney discussed the widespread incidence of violence towards transsexuals:

Roz: Being in transition is very difficult and people do have a desperate need to conform a lot of the time because they're trying to pass because they're trying not to get the shit kicked out of them in the street I mean show me a TS who's never had some sort of violent incident and I'll show you someone who should probably buy a lot of lottery tickets.

I: Yeah.

Roz: Because they've obviously got the luck of the devil

These findings are strongly supported by literature, including a groundbreaking study of violence against transgender people in the USA (Wilchins et al 1997b) which includes many accounts of murder and rape. Other literature documents intersex people and other transgender people suffering abuse from neighbours (Wheelwright 1995), being spat on, stoned, seriously beaten up (Hugill 1998), harassment by children (Young 1996), and many other forms of abuse (Wilchins 1997).

Findings suggest that transphobia may also result in transgender people being made vulnerable to sexual abuse. Salmacis, who was abused as a child while in care, remarked "What does make me angry is that a lot of people who are affected that way as children are abused. Has anybody ever gone to get the child abusers who molested these people, the hermaphrodites?" Literature also indicates risk of abuse, for example Israel and Tarver (1997) describe the high incidence of homelessness and drug abuse amongst young transgender people in the USA, leaving them at risk of violence and exploitation.

Prostitution rates are high amongst transgender people, again meaning vulnerability, while transgender people in prison (Bloomfield 1996, see below) and mental hospital are frequently sexually harassed and raped (Israel and Tarver 1997).

Sanctions seem particularly heavy for people with intersex or androgynous identities. Christie Elan Cane argued that many transsexuals end up settling for one sex as this is the only option available to them in the current binaried gender system: "The bipolarised gender system; if you're not comfortable with the gender that you're born into you either have to go the whole way or change over into the opposite gender through a gender clinic, or you become, you're in a situation where you're socially excluded." Similarly, Salmacis experienced it as impossible to live as a hermaphrodite. This forced her to adopt a female identity in a similar way to the male identity Feinberg adopted when ze found ze could not survive as a transgendered person (1996).

Legislation

Transgender people are excluded from citizenship via legislative rights in a number of ways. The majority legal opinion in Britain is that transsexuality is 'not a reality', as chromosomal sex change is impossible. Hence, people who are diagnosed as transsexual lose a substantial part of their civil liberties (McMullen and Whittle 1994), including the right to marry and to parent or adopt (Young 1996). Alex Whinnom discussed British legislators' current denial of transgender people's rights to officially change their identity via birth certificate, a prerequisite for other rights such as to marry, following the *Corbett vs. Corbett* case which was incorporated into the 1973 Matrimonial Causes Act (Evans 1993). Changes in the British legislation following the case of *P vs. Cornwall County Council* in 1995 allows some legal protection against employment discrimination (Dyer 1996), but current British approaches to legislation have been heavily criticised by transgender activists for limiting rights to those who have had full surgery (thus excluding 95% FTMs), emphasising 'passing' and excluding those who do not 'pass' (40% MTFs), excluding transgender people from the services of the Equal Opportunities Commission and denying transgender people the right to make choices about their sex (Gender and Sexuality Alliance letter 1998). In addition to these problems, transgender people

theoretically face the same public order risks as gays, including 'gross indecency with another male' for MTF transsexuals involved with a man (Evans 1993).

Transvestism, although not specifically illegal, may be legally sanctioned. Cross-dressing in public may be considered to be 'insulting behaviour on the street' (Public Order Act 1936) while use of public toilets different to birth sex may lead to prosecution under the 1956 Sexual Offences Act (Evans 1993). Following Evans (1993) and Carabine (1996) it is possible to identify a conservative policing of the morals of the population at the root of such discriminating legislation. The issue is the protection of the institutions of heterosexual marriage and the family against perceived outsiders, via normalisation of monogamous heterosexuality, and the framing of anything else as abnormal. Ironically, many transsexuals seek legal rights precisely so that they can become upright, moral citizens who raise 'normal' families and contribute to mainstream society. This is notwithstanding wider claims for rights for sexual minorities and people who wish for alternative lifestyles to those deemed moral by the traditionalists. Evans notes that transsexual marriage is permitted in many countries, such as West Germany, Italy and Sweden and that birth certificate change is permitted in others, for example the USA, Spain, Belgium and Turkey. Gay marriage is also permitted in some countries, and if this became legislatively supported by the EEC there would be important implications for transgender people's marital rights.

Legislation is particularly problematic with reference to third sex, multiple sexes, fluid and androgynous identities. Pamela Smith noted that there is no legal state of androgyne. She describes the paradox which legislators are faced with: the period of transsexual transition from one sex to the other means that there must be a third state, however transsexuals are not permanently in this third state. Kate More argued that transsexuality and third sex forces the authorities to deal with legislative realities they would prefer to ignore. For example once surgery is undergone, the government cannot make people go back to how they were before simply because equal opportunities legislation is not working. Salmacis suggested that legal recognition of androgyne as a state separate from male and female would be useful if this was not stigmatised, but that legislation must also make allowance for gender fluidity. She discussed her experience of disclosure of abuse and argues that the

courts would define her as male in order to avoid further action if this was advantageous for them (1999). Thus, gender ambiguity could currently be misused by authorities.

Equal rights legislation and policy was seen as crucial for the social inclusion of transgender people:

"Yes, there will carry on being discrimination, yes people will be discriminated against. But those things should be classed under equal rights legislation, where it says 'you cannot discriminate on the grounds of...'there's race and sex and there's this and this and this, because it's wrong. But the point is that people can't go up to you and say 'oh I don't want to employ you because your voice sounds wrong'. But you start saying it like that to people, 'you have the wrong tone of voice' and it really obviously is discrimination" (Kate N' Ha Ysabet)

Medicine

Medicine plays a crucial role in perpetuating the social exclusion of transgender people at the same time as paradoxically enabling the development of provision of treatment for transsexuals. Medical practice is discussed in detail by King (1986, 1987, 1993). Here, I will focus on the ways in which the medical establishment is oppressive and contributes to social exclusion. The medical treatment of transgender people has been criticised primarily by feminists (Raymond 1980, 1994, 1996, Jeffreys 1996, Hausman 1995, Oudshoorn 1994) and by critical theorists such as Billings and Urban (1982) and Evans (1993). These critiques utilise a social constructionist analysis of transgender to argue that transsexuality is an iatrogenic, medically caused phenomenon operating in the service of patriarchy and capitalism. They focus on the oppression of the wider population via medicine rather than transgender people. Their arguments are heavily criticised by research participants, who argue that they deny their experience and agency, that transsexuality has always existed (Feinberg 1996, International Congress on Transgender Law and Employment Policy 1993) and that people seeking gender reassignment are not simply doing so out of reaction to or constitution by social norms (James Green, Zach Nataf). Another criticism of the hegemonic model of the medical system is tendency to overlook the role of transgender people in shaping the way treatment develops, through direct

interaction with the National Health Service (NHS) and via private surgery and the widening of treatment choice this has provided. The general consensus among all transsexual contributors, including those who were undecided as to whether to have surgery, is that surgery should be available, and that some medical intervention may be necessary at some points. Many participants, however, reject the medical pathologisation of transgender and gender-stereotypical treatment. It is important to point out that there are ongoing debates and divergences of opinion concerning this matter within the transgender communities.

Analysis of the research findings suggested a number of themes, which in some cases overlap and interlock with existing critiques. These will be discussed as follows: firstly, the medical pathologisation of gender and sexual diversity, including intersex, transvestism and gender transience and androgyny, as well as gender non-conformism and homophobia within the medical establishment; secondly, the construction of transgender as psychiatric pathology; and lastly, the marginalisation of provision for transgender people within the NHS and health policy.

The Pathologisation of gender diversity

Intersex conditions are the most notable examples of the medical pathologisation and control of transgender. Various authors (Chase 1988, Feinberg 1996, Kessler 1998) describe how the Western medical system treats the birth of an intersex infant as an emergency. The baby is assigned to male or female as soon as possible and this is enforced by surgical and hormonal intervention, with infants usually being assigned as girls and having their clitorises cut off (Kaldera 1998). This is because intersex is viewed by the medical profession as a pathology as it is socially threatening, even though many of the conditions are not in themselves harmful to the infant (Kessler 1998). The framing of intersex conditions as abnormal even where there are no functional problems is suggested by the burgeoning medical literature (Rhind, Millar, Kopczynski and Meyer 1995 and Wilkinson and Greenwald 1995). The pathologisation of intersex can be seen within the context of a medical system which rigidifies both gender and sex via for example norms concerning anatomy (Paterson 1998).

Salmacis who had surgery as an infant, describes surgery as non-consensual genital mutilation and argues that the reasons for doing it are rarely clinical and usually cultural. She likens it to the genital mutilation which occurs in other countries and is hypocritically vilified by Western capitalist nations. For Salmacis, surgical, hormonal and psychological problems resulting at least in part from early treatment are serious and are still not resolved. Literature (Chase 1988, Holmes 1998, Kaldera 1998, Dreger 2000) supports the wider existence of such problems. Chase (1998) has documented cases of intersex children having their sex assignment changed without being informed as many as three times whilst Dreger (2000) includes testimonies from intersex people who mourn the very severe damage to their sexual capacities due to 'treatment'. Ann Goodley discussed the medical management of intersex conditions:

"I've done a certain amount of work in hospitals. I worked in theatre at a local children's hospital for six weeks, and we had eleven children of intermediate gender, all of whom were reassigned, no, ten of whom were reassigned, into the gender the parents wanted them to be. One was eleven and wanted to be a boy, but was defined as a girl by her parents and though she objected, they did remove her testes. She was an XY chromosome androgen, insensitive. What happens in medicine regarding babies and young children who are intermediate, is that they are assigned to please the parents. When the generation that has been taught there is a gender and sexual continuum have children, perhaps they won't feel it so urgent to propel these children into what might be an inappropriate direction. That's the first point. The second point is that, if they should have a child whose gender identity doesn't coincide with their anatomical sex, it needn't be regarded as somehow their fault or a failure, it can be something that can be addressed, that it's a possibility. I think if people can say 'I see this as a possibility', rather than as a terrible disgrace and a big problem, then it gets better, doesn't it? Some of the people I know have been mis-assigned, who were gender intermediate, and had corrective surgery in the wrong direction, taking away their physical opportunities, and stultifying them into the wrong gender"

Salmacis noted that certain conditions produce childhood fatalities if not treated, but argues that 'that's not to do with the sexual identity, or the gender identity, that's as much of a

problem as having a heart attack at that age. It's a separate issue. People make it an issue because of the gender aspect'. The rigid models of gender prevalent within the medical system affect intersexuals at all ages. For example, Linda Roberts, an adult hermaphrodite, was offered only a choice of a hysterectomy or penectomy when all that was actually necessary for health reasons was the construction of a cervix (see Hugill 1998). Chase (1998) argues that the current medical paradigm is culturally determined and erases evidence which does not conform to dominant dimorphic positions in a way which harms rather than benefits intersex people. Chase (1998) argues that surgery does not erase intersex but simply produces severely traumatised and dysfunctional individuals who need long term medical treatment. Intersex is erased surgically even though medics (for example Conte and Grumbach 1989) concede that this damages sexual functioning. Kessler (1998) suggests that:

"Rather than admit to their role in perpetuating gender, physicians 'psychologise' the issue by talking about the parent's anxieties and humiliation on being confronted with an anomalous infant. They talk as though they have no choice but to respond to the parent's pressure for a resolution of psychological discomfort and as though they had no choice but to use medical technology in the service of a two-gender culture" (p. 32)

It is important to note that there is diversity within the intersex population concerning attitudes to surgery, with some people being happy to exist within the gender binary system. It would seem that infants should be left to mature until such time as they can make an informed choice (see Kessler 1998), although this could also be problematic if they are subject to transphobia during this time. It seems overall that that the move towards a positive intersex identity amongst some intersex people should be supported by the medical profession. Further recommendations are found in Dreger (2000).

Transvestism and androgyny

Exclusion by default occurs in the medical construction of other forms of transgender, including transvestism and androgyny, as abnormal. L'Erry (1991) argues that the medical profession fails to understand non-gender binaried subjectivity, for example transvestism

and drag, which can be interpreted as playing with gender, rather than pathologised. Christie Elan Cane was refused treatment by the NHS because ze did not wish to change from a woman to a man, but from a woman to an androgyne. Ze underwent private treatment, which was successful, but this was done at great personal cost (Christie did not elaborate). Christie criticised the gender clinics, which are oriented solely towards people who seek to change to the opposite sex.

Gender stereotyping

The perpetuation of gender stereotyping by the medical profession forms an important part of the critiques raised by feminists such as Raymond (1980), as noted above. Here, I do not wish to argue that all gender stereotypical behaviour is oppressively imposed. Many transgender people wish to adopt stereotypical roles, and, moreover, professionals are increasingly arguing for the support of gender and sexual diversity (see Watson and Hitchcock 2000). However, research findings suggest that those who do not adopt stereotypical roles are still frequently discriminated against by the medical establishment. For example, Meredith Malek experienced considerable difficulties getting hormone treatment and surgery because she did not fit femininity stereotypes. Kate More discussed pressure to be traditional: she wore dresses when she visited the psychiatrist in order to get treatment although though she wears Doc Martins and jeans the rest of the time. This adaptation has been common among transsexuals seeking surgery (Bolin 1988), illustrating Ann Goodley's argument that the Gender Identity Clinic's rigid norms concerning gender remove transgender people's opportunities for freedom; they tend to look for stereotypical images. This is a huge mistake, argued Ann, as it produces people who are not 'real'. Alice Purnell discussed the way that many transsexuals focus on gender binaries, denying aspects of themselves which are attached to the old gender. She pointed out that this can be damaging for people, both in terms of their own identities and when they do not pass as their assigned sex. Alex Whinnom said that "there is a sort of mythology around having to teach, you know like the clinics in London about teaching people deportment and feminine speaking and all this kind of rubbish, to teach people to be women, which I found patronising and repressive in the extreme". Medical stereotyping has led to transgender people lying about their gender roles in order to gain treatment. Kate N' Ha Ysabet pointed out that this is destructive for both psychiatrists and patients. Evidence from the

research and from informal discussions with practitioners suggests that practice is currently quite varied and that there is acceptance of non-stereotypical gender roles among transsexuals at least to some extent. There seems to be a consensus among contributors to the research that the medical profession needs to move in this direction.

Control of gender role diversity via the imposition of stereotypical identities by medics seems related to the gender of medics and gendered structures within hospitals and clinics. Meredith Malek discussed what she called 'The Transsexual Empire'; the control of surgery by a few male specialists, with people sometimes having to wait for years because they do not fit gender norms. Problems with male dominance within the medical profession are also described by Salmacis:

Salmacis: I'll tell you this much, had it not been for women doctors, I'd be dead by now. Because women doctors don't have all this crap in their heads.

I: That's really interesting because most doctors at the gender clinics are men, aren't they?

Salmacis: Exactly. But it's funny, because most of the women who were on my case are really, they say 'its obvious she's a woman'. They'll do examinations, internals, and say 'it's obvious she's a woman, She's got mammary glands, natural mammary glands....all I'm trying to say is that with me it's simply a case of if people can understand, this might sound bipolar but it's not, it's just purely a result of bipolar thinking. Because the woman saw this is a hermaphrodite. She seemed to say to me 'She's a woman therefore she's on our side'. And the men say to me 'she's going against us'. And when I confront them at (gender clinic) or there's another place (anonymous), that's to deal with CAH sufferers, it's mainly a kid's hospital but they do deal with adults sometimes. In one hospital there's someone called (anonymous), who's a man, and there's two female gynaecologists, and they're good, they know what they're doing. At (anonymous) they're all men, and you have a hard time.

I: Do you have a hard time because you don't want to be stereotypical, in the way you present as a woman?

Salmacis: Well, yeah, because people look at me and say, tall, thin, got the right shape, long, thin neck but face of a rabid lesbian. I'm not being offensive now, I'm referring to Virginia Woolf. They seem to fit me into this sort of Nissan commercial category...the stereotypes we've been put into, it's not a transsexual or a transgendered one, it's a feminine one'

Examination of the discriminatory structuring of treatment for transgender people leads to the conclusion that patriarchy is indeed active within the medical establishment. The medical construction of 'abnormal' allows the construction of 'normal' concerning gender. Thus, fluid or changing gender roles are constructed as culturally unintelligible (Stone 1991) and pathological (L'Erry 1991) by the medical profession. Authors such as MacKenzie (1994) and Rothblatt (1994) argue that most of the discourses surrounding transsexuality reinforce sexual dimorphism (attaching 'feminine' characteristics solely to women and 'masculine' characteristics solely to men). For example the DSM is rife with sexism, such as the assertion that childhood femininity in a boy is pathological and is likely to lead to transsexuality. Gender dimorphism causes considerable suffering to transgender people who do not fit norms (McKenzie 1994). Examples of hypernormative literature abound, for example in Morris' (1997) book *Conundrum*. Raymond (1980) and Evans (1993) document the entrenched sexism of the medical profession. This includes the designation of female genitals as meant for passive penetration (Chase 1998), demonstrating a lack of concern about sexual functioning among surgeons dealing with intersex people. Not only are these discourses dimorphic, they are sexist in other ways. For example, intersex babies are assigned as male where possible (Kessler 1998), presumably because of cultural assumptions concerning male superiority.

Homophobia and moral policing

Another way in which some transgender people are excluded via the medical system is due to the heterosexist assumptions embedded within treatment norms. As discussed in the introduction, transgender has historically been subsumed under the category of

homosexuality (Rosario 1998) with psychiatrists such as Stoller (1968) and Socarides (1970, 1991) failing to distinguish between transgender and homosexuality and heavily pathologising both. This has impacted on treatment methods and is reflected in transgender people's experience of the medical system. Transgender people began to challenge medicine's heterosexism in the 1970s in the USA (MacKenzie 1994), but findings show that in the UK heterosexism is still fairly entrenched. For example, Ann Goodley noted that gender identity clinics assume that clients will be heterosexual in their gender of identification. For example professionals may ask MTFs whether they have a boyfriend, with the underlying presumption that the only reason why people want GRS (gender reassignment surgery) is to have a vagina in order to have sexual intercourse. Authors such as Rosario (1998), Chase (1998) and MacKenzie (1994) describe Benjamin's (1966) classic text as homophobic in the way it links transsexuality with 'wrong' sexual desire. Other instances where heterosexist bias is evident include the prescription of heterosexual intercourse in order to keep MTF transsexual's neo-vaginas open (MacKenzie 1994). Homophobia is also related to gender stereotyping as evident in the early literature described above, for example young female preference for 'tomboyish' activity and male company is seen as a precursor to FTM transsexuality (see Rosario 1998), which negates butch dyke and non-conformist heterosexual female development. However, it is important to note that support for lesbian, gay and bisexual identities is increasing among medics, partly because of pressure from critics. For example, Watson and Hitchcock (2000) explicitly argue in response to my (2000) paper for professionals to support sexual diversity and oppose measures such as Clause 28.

The medical treatment of transgender can act as a form of moral policing in that, as with homosexuality, it has the effect of controlling the ways people express their sexuality. It also occurs in other ways, particularly with respect to sex work. For example, Roz Kaveney discussed cases of NHS surgery being denied to transsexuals because they have convictions for prostitution or drugs offences. She said: 'There were elements in the NHS and gender reassignment service who regarded themselves as having a responsibility to the state, to police the morals of their charges'. This was hypocritical, as 'if they (the transsexuals) were successful (earned lot of money) at prostitution, the very same shrink and surgeon would see people privately'. These research findings can be used to extend Carabine's (1996) analysis of the way that social policy constitutes sexuality: both

heterosexism and transphobia are evident in the medical policies concerning transgender, and medicine is contested territory with regards to transgender.

Psychiatry

As noted in the introduction, debates between medics who see transgender as a physiological condition and those who frame it as a psychiatric pathology have raged ever since the 1960s. The psychiatric pathologisation of transgender is generally rejected by the transgender community and deemed oppressive (for example at the TrAnsgender AGENDA Conference, 1998, International Congress on Transgender Law and Employment (1993), and Israel and Tarver 1998). This is discussed by research participants. James Green argued that the characterisation of transsexuality as due to childhood trauma is wrong: trauma frequently occurs specifically because people are transgender, not vice versa. Many children are likewise subjected to trauma but do not grow up transgender. However, as Purnell says, psychiatrists are pivotal decision-makers concerning access to treatment. She sees this as inhumane, but as a situation which will continue until transgender people stop being subject to psychiatric diagnosis (Purnell 1998).

Intersex people appear to suffer particularly heavily at the hands of the psychiatric profession. Psychiatrists, in particular child psychiatrists, play an important role in dealing with the psychological ramifications of raising intersex people as male or female (Reiner 1996). Intersex appears to have been erased from the psychiatric literature as a valid identity, although recent medical literature argues that people with intersex or related conditions should be excluded from psychiatric diagnosis, including diagnosis of GID (Gender Identity Disorder) (Meyerbahlburg 1994). Tarver and Israel (1997) note that in some cases intersex people are unable to find a gender identity after surgery. They are frequently incorrectly diagnosed with serious psychiatric problems and subsequently victimised.

Like Roz Kaveney, James Green criticised victim-consciousness among transgender people; this is linked to pathologisation on both physical and mental levels. James Green saw this as partly as a way in which people justify treatment, given the difficulty of facing

being transsexual, but also, importantly, pathologisation is usually necessary for getting treatment (especially in the UK via NHS provision). It is important to note that pathologisation and victim consciousness are contentious issues within the transgender communities. A minority of the contributors do see transgender as psychologically pathological and identify as 'ill', and others note the importance of pathologisation in gaining treatment and social acceptance. Zach Nataf and I discussed pathologisation as follows:

Zach: But activists are sort of saying, you know, it's not a pathology to get us out of the essen...that kind of thing but still that it's, you know, it's a condition that needs medical support and that we should have the right to have medical support without being pathologised.

I: Yeah. I mean I think there's an issue there. In an ideal world. I mean...

Zach: And also not to have genital surgery in order to get political rights if that's, if people don't want that.

I: Yeah.

Zach: To choose how far they go is the other thing.

I: Yeah. I mean can you say a bit more about what activists are saying around the pathologisation?

Zach: Well basically, I mean, it generally tends to be self-diagnosed. People go to a gender clinic and say, you know, I'm transsexual, help me! I need this, this and this. Some activists, in the States anyway, are saying, you know, surgery on demand which is not very wise, you know, because anyone and everyone can have some surgery and not really be appropriate for people to have that kind of treatment and it might make, you know, make it worse for them and they end up topping themselves because it wasn't the right thing. So there needs to be some way of assessing, you know, if it's appropriate treatment and if it's going to be useful for

people without, you know..... without making people mentally, you know, putting people in a category of mental illness.

I: Yeah, sure.

Zach: It's a recurring, it's a sort of statistically occurring phenomenon. It's always existed.

I: Yeah. I suppose that's the counter-argument of pathologisation, isn't it? (overlap in conversation)

Zach: It's a condition that needs medical support but that's, you know....

There is some ambivalence in Zach Nataf's discussion concerning GRS being inappropriate for some people because of their psychological problems, whilst at the same time arguing that transgender not involving mental pathology. However, participant observation substantiates arguments that transgender status is not itself pathological: most of the contributors have 'normal' lives, many holding positions of considerable social status and responsibility. As Israel and Tarver (1997) say, the pathologisation of transgender ignores well-adjusted transgender people. Roz Kaveney discussed the alternative view, that transsexuals are under strain and thus may need long term care, but that once they are relieved of the pressure of being transsexual many are successful. Alternatives to a pathologising, especially psychologically pathologising, model are discussed by other participants. As noted above, Salmacis located gender within the nervous system, describing it in 'bodymap' terms, as did Ann Goodley. Kate N' Ha Ysabet similarly argued that transsexuality is not a psychiatric illness, rather it is a physiological condition and also a result of society being rigidly gendered. Kate saw transsexuality as a minor dysfunction, which would be considered unimportant if society was not so heavily invested in the gender binary system. It would seem in addition that it is not always possible to divide mind and body, as debates concerning transgender have tended to do. Salmacis described the intermeshing of factors as complex: mind, body and outside influences including spiritual influences. She criticised the attribution of gender according to genitalia by the medical profession.

It is clear that some transgender people do experience mental health problems, although how much this is the result of the social exclusion of transgender is unclear. Findings suggest that direct and indirect social discrimination seem linked to the incidence of psychological problems among transgender people, ranging from poor self-image and low self-esteem through to depression and suicide. High rates of suicide occur among untreated transsexuals (Young 1996) and study of 102 gender dysphoric people found that 30% suffered depression, largely due to situational factors (Purnell 1992).

The participants with mental health problems specifically discussed current social norms concerning gender as impacting on their health, describing the gender system as in one case 'abusive' and another 'heterofascist'. The construction of self via oppressive gender social norms can be seen to lead to psychological dysfunction. This is individualised, so that the transgender person experiences and is seen as having mental health problems rather than oppressive social norms being challenged.

Research findings strongly indicate that the real problems concerning transgender and mental health lie with society: the cultural denial of transgender people and processes as valid and equal and the social discrimination which transgender people face. Isolation is mentioned by some of the respondents, for example Zach Nataf described how many transgender people in non-urban situations have no access to support systems and suffer psychologically as a result. Poverty, relationship problems or lack of access to relationships, problems with treatment when this is provided, denial of people's pasts (see Chase 1998) and closeting where this is done, violence and the fear of violence, a lack of legal rights concerning parenthood and so forth all contribute to marginalisation and risk of psychological and other health problems. The sheer misery of being socially excluded and stigmatised came across strongly in the research in many ways. For example, participant observation led me to believe that those people who are not able to find work because of their identities as transgender people suffer not only economically but in terms of their mental health. Similarly, the way gender ambiguous people face stigmatisation and abuse may lead them to develop fears of being outside or in social situations. In at least one case among my respondents, this meant clinical agoraphobia. Ongoing colleagueship with one of the participants has included for example giving her some level of emotional support

when her house got vandalised because she is transsexual, acknowledging the pain she felt at being unsupported by a Rape Crisis Centre following experience of rape, experiences of social and economic exclusion and so on.

Where people are psychologically well, i.e. most of the contributors to this research, there is a sense of survival and ongoing awareness of the injustice which transgender people currently face. It seems that a positive sense of being transgender is not socially permitted within mainstream society. For example, Elizabeth Loxley said that she felt a sense of pride about being transsexual, but that she has learnt to closet this in order to 'get along'. However, where people have developed alternative identities, including those developed in opposition to the mainstream, pride in difference may form a basis for identity constitution. For example Del LaGrace Volcano appears to have constructed a transgender identity in opposition to gender stereotypes, whilst Alice Purnell reported cases of transvestites wanting to be read as transvestites because this was seen as transgressive. This can be linked with queer and other subculture norms. It is worth noting that experience of exclusion and corresponding problems are generally much less prevalent where transgender is primarily a recreational (or a performance) thing, as with transvestism and drag. Here, discrimination is experienced less, as people have a socially acceptable identity to return to, and where it is experienced it is often felt to be minor. For example John Marshall, when describing his avoidance of harassment when dragged up by venturing out only after dark, said he simply sees it as part of being a transvestite; a rule of the game.

The marginalisation of transgender people, in particular via psychiatric pathologisation, can be analysed using the work of labelling theorists, for example Becker (1964). People are labelled as deviant by society as a means of dealing on a social level with aspects of identity which are deemed unacceptable. These are carried by the 'deviant', thereby reinforcing restrictive notions of 'normality'. Rosario's study substantiates this argument, which could be illustrated using a study by Mayer and Kapfhammer (1995), who discuss a transsexual patient with 'unipolar mania'. They remark that after the onset of psychosis, the patient alternated between male and female identities. The person in question could be psychotic, but could equally well be gender transient, an identity which is labelled as psychotic by psychiatry despite the normal, non-pathological cross-cultural and

transhistorical incidence of gender transience. However, such a label will trap the person inside the psychiatric system, thereby reinforcing gender binaries as 'normal'.

Findings concerning medicine and the oppression of transgender people suggest a need for client-centred treatment where transgender people do have psychological problems. This is supported by the literature, for example Israel and Tarver (1997) note that transgender people may be vulnerable to mental health disorders, while Purnell (1988) and Chase (1998) describe a lack of counselling and psychological support for transsexuals and intersex people. Chase argues that the (USA) medical profession's inability to find professionals to carry out this task is perpetuated by medical mutilation and stigmatisation of intersex patients. Appropriate treatment would move away from this kind of control of gender variance and towards a client-centred approach. Abel (1977, in Billings and Urban 1982) notes that the ideal therapy session facilitates a patient's emancipation from the language of neurotic symptoms. Making social oppression explicit is crucial in such cases (Billings and Urban 1982) and it is important for professionals to be aware of the impact of victimisation and discrimination on transgender people (Israel and Tarver 1997). Awareness of the structural factors affecting transgender people allows the person to reject harmful discourses which they have absorbed from society, or, if using a poststructuralist analysis, deconstruct notions of pathology, locate pathology at a social rather than individual level, and reconstruct using positive forms of self-identity. Therapy should enable clients to address contradictions and oppression, in other words it should facilitate reflexive social struggle (Billings and Urban 1996). Location of problems at the level of the social is important in a similar way to, for example, racial oppression. Ahmad (1993) reviews the history of the medicalised legitimisation of racism; this individualises medical problems where as in fact these are located in iniquitous social relations.

The Marginalisation of transgender health care

Discussion of the limitations of treatment provision for transgender people must include issues which are not specifically about oppression in a direct sense, but which nonetheless impact on transgender people in a negative way. King (1986, 1993) discusses the marginalisation and stigmatisation, within the medical profession, of medics who deal with transsexuals. This may impact on service provision. A lack of service provision for

transsexuals overall is mentioned by some participants, as are problems with surgery once this is received. Zach Nataf described how to get surgery on the NHS in the UK transsexuals have to wait up to five years, "And that ruins a lot of people's lives. It really really does. People suffer, really suffer". Financial restrictions affect provision, but as Purnell (1998) says, withholding funds and discussing provision in terms of rationing is a short term approach, which fails to take patients seriously. "There have been too many suicides and wasted lives for these problems not to be taken seriously" (p. 9). There is a lack of research concerning for example morbidity and mortality among transsexuals and still problems with diagnosis: some transsexuals have been wrongly assigned and subsequently requested reassignment (MacKenzie 1994). Surgical techniques are still limited, with frequent complications including infections, fistulae, problems with urination and with sexual functioning (see Chase 1998). There also appear to be problems with equality of access to services, particularly along the lines of sexual orientation and socially normative gender roles as described above. There is a need to ensure that services are equally accessible, in order to include people from minority ethnic groups and HIV-positive or immunocompromised people, and to provide services in collaboration with referral services if necessary (Israel and Tarver 1997). These issues boil down to the provision of resources to ensure equality of treatment of transgender people in line with other members of society. This requires structural changes within health care policy. Evans (1993) notes the marginalisation of medics dealing with transsexuality within the medical profession; this appears to be partially the result of the psychiatrisation of the condition and attacks on those who take a physiological approach as well as, perhaps, a reluctance to engage with a difficult and morally challenging area. For example, Roz Kaveney noted that refusal to treat transsexuals who had engaged in prostitution by the NHS was due to fears by professionals that they would be seen to condone this and that funding would be lost.

The medical profession appears in some cases to be resistant to change which would undermine medical hegemony. Contributions at the plenary session at the conference *TrAnsgenda Agenda* (1998) included discussion of the resistance by medics to social scientists and philosophers coming into hospitals and practices because it threatens their hegemony. Instances of professional protectionism were also found in the literature, particularly in the case of intersex people. For example, Chase (1998) notes that Dr

Gearhart, for example, reacted to criticism of medical practice by intersex adults by labelling them 'zealots'. This is despite the fact that intersex people who have become political did this as a result of their experiences of the medical system and have no history of political activism, as evidenced by Chase, Holmes (1998) and research contributor Salmacis. Here, it is apparent that the maintenance of treatment norms via supposedly scientific knowledge serves to maintain the credibility of the medical profession (Kessler 1998). Thus, medicalised management of intersex patients protects the profession from claims of mutilation (Kessler 1998) via continuing erasure of their agency. Research suggested that this is particularly the case when people have mental health problems. Such diagnosis renders people unable to challenge medical orthodoxy; handy if the medical system is understood to depend on the framing of certain groups as ill. However, the medical treatment of transgender people does of course vary widely.

Other Social Structures and Institutions

Transphobia operates in a number of other areas, mostly relating to social policy. These will be briefly discussed in the following order: relationships, the family, education, the media, the penal system, and lastly, certain minority groups.

Relationships

The forming of relationships is an area of difficulty for some transgender people. For example, one contributor discussed uncertainty about his sexuality and where to find a sexual partner, given his ambiguous genitals. Other evidence indicated exclusion of lesbian MTF transsexuals from the lesbian community, making the finding of partners very hard. Elizabeth Loxley described difficulties deciding whether to have the full operation: the lack of social acceptance of in-between states, particularly amongst potential sexual partners, was the main reason in favour of having the operation. She said that women are generally less accepting than men. Findings concerning relationships are echoed in popular literature, with the Guardian column (Anon c 1998) noting the problem of losing a partner when transsexual status is disclosed, and difficulties with the alternative closeting of status. Another area of problems concerns the impact of surgical complications and also abuse relating to the stigmatisation of transgender people, which impacts on the potential to have

relationships. For example, Salmacis described herself as asexual, due to the surgeons having 'botched up' and because of her experiences of being sexually abused while in care. Furthermore, Steven Whittle (1998) discussed problems with a tendency for the sex act and active sexuality concerning transsexuality to be denied, perhaps because attempts are made to delineate transsexuality as an asexual medical condition from transvestite fetishism as a sexual perversion.

The Family

Problems in the family include the pathologisation of intersex and other transgender conditions. Childrearing practices, for example colour coding of infant's clothes and toys, makes dealing with intersex babies socially difficult. The condition may be made taboo, resulting in psychological damage to the child or negative reactions, for example Kessler (1998) documents an extreme case in the USA, where a child was admitted to hospital after the father attempted to rip off his enlarged clitoris with his fingers. Kessler (1998) describes difficulties and embarrassment for families of intersex children. On a wider level, the stigmatisation of transgender means that family and friends of transgender people tend to suffer from actual or perceived marginalisation (Purnell 1998), with approaches to family therapy being discussed in the clinical literature (Emerson and Rosenfeld 1996). Kate N' Ha Ysabet described difficulties in the family concerning having a transsexual child:

"Having a child who is freaking us out has an effect on the rest of the family so that actually tends to initiate things like physical abuse, and problems in the rest of the family because having a transperson, having like this well, they don't know what's going on, they can't get on with life, they get angry because nothing they will do makes this kid any better. So they start beginning to hate the kid, because its just a drain, a constant drain. Families are in this impossible situation, where they go to experts and say 'well she keeps wanting to wear trousers all the time' and the expert says, 'well treat her like a girl, really reinforce her being like a girl' and that psychiatry as a means of social control, 'we must force the people even harder to build gender walls' and in actual fact what we should do is to change the walls"

Rejection by the family and community may lead to social and economic exclusion of transgender children and young people (Israel and Tarver 1997). Some children are taken into care, where violence or abuse may be experienced. Literature suggests that young transgender people are particularly vulnerable to victimisation, drug use and prostitution (Israel and Tarver 1997), also factors linked with social exclusion.

Education

Education is problematic for transgender in a number of ways. As Pamela Summers said, school is a very gendered place. Alice Purnell noted that, although things have improved, single-sex schools and lessons still persist in many places and that teachers use expressions which reinforces gender categorisation, for example 'act like a man'. Playgrounds, toilets and so forth are demarcated along rigidly gendered lines. Kate N' Ha Ysabet described how transgressors of the gender code are violently sanctioned at school by bullying and Alice Purnell discussed the way that tomboys are often idolised, where as sissy boys are persecuted relentlessly. Sex education reinforces gender binaries, and in general taught material contains no description of the intersex body (Holmes 1998) or hint that transgender exists. The exclusion of transgender people and discourses may continue into further and higher education. For example Ormiston (1996) describes denial of student requests to have Leslie Feinberg deliver a commencement speech at a liberal arts college in the USA.

The media

King (1986, 1993) documents the extent of media coverage of transgender in the UK. This is varied, and observation suggests that a movement towards progressive and sympathetic coverage of transgender issues currently seems apparent. However Ann Goodley described the negative impact 'crass reporting' had on the transsexual community, which according to Purnell (1998) fuels the public marginalisation of transgender people. Stephen Whittle described the exploitation of transgender people by the media as follows:

"And they constantly, you know whether it's the newspapers or magazines, journalists or whatever they talk, they talk us they write our supposed words they

talk about what we do in our lives, how we are and so just because they are so utterly greedy and so utterly selfish and such fucking empire builders themselves"

I was present at a discussion of management of the media by transgender people, one of whom had experienced being dragged through the gutter press with marked negative effects on her life. Findings suggest that prurient debates within the popular media serve to further marginalise transgender people. In addition, the media plays a crucial role in promoting normative models of gender. This is evidenced by for example an article framing intersex as an abnormality needing corrective treatment and social erasure at familial and social levels (Hohler 1996), and by research evidence. Salmacis argued that the depiction of 'perfect human beings' in the media and the emphasis on biologist, Darwinist explanations for reality makes transgender people the objects of ridicule and hate, although she also notes that television provides a forum for transsexual people. It is important to note sympathetic depictions, such as Coronation Street's transsexual character 'Hayley'.

Some participants, for example Joanna/Dave Scott, suggested that transgender affects wider society via the media. One contributor remarked on the positive impact that sympathetic portrayal has had on public opinion. Effects of media depiction of transgender on wider culture seemed to be marked in certain contexts and limited in terms of wider effects:

I: Maybe, but um, I'm wondering if it has any effect on society as well, what you do?

Joanna/Dave: I think so, you've only to look at the publications these days. Take for example, I only got this today, it's only just arrived, Ministry magazine. They

I: What, Ministry of Sound?

Joanna/Dave: Yeah, it's got an article in there, 'Chicks with dicks', you know 'gender benders all mixed up' and it goes on about you know gender in a night-club

situation, a club situation, as the song goes 'girls who are boys who like boys to be girls who do boys like they're girls who do girls like they're boys'

I: Good old Blur, yeah

Joanna/Dave: Yeah that's right. You know and it's a lot very much like that, you're playing around with gender, and it's a lot like how we play around with music. Music and everything like that is a great influence of how we mix things in our lives

I: Um yeah, I mean I'm wondering if that has any effect outside of club culture as well?

Joanna/Dave: Hm, probably not

Authors such as Raymond (1980) and Billings and Urban (1992) frame the media as reinforcing the dominant order (see King 1986, 1993). However, this is not substantiated in the findings, which show that the media plays a role in normalising transgender, as well as glamorising it. As King (1986, 1993) argues, the media does not simply promote medical perspectives, or defuse the threat which transsexuality poses to rigid gender categorisation. There is a paradox concerning media coverage: where is objectifying or salacious it tends to reinforce exclusion, but where it is educational, sympathetic or in some cases entertaining it can help enable social inclusion of transgender people. The media thus appears to be a contested domain.

The penal system

Transsexual prisoners clearly faced discrimination at the time of the most recent study (Bloomfield 1996). According to Mills (1995), a hundred known transsexuals pass through the UK prison service each year. Bloomfield identifies a number of serious issues affecting this section of the prison population. These include denial of access to treatment which would contribute to their rehabilitation as citizens; abnormally punitive sentences, with some lifers being told that they will never be released because of their condition and

simultaneously denied treatment. The denial of treatment (including hormones) to prisoners is linked by Israel and Tarver (1997) to heightened clinical depression and risk of suicide. Other ways in which transsexual prisoners are oppressed include strip searches by members of the opposite sex, breaches of confidentiality including a prisoner's records being sold to a newspaper, denial of information concerning conditions including access to medical records and case conferences, psychological cruelty and verbal and sexual abuse including a case of rape by a prison officer (Bloomfield 1996). Pamela Smith noted that rape is almost automatic for MTF transsexuals, who until recently have automatically been sent to male prisons. In the USA, rape is endorsed in some jails as those in 'relationships' are perceived to be more manageable by prison authorities (Israel and Tarver 1997). No data is currently available on treatment of other transgender people in prison.

Other minority groups

As well as experiencing transphobia in mainstream society, transgender people are in some cases faced with stigmatisation by members of other minority groups, albeit larger and more established ones. This study does not attempt to look at the full range of social minorities in terms of norms affecting transgender people. For example, it would be useful to examine attitudes towards transgender people among minority ethnic populations, younger versus older populations and so on. It does seek to describe the relations between transgender people and sexual minority and gender oriented groups, in other words the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities and the feminist communities, as there is a clear overlap in terms of issues. Relations with these groups are also discussed in the chapter on transgender politics.

The research shows that transgender people's experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities are mixed. Although (as noted in the introduction) historically there have been considerable alliances and overlap between transgender and lesbian, gay and bisexual groupings, there has also been considerable conflict. This has led to stigmatisation of transgender in a number of ways. For example, drag queens, whilst part of gay culture, are also looked down upon and not welcome in some gay venues, while transvestites occupy a space of some ambivalence on the gay scene. When accompanying a transvestite friend to gay venues, for example, I noticed mixed reactions to hir presentation;

interestingly this increased when ze presented as a non-stereotypical woman rather than a traditional transvestite. As discussed in the chapter on transgender and gender pluralism, the confusion between 'gay and lesbian' signals and transgender signals causes problems in the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. This relates to the ambiguity which is a crucial factor in the exclusion of transgender. Ambiguity seems to be linked with the social erasure of transgender people in some cases. For example Kate N' Ha Ysabet discussed the way she is 'read' as gay at a festival:

"Social control of transgender is like, I don't know (sighs) its all the things I say, it's easier to give an example. Summer Rites, being told that, and having gay men coming up to me thinking I was a gay man and saying well, talking about someone who's transsexual saying 'well they're just like us aren't they?' and, people at Summer Rites going 'we don't believe in all this PC crap' and I'm trying to point out to people the thing that not believing in all this PC crap is like, how would homosexuals feel if they went to, I don't know, a rock concert, and were told, 'oh I saw two men kissing and they were thrown out and I complained to the organisers and the organisers said, "oh we don't believe in all this PC Crap"' Being PC is in the eyes of the beholder, and actually it's about, non-PC is about xenophobia"

A particularly marked area of conflict concerned MTF transsexuals occupying women-only space. Transgender people experience a considerable amount of exclusion from women only space: struggles concerning this are currently occurring in many contexts, including Rape Crises Centres, Women's Centres, lesbian social space, Women's Studies courses and organisations, women only educational institutions, as well as arenas where institutional policy dictates single sex membership. Alex Whinnom discussed the illogicality of this given the current gender dimorphic system:

"And the battle's being fought about whether transsexual women can join lesbian groups, all this kind of stuff. It's happening all over the country in different places and usually fun because at the end of the day do you want me to be in your lesbian group or do you want this other person? You know, that's the choice you've got if you're going to have this polarity of gender and say well am I a man or a woman,

well okay, which one of us is the woman? Which one would you rather have in the group, you know"

It would seem that until (or unless) non-male and non-female identities are socially legitimised, space must be made within established categories for transgender people. Increasingly, transsexual women are being accepted within women only space if they 'live as women'. Meanwhile, alliances are being forged between transgender and lesbian, gay and bisexual groups, with transgender now included in many lesbian, gay and bisexual groups and publications in the UK, and transgender people being given a prominent position at the Pride march.

Conclusion

The most striking theme to emerge from the findings is the systematic social erasure and control of forms of gender which deviate from gender binaries. This occurs via processes of identity formation which construct transgender as 'other' and abnormal, due to the way in which it challenges existing categories. Transphobia is linked with control of non-sex-stereotypical gender behaviours and sexual orientations, with intersexuals, androgynes and non-recreational gender transients being the most heavily controlled. Transgender behaviour and transgender people are subject to transphobia in many and varied ways, with the crucial institutions being those which define their very identities: bureaucracy, the law, medicine and other areas relating to social policy. There appears to be a high level of cultural resistance to change, although transgender becoming increasingly accepted in a variety of contexts. Transgender people who are otherwise socially deviant, especially people with mental health problems and offenders, are subject to particularly heavy discrimination. Transphobia is not limited to mainstream social institutions: transgender people also experience discrimination from social groupings such as gays, lesbians and feminists. The stigmatisation of transgender may extend to those who provide care within the medical system; where research and provision for transgender people is under-resourced.

Both legal and medical systems exclude transgender people from full social participation and reinforce the status quo by labelling gender variance 'abnormal'. Ironically they do this in opposing ways. This exposes the fallacy upon which the gender binary system is based:

"Its as though the system is then turned against itself. So if the rule is, you have to be either male or female, and the ideological state apparatus, the law, and medicine, and education recognise only that, and have consistently therefore recognised transsexualism as a movement from one status to the other, then it has to take account of that, so it has to recognise movement" (Pamela Summers)

The construction of gender plurality as abnormal serves to legitimate perpetuation of a two gender system, and the policing of transgender and non-transgender people in terms of gender and sexuality. It means that transgender is seen as pathological, thus undermining some transgender people's agency and leading to medical abuse and coercion, particularly in the case of intersexuals, but also among transsexuals who have full surgery when partial or no surgery would have been preferred if this was socially (and legally) acceptable. Gender pathology is usefully located at the level of the social, as opposed to individual transgender people: what is really pathological is the refusal of wider society and the individuals that compose it to acknowledge gender variance as a natural part of the spectrum of human possibility. Transgender can be seen as normal variation (Gender and Sexuality Alliance Newsletter to DFEE 1998). However, at present, transgender people end up carrying social level pathology, which impacts heavily on their health and ability to contribute as citizens, and which drains public resources.

Chapter 6:

Transphobic Discourses

The previous chapter focused on the subjective and institutional aspects of transphobia. This chapter addresses the ideological roots of transphobia, although these are not necessarily distinct from subjective and institutional aspects of transphobia (as their presentational separation suggests). I use the 'discourse' definition of ideology: ideologies are sets of interrelated ideas which are both normative and descriptive (Heywood 1992). Research findings suggest that ideologies have an important role in the perpetuation of transphobia. For example, many MTF transsexuals appeared to be simultaneously oppressed by patriarchal norms of femininity and the feminist critique of transsexuality (see Raymond 1980, 1994). Deconstruction of transphobic ideologies could form a useful contribution to a revised approach to policy and practice, for example the revision of mental health service provision for transgender people which I discussed in the previous chapter.

This chapter, therefore, asks the question:

- what are the reasons behind the social erasure of transgender and systematic discrimination against transgender people?

- how does transphobia operate in the case of feminism?

The chapter outlines transphobic discourses and ideologies. It then develops analysis of feminist transphobia as a means of providing a case study of transphobia. This is certainly not because transphobia originates in feminism, but, rather, because feminist transphobia was a strong theme to emerge from the data, and once it is addressed, theoretical and political alliances between transgender people and feminists could be very fruitful. The chapter will take a broadly constructionist/poststructuralist theoretical approach, but this will be done with awareness of the problems encountered by an analysis rooted only in

constructionism: a tendency to overlook the reality of the body, cognitive faculties and the operation of the social world.

Transphobic discourses

There are a number of discursive structures underpinning transphobia. These mostly predate feminism and set the wider social context for the Western oppression of transgender people. I shall outline and discuss the following forces in brief: Ethnocentrism and Colonialism, Patriarchy, Homophobia, Sexphobia, religion, Capitalism, body fascism and finally, other forms of oppression.

Ethnocentrism and Colonialism

Transphobia exists within the context of the cultural and economic dominance of Western societies over others. The introduction documents the wide cross-cultural and precolonial incidence of transgender. Research findings evidence ethnocentrism as a cause of transphobia. One research contributor, whose background is Chinese, discussed the way in which Taoism and Taoist culture allows greater freedom concerning gender plurality, and a South East Asian non-transgender person attending one of my presentations described greater acceptance of transgender in the Pacific Rim countries. Western transphobia has, in some cases, directly impacted on communities which could be called transgender, for example Nataf (1996) discusses British colonial stigmatisation of Hijras and prohibition of their practices.

The extent of gender plurality among other cultures is used by some Western transgender people to argue for gender plurality in Western Capitalist societies, while others resist this and continue to see a binary system as natural. Debates concerning this are ongoing, for example at a meeting I went to (Hove, May 1999) this was a contentious subject. Meanwhile, it is worth pointing out that while it would be easy to adopt an argument that non Western-Capitalist and precolonial societies are or were perfect, but that this would lead dangerously into an essentialised view of the 'natural goodness' of non-European peoples, in other words a sentimental ethnocentrism which erases difference and contradiction (see Slater 1992). Thus, for example, while the Hijra third gender people of

India are part of Indian culture, they are also denigrated (film festival 1998). It would take careful analysis to ascertain the extent to which this is due to British colonisation and the impact of Victorian values on India and how much this relates to other factors. What is clear, however, is that a wide range of cultural variance concerning gender has been and continues to be subsumed by the interests of colonialism and, now, globalised capital. Cross-cultural research and analysis concerning transgender along 'race' and postcolonial lines is crucial.

Patriarchy

Some research contributors respondents saw patriarchy as a cause of transphobia, particular the way in which gender categories have been constructed and fixed as a means of enabling men as a class to dominate and exploit women. Ann Goodley discussed the origins and operation of this:

Ann: I think that, because of the patriarchal society that we've had for more than 3,000 years in which it was important for a father to hear 'it's a boy' this means that his land, his line, his name, his property, his genes are protected. It's very much in tune with the idea of the selfish gene and the dominant male. And so the very first question that's ever asked is 'is it a girl or a boy?' 'Is it a boy or a girl?' And once that's said it's written in stone. And people really firmly believe that your genes are your destiny to the extent that they'll have a child named down for the public school, the regiment or whatever else. And assumptions are made about a baby before it's even learnt to speak one word. Secondly we're in a post-imperial power but the imperial prerogative's still there. We've just been through two major world wars, in this century and I gather 60 million people died during wars during this century, which is drawing to an end. Boys are important because they become cannon fodder, soldiers, they protect the country. So in the post imperialist period there is still somewhere in the back of the mind the idea that we need the men. To do the fighting, to protect the women, to protect the land and all that sort of rubbish. And I think it's particularly noticeable that in countries which have traditionally been imperialistic the men are dominant, you look at Japan, America, Britain, Germany, this is something which has happened and it's led to very clearly

demarked ideas about 'shoulds', you know 'boys should XYZ' 'girls should XYZ' it means that certain things are also 'should nots' so that it took until half way through the century before women got anything like equal rights in work and they still aren't paid, we still aren't paid justly for our work in the main, we didn't get our vote in this country its a totally mad situation

I: So it's war and patriarchy and religion, really?

Ann: That's right. I think that the initiating spark, if you like, came from the realisation of the power of the male seed. The hunter-gatherer suddenly became more important than the homemaker-child bearer. So the conflict between groups meant that the males fought. So that very ugly powerful male idea, as the protector which is a nice idea in some ways, is also gross as it implies inequality. So a lot of the sight has been lost of the magic and the power and the position of women, and that applies to everybody, absolutely everybody

Pamela Summers echoed Ann, linking ownership via inheritance expressed through birth relations with the gender binary system. Alex Whinnom described the difficulties which transgender poses for the British aristocracy, who base succession on the male heir. Literature supports this analysis, in particular Feinberg (1996) who argues for example that medical and legal systems are imposed on the natural order because of systems of inheritance, legitimacy, paternity, succession to title and eligibility for certain professions. Bullough and Bullough (1993) note that one cause of Western hostility to male to female transgender is fear of status loss, as historically men who cross-dressed have been stigmatised while women who took male roles are rarely seen as abnormal.

Patriarchy can be seen to operate in many of the contexts in which transgender people are oppressed, including sex stereotyping (especially in the medical profession, as discussed in the previous chapter) and rigid categorisation (Shlain 1999) as well as sexism against female transgender people and discrimination against effeminate boys and men. Intersexual Kaldera (1998) notes that the male dominated culture is very hard to contend with. The patriarchal system rests heavily on the notion that sex and gender divisions are natural, but intersex challenges this at a fundamental level. As Salmacis said:

"The normals sit there so self-assured and so perfect because they think that they're natural, but I was born naturally hermaphrodite, so I'm unnatural am I? No, I'm just one of those variations, like everybody else is a variation in life"

Homophobia

Findings indicate that homophobia and biphobia (discrimination against gays, lesbians and bisexuals) are strongly linked with transphobia. This is the case where transgender people are directly sanctioned, for example Elizabeth Loxley described how mainstream people and transsexuals find it really shocking that she is bisexual, and that she is stigmatised because of this, whilst John Marshall noted that he would get labelled as a 'pouf' if he walked down the street in a dress.

Transphobia can be seen to originate in homophobia, or, alternatively, homophobia to originate in taboos about gender crossing. For example, John Marshall described how men feel sexually threatened by transvestism, as it challenges their heterosexual identities. This is supported by the literature, for example Jaggi (1998), and by Holmes (1998), who sees the taboo about intersexuality as being due to fears about homosexuality. Homophobia can be identified as consolidating male heterosexual power (see Prosser 1998). Homophobic constructions are produced by and producing of normative gender relations and identities. Butler (1997) discusses the way in which the foreclosure of subject identity formation occurs: 'impossible' desires, such as homosexual ones, are denied and this denial is carried through to the social level, where it results in the exclusion of 'others' who are cast as abnormal or persecutors. Prosser (1998) argues that homosexuality is enmeshed with transgender and that heterosexuality is constructed by the social sublimation of transgendered identification. It therefore makes sense that social denial of both transgender and homosexuality leads to further transphobia. Rubin (1984) links the persecution of homosexuals with the oppression of others who do not fit mainstream norms. This is substantiated in the findings: Zach Nataf suggested that transgender people, women and queers share opposition to heteropatriarchy.

Sexphobia

Transphobia can be traced to sex phobia, or fear and social sanctions concerning sexuality. This is particularly the case with transvestism, which for many people is explicitly linked with sexuality. Contributors note that historically, organisations such as the Beaumont Society have denied links between transvestism and sexuality. However, findings suggest a need to reclaim transvestism as a positive, healthy form of sexuality. Yvonne Sinclair discussed this:

"When you do something for pleasure society has a tendency to frown or snigger. But if you change the words slightly from 'You're a TV, a pervert' to 'You're a TS, oh how sad, trapped in the wrong body' that makes it OK. It's like drag queens are accepted, 'Oh look, they're a parody of women', but they're being paid for it and that makes it socially acceptable. But when you're doing something because it gives you pleasure then it makes you some form of outcast"

The denial of sexuality can be traced to the definition of transvestism as a sexual perversion and as pathological, and also to specific social taboos. For example Yvonne Sinclair discussed masturbation taboos in relation to sanctions on transvestism. In general, suggests Ekins (1997), the social portrayal of transsexuality erases the erotic aspects. This impacts negatively on transsexuals. For example, Roz Kaveney noted that one reason she was not sure she was a transsexual was because she was told by society that she could not be a transsexual because she enjoyed sex. Bland (1995) argues that the definition of transsexual as someone who does not cross-dress for pleasure denies them the possibility to do so, and that this is oppressive as it blocks the self-therapeutic aspects of sexual fantasy, causing people considerable distress. Feinberg (1996) also criticises the vilification of transvestite fetishism by feminists and others. Steven Whittle (personal communication 1998) discussed the self-perceived need for transsexuals to distance themselves from transvestites because of the stigmatisation of transvestite sexuality. However, the social oppression of transsexuals is also directly linked to sexphobia. For example Feinberg (1996) notes that sensationalism about transsexuality is due to cultural taboos about genitalia.

Social taboos about sexuality are a means by which sexuality is controlled. The public management of sexuality is well documented (see for example Durham 1995, Carabine 1996) and is discussed in the previous chapter with respect to transgender and medicine. The framing of transvestism and transsexuality as 'sexual perversions', and as pathologies, rests on negative attitudes towards non-reproductive sexuality and the notion that sex is at the root of social order/disorder (see Rubin 1984). Rubin formulates a pluralist theory of sexuality aimed at denouncing erotic injustice and promoting sexual pluralism. Her work links with that of the sex liberationists Reich (1962) and Marcuse (1970), who see sexuality as an essential urge which is capable of creating progressive social change and the removal of social oppression concerning sexuality as necessary for a more civilised society. Sexual liberationism was superseded by Foucault's repressive hypothesis, which rejects the idea of an essential sexual urge. However, research findings indicate the possible existence of some degree of essential self, of which sexuality is a part (see chapter 4). There are problems with sex liberationism, in particular a blanket enthusiasm about all forms of sexuality, which can override concerns with power structures (Pringle 1992) and agency. Research findings indicate the dangers of being overly sex positive and a wide divergence of opinions concerning sexuality held by transgender people, including in one case an anti-pornography stance, and dislike of sexual-expression driven transgender behaviour evidenced among some others. Some transsexuals and intersexuals identify as asexual, and some are unable to have genital sex because of their physiology. Agency is crucial here: sex-positive pluralism means equality of people regardless of their form of sexual expression, including celibacy and traditional forms of expression as a positive options. Consensuality and non-harm is also fundamental. Hamish usefully discusses the limits of queer politics and sex liberationism: forms of sexuality which abuse power, particularly paedophilia, are not part of a liberationist sexual politics. Despite these issues, a sex-positive stance is important for transgender politics because so much of the stigma attached to transgender is rooted in sexphobia.

Religion

Religious beliefs are an important cause of transphobia, as well as contributing to the homophobia and sexphobia discussed earlier. Salmacis, who was born into a Jewish

family, described the way in which Christianity and Judaism reinforce rigid male-female binaries. By challenging the gender binary system "you have to accept that nature doesn't work in the way that the Christian church says it does: it works like nature". She expressed considerable anger about religion and saw it as legitimating the oppression of intersexuals. Ann Goodley discussed religion and transphobia:

Ann: I feel very strongly that particularly in patriarchal societies such as ours, the Judeo-Christian-Moslem sort of ethos, we've lost touch with the magic of the middle ground. And I think in a sense it's like pretending that half the brain doesn't work in our society if you like, I think we've made ourselves mono-polar, not just, although it defines itself as a bipolar society the results of that extreme polarity is that men do not understand women and women do not understand men, frequently, because its an isolated polarisation it's not even a sensible joined up form of polarisation like in the planet.

I: Um, yeah. You've already mentioned patriarchal society. Can you say a bit more about how that you know the relationship between the two, between patriarchal society and this binary?

Ann: How it has come?

I: Yeah

Ann: Right, I think it's, obviously the foundation comes from the Judeo-Christian creation myth: God created the male and female, in fact it says male and female, it doesn't say male or female but people take it to mean that. And because at the time of the early Jewish patriarchs, they wished to prevent idolatry, where people were worshipping stones, objects, money, sex or whatever and they wanted them to worship a monotheistic godhead. And at that point in history men had realised that their sperm had something to do with babies, and they were firmly in charge. If you look further back in history, beyond Gilgameth and so on, to the time of the Goddess, women held power over life and were therefore seen to have power over death and were much more powerful and if you look at modern matriarchal

societies the position of women is not subsidiary to men but its either equal or more powerful to men. So I think it was bound to happen once men had placed the phallus, God had to be male and if God was male then men were nearer to God than women, after all women have horrible periods and unclean things and they tempt men away from this god. The whole of that rubbish has developed where you have Eve as the temptress dragging man the poor soul towards hell. St Augustin's confessions crystalised this: women were seen as either virgins or evil temptresses.

I presented preliminary findings at a meeting (Hove, May 1999). The transsexuals and transgender people present discussed religion and there was general agreement that this is a major cause of transphobia, although one Christian contributor noted that the church is changing due to the impact of debates concerning homosexuality. The discussion addressed the way in which monotheistic religions tried to bury third sex/gender, as this has links with matriarchal religions, paganism and shamanism. Transgender people are seen by such traditions as understanding different things because of their difference from ordinary men and women. They have access to both sides of the gender divide, thus are 'special'. Transgender people have had a historical role as doctors as well as a role in early religions. They were thus a threat to the hegemony of the church, who controlled them by witch-hunting and other oppressive tactics. The monotheistic religions are male dominated, with an emphasis on 'God the father' and the perpetuation of male hierarchy via centralised, hierarchical institutions. One participant noted however that it is now thought that some of the matriarchal religions were just as oppressive as patriarchal ones, and that now, with the breakdown of monotheistic religion, there is a chance for humanity to create a balance of power between women and men.

Literature supports findings concerning religion and the oppression of transgender people. MacKenzie (1994) identifies rigidity concerning sex binaries as rooted in Judeo-Christian hierarchical religion, and Bullough and Bullough (1993) describe the biblical condemnation of cross-dressing. Kessler (1998) points out the way in which the Catholic church naturalises sex dimorphism, while Rothblatt (1995) discusses the way in which the church used to frame transgender people as heretics or devils. Feinberg (1996) documents the systematic oppression of transgender people by the Christian church, including widespread murder and genocide legitimated by interpretations of the bible and based on

the suppression of matriarchal and pagan religions as well as capitalist and class interest. Ze also discusses the incidence of transgender within the church, including cross dressing as part of religious ceremony, and the hypocrisy of this.

The key reasons for the religious oppression of transgender people seem to be the way in which transgender involves the crossing of the gender divide. This potentially gives people power which others do not have. As noted in the introduction, many spiritual traditions, for example Taoism, Tantrism, Alchemy and Shamanism, are based on the idea that the combination of characteristics of both sexes can connect people to a transcendent spiritual realm (Feinberg 1996, Hutchins and Kaahamanu 1991, Klossowski de Rola 1973). Findings suggest that the concept of transgender as spiritual is also part of Christianity:

"We also hold the notion from Judeo-Christian mythology that Adam at his creation was both male and female, since in their story, you know, he contained Eve. So there's an arguable sense of androgyny there, located in the sacred and transcendent rather than the sacred and immanent" (Pamela Summers).

Obviously, religions vary in their stance towards transgender, and there is also diversity within religions concerning this issue. Some spiritual traditions use transgender as a means of gaining access to spiritual experience in the present, or immanent, based on people's own experience rather than completely reliant on institutional tradition. This is deeply threatening to religious institutions which rely for their existence on people gaining access to spirituality only through hierarchical systems. For example, Joan of Arc, who was transgendered, was killed by the church after claiming that she received information in visions of a higher authority than that of the church (Feinberg 1996). Shamanism is linked by Kaldera (1998) to progressive political activism, perhaps because of the self-empowerment which transgender provokes. In other words, a connection to a sense of spirituality which is based on agency, and a self-identity which develops in relation to but is not dependent on social norms, can be a powerful springboard for social change. Pamela Summers discussed the problems of politics based on spirituality: the idea that an idea comes from the 'transcendent' and is thus more worthy and less open to challenge than others is dangerous, lending itself to moralism and power structures. However, a pluralist politics which includes spirituality would acknowledge the right of every citizen to develop

their connection to the 'transcendent' if they choose to do so and to debate the implications of this within the political forum.

Religious oppression of transgender people continues today, with the right wing attack on transgender people in the USA strongly influenced by the religious (mostly Christian) right (Swan 1997). The moral right aims to preserve the differences between women and men by maintaining the existing hegemonic heterosexual order (Luff 1997). Weeks (1998) points out that increasing religious fundamentalism can be understood in relation to fast economic, social and cultural change. Swan (1997) discusses the reality of the current crisis in morality, but argues that this is not solved by the silencing of sexual and gender minorities. Swan suggests that Christian values support tolerance and pluralism rather than the stigmatisation of socially marginalised groups.

Capitalism

Capitalism can be seen to be an important factor in understanding transphobia. However, there is a divergence of opinion in the findings and literature concerning the relationship between capitalism and transgender. For those thinkers using a conflict model, capitalism fuels transphobia and/or entails the capitalist exploitation of transgender people, while for other thinkers, capitalism enables gender expression via processes of commodification.

Feinberg (1996), coming from a Marxist perspective, traces the development of transphobia through religious domination based on class interests, involving, initially, suppression of decentralised matriarchal religions by the Jewish and Christian churches. Suppression of the peasant classes throughout medieval times can be linked with transphobia, as transgender was in some cases an important part of peasant rebellions. Interestingly, contributor Yvonne Sinclair points out that transgender has always been present and tolerated amongst the "idle rich", where as when working class people have 'done' transgender they have been suppressed. Following Feinberg, transgender can be seen to destabilise capitalism because it challenges the sexual division of labour, on which private ownership and the accumulation of wealth is based. Bigotry against transgender people can therefore be seen as a tool used by the parasitic ruling classes to control the masses, via a divide and rule technique. Transphobia can also be traced to excessive

materialism, with identities being based on the physical, so that presentation becomes extremely important and people are categorised on the basis of their appearance.

It is important to point out that conflict analysis of transgender can be used in a transphobic way, if transgender is seen as a form of capitalist commodification and transsexuality as a medical condition is seen as created in the service of capital interests (see Billings and Urban 1982). This view is rejected by transgender people, including Feinberg (1996), who points out that transsexuality exists transhistorically (for example temple eunuchs). Nonetheless, some contributors discuss the capitalist exploitation of transgender people. MKP argues that 'there is a transsexual empire', while Stephen Whittle discusses the way in which transgender people have been commercially exploited:

Stephen: There are people who hang on the community who do some real weird things and, you know, a lot of the therapists or supposed therapists a lot of the shrinks, some of the lawyers who hang in, not many lawyers hang in on the community actually because I don't think they've got as much money, surgeons as well, hang in on this community they're not part of the community they're literally hangers on making money, making money that's all it's about, making money, making personal ? and unfortunately what happens and I think this is a really important aspect of it is for a long time those people have been the voice of this community or those people have been perceived as the voice of this community. So this community is seen as, people who are seeking specific things whether it's a stereotype. But most specifically people who are utterly selfish but the problem and I actually really do believe this is sort of a piece of research to be done, is to do some analysis of the way these people are ?? exactly how to think, that they are selfish people, they are greedy people and because they speak for us but they are fundamentally selfish and greedy people ? we get seen as selfish and greedy people.

I: You're sort of talking about the way that medics and the lawyers and the academics have appropriated experiences and pathologised it etcetera that's what you're talking about isn't it?

Stephen: Yes

An alternative analysis of transgender and capital focuses on the way in which capital appears to operate in a neutral fashion to some extent, with commodification enabling transgender expression, and the market forcing social change. There is some support for this in the findings. For example, the increase in private treatment of transsexuality appears to be putting pressure on NHS providers to release outdated, gender-stereotypical treatment norms, and recreational transgender is linked with a liberalisation of public attitudes towards transgender. This is occurring in the context of a loosening of sexual authoritarianism linked with emphasis on the free economy, which allows choice but can undermine social co-operation (Weeks 1997). The commodification of transgender involves consumerism, and in some cases containment in sections of society in a way which stops them affecting the mainstream (Evans 1993), but simultaneously allows transgender people self-expression. Self-expression is however strongly stratified by economic circumstance, which obviously affect access to surgery, clothes and other things enabling transgender presentation. Zach Nataf cited economic inequalities as the biggest problem facing transgender people. These operate within the transgender communities as well as wider society, with a hierarchy existing concerning surgery, which is hugely expensive. Roz Kaveney noted that many working class transsexuals have to resort to prostitution:

Roz: Oh, example .. I mean I actually didn't have a bad time with this. We're talking cases where I know people who were denied NHS surgery because they had convictions for prostitution and drugs.

I: Oh God.

Roz: One, prostitution, well, I mean, you know, get real.

I: Yeah. I mean a lot of people do it, don't they?

Roz: Yeah. I mean it's part of you, if working class kids who spent their teens being fucked up about being transsexual and have often left school without any qualifications ... you know, what are they going to do?

I: Well exactly. I mean what, you know..

Roz: And who are too insecure to go and get a job in a shop. And aren't going to be able to pay for all the side consequences of transition like probably having to find a place to live

The debate concerning transgender and capitalism will no doubt continue. A purely Marxist analysis can be rejected following Foucault, who understands power as operating in diverse, fragmented ways by the imposition of a grid of definition (Weeks 1989). However, the imposition of a rigid binary concerning sex and gender may be linked to class domination and inequality as fostered by hierarchical and patriarchal religious institutions. A democratic model is perhaps more enabling, but may fail to address the structural inequalities affecting transgender peoples' ability to engage socially.

Body Fascism

One of the effects of increased consumerism and materialism is body fascism, which can be defined as unequal treatment of people on the basis of appearance norms, and the stigmatisation of those deemed unattractive. This is a major problem for many transgender people and can be located as a direct cause of transphobia. As Ann said:

"Unfortunately we judge each other on how we present, and how we present is judged not just aesthetically but in terms of what is fashionable, what is acceptable, within the society within which we live and so on. It's very very difficult"

Body fascism is linked to pressures on transgender people to fit social norms and to attempt to pass as well as to considerable suffering amongst those who do not fit social norms. Several respondents discussed body fascism as a problem which has to be dealt with during the course of daily living. Interestingly, Stephen Whittle noted the way in which attitudes in the transgender community, which apparently used to be rife with body fascism, are changing:

"I think in relation to feminist theory or queer theory that's one of the most important things that the community has because people are really not told any longer what they should be like. Nobody says, 'Oh of course when are you hoping to have your surgery', nobody sort of does that at all. I mean you might get some comment like, 'are you still taking hormones?' and somebody might say, 'oh no I'm not ?' and they say, 'oh yes I wondered whether I should?', you know and then people have a conversation about medical risks and so on and so forth but nobody says, somebody might say, 'oh you ought to really because you'll get osteoporosis if you don't' but nobody says 'you ought to because you'll look more like a man or a woman', they say 'you ought to because you'll get osteoporosis if you don't', there's a big difference, a huge difference" (Stephen Whittle).

Literature documents the effects of body fascism among the wider population, for example Lacey (1999) notes how people who are considered beautiful are socially privileged in the workplace, relationships and wider society. For transgender people this can extend to surgery, for example surgeon's emphasis on the appearance of genitals rather than sexual responsiveness (Kessler 1998), as well as the wide range of purely cosmetic secondary surgery which many transsexuals undergo. Kessler (1998) discusses Hausman's analysis of cosmetic surgery, where this is seen as shifting the boundaries of the socially acceptable so that a smaller range of appearance is considered normal and so that bodies become objectified. Feminists have thus argued for the rejection of cosmetic surgery (Kessler 1998). This is a difficult issue which needs to be understood in terms of the lived experience of transsexuals who feel that they need surgery regardless of social norms: how far does this extend into cosmetic surgery, and how far is it possible to criticise others' choices? Choices concerning how far to adapt to social norms have to be made at the individual level. However, explicit acknowledgement of the inequity of socially constructed, naturalised norms concerning appearance is important in creating social space for physical diversity. This involves challenging the privileging of certain types of appearance. As Kessler (1998) says, "If we want people to respect particular bodies, they need to be taught to lose respect for ideal ones" (p118).

There are other discursive structures which contribute to transphobia. These include disablism, which is related to body fascism. It is difficult to link this directly to

transphobia because of the divergence of opinion within the transgender communities about whether transsexuality and intersex are disabilities. However a social model of disability, where this is seen as constructed, is certainly pertinent to the exclusion of transgender people on the grounds of body type. Mentalism, or the stigmatisation of people with mental health difficulties, is also relevant, given the medical framing of transsexuality as a psychiatric problem and the effects of this on public attitudes. One contributor with serious mental health problems identified mentalism as an issue, although this is problematic given the rejection of transgender as a mental pathology by many transgender people (see the previous chapter).

Feminism and Transphobia

Transgender is a divisive and volatile issue for the feminist movement (Whittle 1998). Feminist debates about transgender centre around the work of fundamentalist radical feminists, in particular Raymond (1980, 1994), Daly (1984), Jeffreys (1993, 1996) and Greer (1999). I have called these feminists transphobic because they display the fear and prejudice which characterises transphobia. Raymond's classic and influential text *The Transsexual Empire* (1980) embodies the key tenets of feminist transphobia. It has impacted very negatively on transgender people's lives and on wider discourses concerning transgender. This is now changing with the work of authors of authors such as More (1996c), Whittle (1998b), Feinberg (1996), Prosser (1998) and Califia (1997). However, as Hamish Macdonald noted, the effects of Raymond and other feminist's attacks on transsexuals are still strong.

In this section I do not deal with the medical aspects of Raymond's attack on transsexuals, as her useful if flawed critique of the medical establishment was addressed in the previous chapter. I also do not address the critique of Butler (1990, 1993), which is dealt with in the chapter on poststructuralism. This section deals with unwarranted and oppressive feminist discourses concerning transgender. I will address the work of four feminists here: Raymond (1980, 1994, 1996), Daly (1984), Jeffreys (1996) and Greer (1999). There are other transphobic feminists, including Millot (1990), who frames transsexuality as a mental pathology, Hausman (1995), who denies transexual's agency and expresses prejudice concerning intersexuality and the surgical complications involved in transsexuality

(Hemmings 1996) and Zita (1992). This section will begin by providing a historical and theoretical context for the development of transphobic feminism and describing the work of transphobic feminists. I then develop a critique of transphobic feminism, focusing on methodology, theory and politics and, lastly, I briefly discuss the implications of transgender for feminism.

Transphobic feminist discourse regarding transsexuality emerged in the 1970s during disputes concerning transsexual women in women's space (see Raymond 1980). Raymond's (1980) book had contributions from a number of radical feminists, including Mary Daly and Andrea Dworkin. Radical feminist analysis developed in the context of consciousness-raising, the reclamation of women's voices and visibility, the establishment of rape crisis centres and other developments which can be seen as a reaction to male domination and oppression. Radical feminists adopt a variety of theoretical positions, ranging from the biologicistic, technologicistic stance taken by Firestone (1970) through to the constructionist analysis of authors such as Ti-Grace Atkinson (Humm 1989).

The core tenets of radical feminism are that women's oppression stems from their categorisation as an inferior class due to their sex/gender. All oppression and inequality is seen as an extension of male supremacy, or patriarchy. Radical feminism is termed 'radical' because it frames all forms of domination as based on gender inequality. Radical feminists aim to destroy the gender system and argue that this will lead to emancipation in terms of other types of inequality, for example racism (Firestone 1970). There is an emphasis on woman-centred identities and lifestyles. Emphasis on the 'personal as political' means that sexual identification is seen as a locus of political change (Humm 1989), with the frequent (and damaging) effect of encouraging prescriptiveness concerning behaviour and identity. Radical feminism has, I feel, made a hugely important contribution to sexual politics, by opening up space for women to explore alternatives to mainstream gender and sexual relations, and by influencing these. There are, however, serious problems with radical feminism if it is taken as the only, or best, standpoint.

Debates concerning radical feminism and its limitations have been an important issue for feminists. Radical feminism has been strongly criticised by Socialist feminists (Humm 1989) and Black feminists (hooks 1984, Davis 1981). The 'sex wars' of the 1980s

concerning pornography, sadomasochism and butch/femme roles are related to radical feminism (see Vance 1992). The key areas of dispute concern the view that all women are a class, versus notions of difference, and the view that men and masculinity are the cause of all oppression, versus stances which locate oppression elsewhere in addition to masculinist forms of inequality. Other disputes occur in relation to sexuality (see for example O'Sullivan and Ardill 1993). Califia (1997) usefully likens fundamentalist feminist positions to right wing religious fundamentalism: the moral high ground, fervour and vilification of dissenters are all present. As well as damaging and alienating people, feminist fundamentalism has acted to detract from equal rights campaigning, because focus has been on policing of morals and insider/outsider issues. It has, suggests Califia (1997) allowed feminists to avoid facing self-critique and social change. Radical fundamentalist feminism has been shown to erase the lived experience of vast numbers of women, and is no longer used unproblematically in feminist thinking. It is, however, important to locate debates concerning transgender and feminism in relation to radical feminism. The arguably dated, limited concepts adopted by radical feminists still dominate feminist analysis of transgender, while analysis in other areas, such as ethnicity (for example Mirza 1997) has leapt ahead, usefully informing current feminist praxis.

I have used the term 'fundamentalist feminism' to describe Ramondesque radical feminism because it is based on the assumption that women's inequality is the sole cause of oppression and involves prescriptive politics. Her stance towards transsexuals is extremely problematic. Raymond's (1980) views about transsexuality can best be summarised by the quote "I contend that the problem with transsexualism would best be served by morally mandating it out of existence" (1980 p.178) via legal limitations on changing sex. Raymond names transsexual women as men, denying their self-identification. She reaches her position via the interpretation of transsexuality as the result of people's inability to adapt to patriarchal gender norms. This includes transsexual's supposed abhorrence of homosexuality and 'desire to "normalise" their sexual relationships by acquiring the appropriate genitalia"' (p. 122). For Raymond, the medical treatment of transsexuals is seen as a patriarchal means of reinforcing gender stereotypes. She sees transsexuality as socially constructed, with no biological aetiology. Thus physical sex-changing is seen as harmful and as violating of identity development, as well as providing a means of evading the political project of resistance to gender norms. Transsexuals are seen as reinforcing

gender, when, according to Raymond, the goal of feminism is to eradicate gender altogether. She rejects the notion of androgyny, arguing that it tends to be male dominated historically and is linked to conventional definitions of feminine and masculine. Raymond appears to fall into the pro-censorship camp of feminist thinking, for example she links transsexuals with lesbian imagery in male pornography in a denigrating way.

Raymond describes MTF transsexuals as 'boundary violators' (p. 108) and as deceptively invading women's space, minds and emotions. She argues that "All transsexuals rape women's bodies by reducing the real female form to an artefact, and appropriating this body for themselves" (p 104). She suggests that "The transsexually constructed lesbian-feminist feeds off woman's true energy source, i.e. her woman-identified self. It is he (sic) who recognises that if female spirit, mind, creativity and sexuality exist anywhere in a powerful way it is here, among lesbian-feminists" (p. 108). She thus privileges genetic women's positions asserting that that, unlike MTF transsexuals 'we know that we are women'. Raymond silences opposition from transsexuals by denying them any understanding of themselves and argues that lesbian-feminists who accept transsexual women are "mutilating their own reality" (p. 119).

Raymond has maintained her position regarding transsexuality and extended this to include other forms of transgender (1994, 1996). Thus, in her later work, transgender people are still seen as reinforcing rather than challenging gender norms: both by the adoption of stereotypical modes of appearance and by a trend towards expressive individualism rather than collective political action. Raymond (1994) argues that transgender is a means of assimilating challenges to gender norms. She suggests that "A real sexual politics says yes to a view and reality of transgender that instead of conforming to gender, really transforms it" (p. 632).

Mary Daly (1984) holds a position similar to Raymond regarding transgender. They have collaborated in developing this stance, for example Daly discusses transsexual 'deception' of genetic women with Raymond (see Raymond 1980). Daly's stance seems to originate in her essentialist woman-centred form of theology (1984), where a 'real' sense of spirituality is intrinsically linked with being female. Daly argues that patriarchal Christian doctrine encourages people to doubt their perceptions and that this 'doublethink' persuades people to

accept transsexuality. She equates transsexuality unproblematically with anti-abortion, advertising concerning nuclear weapons, pornography and sadomasochism through this notion of 'doublethink'.

Sheila Jeffreys (1996) also follows Raymond's analysis of transgender. She argues that transsexuality and transgender are reinforcing of heteropatriarchy because they maintain gender as real rather than transcending or destroying gender, and that in many cases transvestism and drag are part of mainstream culture. Like Raymond, she describes transsexual women as men. Jeffreys also sees transsexuality as resulting from internalised homophobia. She extends Raymond's analysis to argue that transgender maintains two dichotomous genders: 'the transgender activists are not creating a "third" but are merely recreating two genders of male supremacy, male dominance, in masculinity, and female subordination, in femininity' (1996 p. 90). In addition, she describes text concerning transsexual's sexual experience as a 'freak show' and as similar to disability pornography (1996). Jeffreys addresses postmodernism and the work of transgender author Halberstam, arguing that Halberstam's postmodernism lacks a basis in material experience, for example change to bodies is not fluid, it is irreversible (I agree with this, to a degree, as shown in the chapter on poststructuralism). Jeffreys also mentions Bornstein's (1994) critique of radical lesbian feminists for seeking to maintain gender categories, but she does not provide an adequate response.

Germaine Greer (1999) utilises Raymond's work. Initially, Greer was not transphobic and in fact bases her work on the notion that there are more than two sexes and genders and that the sex/gender dichotomy is false (1970). However, she subsequently develops prejudice against transgender people, as evidenced in the following quote:

"On the day that the Female Eunuch was issued in America, a person in flapping draperies rushed up to me and grabbed my hand. 'Thank you so much for all you have done for us girls'. I smirked and nodded and stepped backwards, trying to extricate my hand from the enormous, knuckly, hairy, be-ringed paw that clutched it. The face staring into mine was thickly coated with pancake make-up through which stubble was already burgeoning..." (1989)

Greer's attitudes are illustrated by very public campaign against transsexuals. Contributors discussed the way in which Greer has recently been active in trying to exclude a transsexual women from a female-only university. In *The Real Women* (1999) Greer devotes a whole chapter to criticism of transsexuality. Like Raymond, she argues that the medical establishment created transsexuality and that this is profoundly conservative, and she uses male pronouns for transsexual women. Transsexuals should, according to Greer, be denied citizenship rights, such as passports in their new sex. She endorses the rejection of transsexuals by genetic women. Apparently following Raymond, she states that "when he (sic) forces his way into the few private spaces that women may enjoy and shouts down their objections, and bombards the women who will not accept him with threats and hate mail, he does what rapists have always done" (p. 80). Greer extends Raymond's line to suggest that transsexuality is supported by the state because it concerns women framed as 'defective males'; the same is apparently true of intersexuals. Like Jeffreys, she discusses involvement of transgender people in the sex industry in a negative way. However her work is somewhat more grounded in social analysis, for example she discusses the social acceptance of third sex in India as enabling people with these identities to exist.

To summarise, these accounts share a denial of transgender people's agency, voice and ability to self-define. They all frame transsexuality as caused by a patriarchal system and posit transsexuality and transgender as reinforcing gender norms rather than transcending them. They all argue for a policing of sex/gender boundaries and see transsexual women as deceptively and destructively invading women's space. They all assume a privileged political and moral position for genetic women. Even where their contributions are useful, they are still problematic. For instance, Raymond's critique of stereotyping medical practice, although still relevant in some cases, is now dated and Jeffrey's interpretation of transgender people's use of the term 'shaman' as ethnocentric is simplistic. For example I met a Native American Two-Spirit (transgender) shaman who was campaigning to have Native American teachings accepted in the UK educational system. The problems with transphobic feminist's analysis will be dealt with by addressing, their methodology, theory and politics.

Methodological Critique

There are serious methodological problems with the work of Raymond, Daly, Jeffreys and Greer. The three latter feminists all base their analysis on Raymond's work, rather than independent empirical research. Raymond's research can be seen as unethical. It completely denies transgender people agency and voice. Her work has had very harmful effects. In addition, Raymond, Daly, Jeffreys and Greer are at times inconsistent and irrational and their work also contains some factual inaccuracies. These points will be dealt with in turn.

Ethics

Raymond's methods go directly against basic feminist methodological and ethical guidelines, such as honesty, equality of research relationship, empowerment of participants, giving of voice and non-harm (Reinharz 1992). She deceived her subjects when gaining access by failing to let them know that she had an anti-transsexual agenda (Califia 1997). Zach Nataf described Raymond as dishonest, as the research was carried out on the "pretence of feminism and empowerment to women against patriarchy in some way". In addition, as Zach said, this probably means that her findings are distorted. There are other ways in which transphobic feminist's praxis is unethical in relation to transgender. For instance, contributor Salmacis discussed her distress at the pejorative use of the term 'eunuch' by Greer ((1970), as it denies 'eunuch' as a positive identity.

Agency and self-determination

Raymond and other fundamentalist feminists, in effect, deny transgender people the basic right to exist. This amounts to gender fascism and xenophobia. Raymond's stance is rejected by the transsexuals who contributed to the research, but Raymond denies transsexuals any understanding or self-determination in the matter. This is based on the notion that transsexuals are suffering from false consciousness, but as Zach Nataf pointed out, feminists themselves might be suffering from false consciousness. He described Raymond's position as "incredibly arrogant" in presuming she understands transgender people's lives better than they do, and in using pejorative terms such as 'internalised self-

hate' and 'mutilation' to describe transgender people's experience. Raymond's erasure of transgender agency and lived experience is the most fundamental problem with her position, and that of other feminists who adopt a similar stance. Agency was emphasised as crucial by contributors to the research. This included the right to self-define. Raymond's denial of transsexual's rights to self-identify is evidenced in her use of stigmatising terms such as 'male to constructed female' and male pronouns to refer to transsexual women. This denial of transgender agency is also used by Raymond to excuse herself for her deception of transsexuals: she frames transsexuals a 'captive population' incapable of giving informed consent (Califia 1997).

Raymond silences and denies the agency of other groups as well as transgender people. She frames dissenters, including feminists such as myself, as being deceived and failing to see the 'repressiveness' of liberalism and tolerance, as well as betraying the feminist cause (Califia 1997). This silences opposition to fundamentalist feminism and is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the dominance of the 'Raymond' stance on transsexuality has remained the dominant form of feminist analysis for the last twenty years.

Non-harm

Research findings indicate that Raymond's and other feminist's transphobia has had a negative impact. Contributor Salmacis described how the people who sexually abused her as a child quoted Raymond's book when labelling her a freak, in order to justify their abuse of her. Raymond's work can also be linked to psychological abuse. Kate N' Ha Ysabet said "My experience of a lot of feminists has been very abusive". Roz Kaveney sees Raymond's stance as victim-blaming. Contributors described the way in which the fundamentalist feminist line erases transgender people's agency. For example, Stephen Whittle discussed ignorance of transgender experience:

"But you know people talk about sitting on the fence. The issue is that our place is on, on you may call it the fence but it's a place to us and I think that as far as the transgender and transsexual community we have a place. It is a place but it's, but it's seen as being a place that's created by other people, controlled by other people,

manipulative, a manipulative place and it's, you know, just, it's, it's a naive and the real ignorance about what it means to be a transgendered or transsexual person"

Transphobic feminist's work has also had a harmful effect on the wider population. Their ideas are damaging to genetic women as well as transgender people insofar as they reinforce women's fears about safety, politics, community, spirituality and womanhood. In other words, they perpetuate fears about transgender by linking them with the very real abuses which women continue to suffer because of patriarchy. For example, these discourses might make a woman feel unsafe in women-only space if they knew a transsexual woman was present, where as in reality the likelihood of this posing any threat to anyone is very small indeed. These ideas also stunt possibilities for collaboration and friendship across gender boundaries. Lastly, Raymond's stance, and the fallout from her and other's work, meant that it was very hard for me as a feminist to gain access to the field. In effect, she fouled the pitch, creating very justifiable mistrust among transsexuals concerning non-transgender feminists and feminism.

Inconsistency

In addition to poor research practice, transphobic feminist's use of argument is flawed. Raymond's arguments are contradictory, for example she flips between biological essentialism and social constructionism. Raymond and other feminists also use inflammatory language. For example Raymond asks whether every lesbian feminist space will become a harem if lesbian feminist transsexuals are present. She quotes psychiatrists who say that many transsexuals have masochistic tendencies, then equates transsexuality with sadomasochism (More 1996c). She likens transsexuality to Nazism and to foot binding, clitotorodectomy, lobotomies and other abuses of human rights in a very poorly substantiated way. Daly and Jeffreys also link emotive (and in the case of paedophilia, abusive) practices with transsexuality in an unsubstantiated manner.

Transgender contributors discussed the irrational aspects of Raymond's arguments. Hamish, who has a long history as a lesbian and a feminist, commented on the way that MTFs were seen as enemy spies in late seventies and early eighties women's space. He said: "It's hardly going to shatter world politics, you know, what goes on the local dykey

disco. World War Three is going to break out because some MTF has been down to a dykey disco, I don't think!". A similar theme is that there is a patriarchal conspiracy to make biological women obsolete via the creation of female transsexuals; Raymond suggests the advertising industry is involved in propaganda concerning this and that transsexuals are eager co-operators in this venture (Califia 1997). Contributor Roz Kaveney discussed transphobic feminist irrationality:

Roz: There was also the paranoid argument, you know the Janice Raymond trojan horses and the patriarchy

I: So basically transsexuals are invading women's space?

Roz: Yes, transsexuals are created by medical science on a slab with electrodes (laughs). In order at the very least to invade space.

I: So what do you think about that then?

Roz: (laughs) Um, it's .. the fact that it's the language which uses the sort of rhetoric that's always associated with nationalist movements as they move into their fascist phase speaks, I think, for itself.

I: Yes. So you're talking about the rhetoric.

Roz: Yeah, I mean the..

I: In what way?

Roz: The rhetoric is of pollution. A politics that talks about pollution is a politics that is moving into magical thinking. Any politics that includes magical thinking as a way to drive out sections of the community and stigmatise sections of the community has already made the leap towards that. So that sort of irrationalist politics which we for a short time we can call Fascist.

I: Yeah. So can you talk about why it's magical?

Roz: When Janice Raymond says 'ah yes, all transsexuals rape women's bodies. Lesbian identified transsexuals rape the entire ..' I mean I can't quote this, I used to be able to quote this verbatim, you know the entire body politic of women by intruding them. There are two things, one, whether this is actually saying that this metaphor is literally true and two, it's an insult to the fact that people are actually raped, both women and men and transgender people are actually raped, not metaphorically and to use rape as a metaphor in that way is an insult. And it's also a way of blaming victims because actually, who's more likely to be a victim of violence, of sexual violence? An American academic or someone working the street?

Factual inaccuracies

Transphobic feminist methodology has resulted in the perpetration of other fallacies. For example transsexual women who live as women are now accepted in many women-only spaces in the UK with little effect on those spaces. Problems seem to be mostly due to fear and prejudice among genetic women, rather than difficulties such as dominating behaviour by transgender women. I was told by one non-transgender worker at a women-only centre that transgender women come to their groups but the other women are left ignorant of this because they would be upset if they knew. These transgender women pass as women without any of the problems discussed by Raymond occurring. Similarly, research findings show that the argument that transsexuals are brought up as one sex and cannot change socially is wrong. Many of the transsexuals I met are socially indistinguishable from genetic women and men in every respect. Another issue is Raymond's (1994) fears of 'androgynous humanism' replacing women and feminism. As noted above, Raymond (1980) rejects the concept of androgyny because it is seen to be male-dominated. However all of the four intersex or androgynous people who contributed to the research use feminism, and three of them are socially female.

Another critique stemming from Raymond is that transsexuality is a means of people avoiding facing their homosexuality. There may be some truth in this, but only for a

minority. Many transsexuals who were originally heterosexual become asexual or homosexual following transition. The choice of surgery as a means of dealing with homophobia is unlikely, as shown in discussion with James Green, who has talked with hundreds of American transsexuals:

I: One of the things that people who've kind of, well, been, well, I suppose I'm thinking of people like Sheila Jeffreys have said that it's about people transition because they're gay and they don't want to acknowledge it, (James laughs) Just tell me what you think, so I can put it down.

James: Er, I wouldn't be surprised if you can find people who are deeply homophobic, but are attracted to people that would prior to transiting have made them homosexual.

I: Yeah.

James: You know, why not? You know, certainly there are, that doesn't necessarily mean that that's the only criteria that one would need in order to go through a transition as massive as this. You know, certainly there are probably other factors going on. I don't think, I have never met anyone, or spoken to or corresponded with anyone who was completely driven by their sexual desire as the thing that was needed, that they were trying to satisfy by going through transition

Other transphobic feminists also show ignorance concerning transgender. For example, Greer (1999) makes false assertions, including the view that MTF transsexuals show little interest in reproduction, and that FTM transsexuals have no possibility of a career in the sex industry. These 'facts' are disputed by my findings: some transsexual women do wish for children and one FTM contributor discussed the possibilities of earning money via sex work, while another male-identified transgender contributor already does so, albeit dragged up as a woman.

Theoretical Critique

There are a number of theoretical problems with the work of Raymond and other transphobic feminists. These include biological and social determinism, flawed notions of gender and oppression, problems concerning ideas of transcending gender and incapacity to deal with intersex and other non-male and non-female identities.

Constructionism and determinism

Despite her assertion that transsexuality is a social construct, Raymond (1980) adheres to a mixture of biological and social determinism in her discussion of genetic women. She argues that transsexual women are unequal to genetic women because they are born male. Similarly, Daly (1984) describes MTF transsexuals as 'the biggest lie', because they are not born as women. Contributors have been at the receiving end of these attitudes. For example, Kate N' Ha Ysabet described feminists saying things like 'I can still prove I'm a woman because I've got a cunt. I'm a woman cause I've a cunt and you're a bloke because you've got a cock'.

The biologically determinist stance indicated by Raymond is untenable, as there are wide chromosomal and biological variations among the general population (Rothblatt 1994) and intersex people are not accounted for. In addition, it goes against the constructionist position developed by feminists since de Beauvoir (1953). Biological determinism of the binary system type is a dangerous break with early feminist constructionism (Feinberg 1996), which is probably why Jeffreys (1996) is at such pains to argue that biological determinism has never been a part of feminism. However, Raymond and other transphobic feminists such as Greer (1999) use biological factors in their judging of transsexuals in a deterministic way. This is not just in denying the capacity of transsexuals to change physical and social sex/gender. It also entails a form of body fascism. Passing transsexuals can, after all, avoid the discrimination from feminists which other transsexuals face. Research contributors discuss Raymond's focus on biology. For example, Ann said "she describes this six foot lout with a deep voice and a shadow in a frilly frock that belonged to his mother - if that is her concept of what a transsexual is, it's very limited and isn't anything like the truth for most people. Actually if she looked into that person's mind

she might find someone more female than she is". Roz Kaveney noted that this focus on appearance makes things difficult for all tall, rugged women and short plump men. In some cases it is also disablist, for example Jeffrey's (1996) disparaging discussion (noted above) of an FTM's sexual experience. In effect, what Raymond and other fundamentalist feminists do in their focus on the physical is create a new biologically-based class system, with transsexuals at the bottom of the hierarchy (see More 1996c).

Another key argument employed by Raymond and other feminists against transsexuals is based on social determinism. Apparently, transsexual women have not been brought up as female, and experienced patriarchy, so they cannot become proper women. Contributor Kate N' Ha Ysabet discussed the arguments used against transsexuals by feminists, who according to Kate say:

'I have been brought up' or repeatedly 'I have been taught to be a girl since I was a child' and it's the two proofs I hear again and again 'I'm a woman cause I've got a cunt' or 'I was brought up as one'. Right? And then this always thrown at transsexuals who are the next generation on, by the establishment who say 'you weren't brought up as a girl I was, you have a different experience to me' right? 'No one forces you to be a girl' right, And that's the real terror thing. And I said before about the fact that I was actually taught to be a girl, because my brain taught me to be a girl, because I lived in an environment which taught me how to be a girl, and I wasn't born with a cunt, and you know it doesn't make me any less of a woman. It's how, when I was four years old, I grew up thinking, when I first became aware of myself as a person, I became aware of the girl, I didn't come up to ? as a girl, I didn't knew what the concept of a girl was, it was only later did I learn that there was a difference between boys and girls and then later I learned what the word 'girl' meant, and that was all new stuff. But I was aware that 'I am like my body, I am like ?'

I: You didn't know

Kate: I didn't know. But I therefore also carried on learning how to be a girl.

Raymond's use of constructionism is flawed. Constructionism is often interpreted to imply that gender can be changed, as it is constructed (although as MKP pointed out, things can be socially constructed but immutable after a certain point). Some constructionists have argued that transsexuals can change their gender attributes. Raymond fails to see this, thus framing transsexuals as immutably stuck with their gender of birth. This is hypocritical, given the feminist reliance on notions of women's gender-role malleability. Transphobic feminist's arguments are flawed because of this contradiction, which leads into social determinism and a denial of transgender people's (and men's) abilities to deconstruct and reconstruct themselves, thus political nihilism. If such a modal was applied to non-transgendered women, any woman brought up in a rigidly sexist environment would be doomed forever to living a stereotypical life.

Another argument put forward by transphobic feminists is that transsexual women do not share the same oppression as other women. As Feinberg (1996) says, this presumes that other women share common oppression, which problematic. If the 'common oppression' line is taken, it can be criticised in that once a transsexual begins to act as female she will be treated as such (Califia 1997). This is supported by findings, in which several MTF transsexuals described their experience of sexism. For example Elizabeth Loxley said that although her upbringing was different from other women she is now living as a woman, thus subject to the same sexism as other women. For instance, she experienced patronising behaviour from men, for example, offers to help her park her car. Another contributor discussed the way in which many previously non-feminist MTF transsexuals become feminist when they transition and begin to experience sexism.

As discussed in the chapter on theorising transgender, total constructionism seems to be a flawed model for identity, as most transsexuals experience gender as an inner drive which cannot be modified, although this is widely debated by transgenderists. Some transsexuals do experience gender essentialism but this is different to physiological sex, thus delinking it from the biologically-based female essentialism characteristic of the work of feminists such as Daly (1984) and Raymond (1980). The acceptance of some level of possible essentialism poses a challenge to constructionist feminist's arguments against transsexuality, but as noted earlier, essentialism does not necessarily mean rigid sex roles or a dimorphic society, but rather a range of semi-malleable essential genders and gender

identities. This is different from both the essentialist, biologically determinist model which Raymond slips into at times, and the essentialist female spirituality of Daly's (1984) work. Instead, self-essentialism could take a number of gendered forms, which may or may not tally with biological sex and constructed gender.

Androphobia

Raymond, like Daly (1984), Rich and Morgan (Califia 1997) draws on ideas of an essential femaleness and links this with radical feminist concepts of men and masculinity as fundamentally oppressive. As contributor Roz Kaveney said, "back in the early seventies the argument was that there was this single thing called women's experience which was intrinsic and essentialist and which no one 'not all female' could possibly have. Therefore any attempt to construct an identity was doomed to inauthenticity and falsification". Thus, women are thought to be inherently superior to men. This leads to a number of blind spots. Some of these have already been discussed by feminists, for example Ramazanoglu (1989) notes the inability of early second wave feminism to deal with women oppressing other women. Difficulties which are particularly pertinent to transgender include the way in which Raymond and others fail to deal adequately with FTM transsexuals and with masculinity. Raymond sees FTM transsexuals as tokens, upholding patriarchal ideals and co-opted by the patriarchy (Califia 1997). However, FTMs form a considerable part of the transgender population; many are feminist and/or queer, and their abandonment of womanhood cannot be explained by Raymond. Raymond and other transphobic feminists also fail to account for the long history of butch and transgender in the lesbian communities and the way that identities, which could be interpreted as FTM, have been co-opted by lesbians (see Prosser 1998).

The inability of fundamentalist feminists to deal with gender difference can be seen as one of the reasons for their criticism of FTMs, camp and drag kings (Raymond 1994, Jeffreys 1996). One contributor describes the feminist inability to deal with masculinity as a major factor fuelling transphobic feminism. This is both in the sense of the possibility of a positive, non-oppressive masculinity and in the sense that fundamentalist feminism denies men the possibility of changing their oppressiveness or becoming more 'female' (More 1996, see also Echols in Alcoff 1988). Importantly, traditional forms of femininity are also

vilified by fundamentalist feminists. For example Jeffreys (1996) has attacked transgender people via the interpretation of drag as stereotypical and misogynist. Here, transgender issues are caught up in wider debates within queer and feminism, as other feminists such as Butler (1990) interpret drag as transgressive of gender norms and therefore radical. Clearly, drag can be misogynist, but the taking on of stereotypical feminine attributes is not necessarily so, it could equally well be a celebration of certain types of female performativity. As Feinberg (1996) says, people who do drag are a varied group. More (1996c) argues that the feminist attack on MTFs is about the use of feminine signifiers, which are deemed irrevocably linked with patriarchy and oppression. She interprets this as misogynist and denying of the feminine.

As already noted, one of the main problems transphobic feminists have with transgender is that they see it as reinforcing gender, rather than transcending it. One well documented critique of this argument is that transsexuals make explicit the constructedness of gender, thus enabling subversion of patriarchy (Stone 1991, More 1996c). This was amply evidenced in research findings, although as Stryker (1996) notes, transsexuality both challenges and reinforces gender. However, importantly, the feminist idea of transcending gender is flawed. Firstly, Raymond fails to explain what transcending gender really means in terms of feminist praxis: surely not retreat into separatist woman-centred culture? Secondly, it is, in my own experience, easy to argue for the dissolution and transcendence of categories when one's subjectivity is unified and discrete, as was the case with me when I was a radical feminist. The chapter on theorising transgender describes the ideas of those people who have gone beyond a discrete identity. While some of them, such as Bornstein (1998) continue to argue for fluidity, research findings also illustrate the need for gender categorisation. This need is overlooked by Raymond and other fundamentalist feminists, whom, I feel, operate from a place of ignorance about the reality of fluid, multiple, 'post-gender' experience. The experience of really transcending gender paradoxically entails the realisation that gender is necessary for identity purposes and as a basis for social interaction. What is needed, as Roz Kaveney said, is "more and different genders", and acceptance of gender and sexual orientation fluidity, not the erasure of gender per se. The flawed attempt to transcend gender is a central theme not just for radical feminists, but also for queer theorists and postmodernists, as discussed in the introduction and the chapter on poststructuralist transgender theory.

The challenge to feminism

Research findings indicate that the issue at the basis of feminist transphobia is the threat which transgender poses to cultural and radical feminism, which is based on the notion of an unequal gender binaried system resting on discrete male-female categories. Early feminism, especially liberal feminism, was concerned with equality of the sexes, and could probably support an framework for equal rights which includes transgender people. Some of the research contributors pointed out that the shift towards cultural and radical feminism and separatism was a departure from this. For example Salmacis said:

"[Feminism's] most powerful allies, when it all started, were those who were intersexed. Because in the fifties, before people like Betty Friedan appeared, a lot of the campaigning for women's issues had merged in with a lot of the campaigning for transgendered rights, although it wasn't known as that then. And then all of a sudden when Betty Friedan and a few self-interested types, culminating in somebody called Raymond, that was purely self-interest, and really going against the nature of feminism, because feminism was saying you should equalise opportunities for both sexes. And you should equalise it so that people don't have unrealistic expectations placed upon them. So what's Janice Raymond doing? Exactly the opposite; 'a man's a man, a woman's a woman, you can't change the fact, ha ha ha, do as you're told. If you're in-between, I wanna gas you'. Well, what's that got to do with feminism? They lost something very important. Not only that; some of the feminist icons, such as members of the Bloomsbury group, such as Vita Sackville West, such as Virginia Woolf, they were very against this kind of self-interest driven militant - I'm not going to say feminism, I'm going to say female supremacy - 'oh, I've got a proper womb and ovaries, aren't I perfect, I'm better than you'. Well, I can turn around and say, 'I'm a hermaphrodite, I know more about life than you ever will, because my experiences are far more sacred'. But it doesn't work like that. But if I went and publicly said that, that because I'm a hermaphrodite I can see things that men and women can't, they get very upset by it. And the kind of crap than women threw at men, or men threw at women in the past, will be thrown over themselves, and they'll both feel like dirt, and then they'll hopefully realise how stupid they were to each other, and to themselves".

Radical and cultural feminism focus on the differences between women and men, developing a simplistic model of oppression which equates men and masculinity with the forces of oppression, or patriarchy. This has led to gender inconsistency being suppressed by feminism (More 1996c). As More (1996c) argues, radical feminism was generated by a false distinction between the sexes, thus a false (or at least, constructed rather than natural) community of women. In focusing on gender divisions, feminism paradoxically reinforces these (see for example Alcoff 1988). Transphobic feminists are thus unable to deal with transgender on a theoretical level. Transgender people arguably scramble sex and gender norms in a far more radical way than perhaps a non-transgender feminist could and this threatens the ontological and epistemological basis for feminism. This is a serious matter for academic and grassroots feminism, but not one which can be addressed using the approach developed by Raymond and others, which is shown to be obsolete by political transgender. As Califia says, "Nothing upsets the underpinnings of feminist fundamentalism more than the existence of transsexuals" (1997 p. 91).

Political critique

Feminist transphobia in relation to politics can be criticised in a number of ways. Research findings support the notion of a 'feminist empire', where transphobic feminists attack transgender people out of self-interest. Feminist prescriptiveness is another problem. These points will be addressed in turn.

The Feminist Empire

Many of the transgender contributors locate the reasons for Raymond and other fundamentalist feminist's attacks on transsexuals in their own self-interest. This is backed up in the literature (Bornstein 1994). It occurs in relation to feminist praxis and women's space (as also discussed in the previous chapter). It is interesting to note that fights over transgender and women's space have been going on for millennia (Raymond 1980, Feinberg 1996, Califia 1997). Stephen Whittle discussed the 'feminist empire':

"I think some of it is fundamentally vicious and vindictive and it's about other people creating their own empires especially the Janice Raymonds of this world, if you see what I mean, you know, Janice Raymond is, you know, by far, by no means the only person, I mean, over and over again, you know, whether its the level of very local politics, like who should be allowed into, who should be allowed into Women's night at Paradise to, you know, who should sit on the police, you know, the gay and lesbian police committee, you know, you know the truth of the matter is transgender and transsexual people are, you know, seen as being somehow dangerous through some form of almost, well the trouble is 'you're not dangerous enough because you can be hidden', do you see what I mean, and it, then we become dangerous just because, you know, we might, you know, somehow be hidden, or not, but even if we name ourselves we're doing it for all the wrong sorts of reasons and I just think these people are doing all these things for all the wrong sorts of reasons"

Feminist transphobia is not simply about fear and misunderstanding, it is due to the way in which transgender challenges feminism and the empires that career feminists such as Raymond have built for themselves. Zach Nataf said:

"I think, well, Janice Raymond gave feminists the terms for thinking about transsexuals for a very very long time. In fact, Janice Raymond gave the terms to everybody in thinking about, you know, transsexuals for a very long time. Everyone refers to her book. Everyone, you know, because it was the only one around for a while and ... I don't know. I think for me it was about power of a small group of, you know, privileged, white feminists who wanted to make the definitions about who was in and who was out and who was right and who was wrong and, you know, build a power base of their own and that book was part of that. ? people were, you know, who was the good person and who was the enemy?"

Stephen Whittle discussed the way in which feminism, like many other political and academic movements, includes personal agendas for which people will fight, doing anything to achieve them. This could include self-identification as a woman identified woman, rejection of masculinity and defence of any perceived threats to women only

space. The fights over space, for example fights over butch versus FTM and assertions that MTF transsexuals are cashing in on lesbian feminist culture (see More 1996c), have a distinctly territorial flavour. Personal agendas also include protecting of moral high ground concerning sex and gender, for example Rubin (1984) argues that feminist insistence on sex difference is part of ongoing moralising about sex by both lesbian and heterosexual feminists, and she criticises sex-negative thinking. This sex-negative thinking affects analysis of transsexuality, for example Raymond sees the prostitution which many MTFs go through to pay for reassignment as inevitably exploitative (Raymond 1984), but some of the transsexuals I talked to did not see it like this, it could be a positive choice given economic constraints.

Transphobic feminists can paradoxically be seen to be reluctant to let go of the gender and heterosexist institutions which form the basis for much of feminist politics. Salmacis argued that while feminism is useful in challenging the underlying principles of the 'bipolar dictatorship' feminists are only interested in one side, so feminism changes nothing. There is a sense here in which some feminists are heavily invested in a gender binary system on a personal level: when identity is built on a certain set of beliefs it is very to release these. My own experience was of a huge sense of loss and grieving when I realised the limitations of radical feminism and identification as a woman. It may also be the case that some feminists feel envy towards transgender people. For example, Greer (1970) remarks that "some lucky creatures are male and female by turns" (p. 25). One contributor suggested that one of the reasons why feminists are frightened of transgender people is because they have seen both sides of the gender divide, thus have an authority to talk about feminism which others do not have. This is problematic as it potentially creates a new hierarchy, but the transgender people I met did not support such a hierarchy and wished only for equality. Another, related, issue is the oppression, for example sexual abuse, which is the experience of many women. One non-transgender woman to whom I talked discussed the way in which transgender threatened her sense of surviving violation as a woman, and the radical feminist politics which she has developed concerning this. While women clearly need support with such issues, the research findings made it clear to me that suffering is not the prerogative of women. For example, many transgender people experience sexual abuse. I feel that some feminists may be attached to an identity of suffering as women. This is supported by the literature (More 1996c). There is a need for women to avoid victim

status, while acknowledging that gender equality is not yet achieved. Also, certain aspects of female bodied people's experience is unavoidably sexed, for example gynaecological problems, and this need to be taken into account, whilst being aware of the suffering of everybody, in different forms and contexts.

The 'feminist empire' can be seen as an aspect of patriarchy. Contributor Salmacis described feminism and male chauvinism as the same in that their motivations are self-interest: the protection of the interests of one group. The feminist equation of oppression with masculinity leads to a failure to see women as potential oppressors. Because of this, Raymond, Jeffreys, Greer, Daly and others have perpetrated oppression of a sort which seems identical to 'patriarchy' in everything but name: social discrimination based on gender, the denial of agency and the right to self-determination. This was described as a 'cycle of abuse' by Pamela Summers. Socialist feminist Rose (in More 1996c) suggests that there are many painful parallels between the oppression of strong women and lesbians by mainstream society and the stance taken towards transsexuals by transphobic feminists. I too experienced a real sense of pain when I realised how (presumably unintentionally) damaging the work of transphobic feminists has been for transgender people and progressive sexual politics.

Transgender as political

Raymond's (1994) work includes the view that transgender people are not political about gender. There are some instances in which transsexuals do adopt stereotypical gender roles, and this is challenged in some cases by other transsexuals. For example, Ann Goodley said: "It's time for transsexuals to burn their bras and get on with being feminists". Findings make it clear, however, that some transsexuals and transgender people are overtly political, and that this does challenge social stereotypes concerning gender. Participants in the research challenge cultural norms in diverse ways, including, in some cases, by presenting in non-sex stereotypical ways, by taking on non-gender normative social roles and by being 'out' as transsexuals in the workplace as well as involvement in overt political activism. This is supported in the literature (Whittle 1998) and by contributors. As Zach Nataf said,

"Clearly transgender as a movement is showing that it does have to do with the bigger political picture. The people are, you know, that it does have an impact on society. It is political. It is radical. Not every individual transgendered person is a political person or an activist and some people don't give a fuck about the rest of society. But that's true of lesbians and gays, I mean that's true of everyone".

The growth of the transgender movement flattens Raymond's (1980, 1994) assertion that transsexuals perpetuate gender norms and fail to be political. This assertion, according to Zach Nataf, has contributed to the stereotype of apolitical transsexuals.

Prescriptiveness

There is another problem with Raymond's stance on transgender and politics. Raymond's position is prescriptive in its assumption that transsexuals must become political. Raymond argues that people who transition defuse political action. These attitudes were criticised by the transsexual contributors, who argue that some people would need to change sex regardless of social norms. In addition, the notion that people must be political about their identity is problematic. Zach Nataf criticised the prescriptiveness of Raymond's stance and this was echoed by others, such as Alex Whinnom, who argued that people cannot be expected to carry a torch for some ideal, when they are quite happy leading traditional lives. He argues that no-one has the right to tell other people how they should be, and that moral judgement lies at the basis of Raymond and other's positions. "People like Janice Raymond, rather than looking at herself and saying 'how can I be a better human being?' they're telling everyone else that they're wicked and they could be better". Transsexuals may in fact have reason to be less political because the sanctions on visibility are so heavy. For example, some MTF transsexuals need to adopt stereotypical appearances in order to pass in public and avoid violence, job discrimination and so forth.

Feminist fundamentalism, as apparent in the work of Raymond and others, has had the no doubt unintentional effect of damaging the feminist cause. As Alex Whinnom said "I'm not knocking feminism, I believe in feminism, but there's a certain loony left core, whatever. And they're very loud. And it's quite frightening because they get published". Raymond vilifies transsexual women who are feminists and who reject heterosexism, leaving them in

a double-bind position. This has led to anti-feminist sentiment among some transsexuals: "There was a point at which, because those radical feminists said that transsexuals couldn't be feminists, a lot of transsexuals would take the line that no proper transsexual would ever be feminist because you know (laughs) why should you slit your own throat?" (Roz Kaveney). Most of the transsexual women who contributed to the research did identify as feminist, and some have made considerable contributions to feminist organisations. However, as Elizabeth Loxley said, this is not easy given the anti-transsexual stance dominant within feminism. By adopting this stance, feminists 'born as women' are denying useful alliances at the levels both of activism and praxis.

Summary and Conclusion

There are a number of discursive structures supporting transphobia. These include ethnocentrism and Western ideological hegemony, patriarchy, homophobia, sexphobia, and body fascism. These combine with and contribute to the other factors concerning to exclusion, which were outlined in chapter on the subjective and social aspects of transphobia, in a way which often leads to the marginalisation and stigmatisation of transgender people. These forces operate in fluid and contextualised ways, combining in many cases to fuel the social exclusion of transgender people. So for example, sexphobia, religion, and capitalism might all combine in a particular situation to influence the sacking of a transvestite or the imprisonment of a transsexual engaged in making pornography to pay for her sex change.

One of the discourses feeding transphobia is fundamentalist feminism. This takes a number of forms, with the central theme being the enforcement of the gender binary system based on unacknowledged self-interest, fear of gender diversity and the lack of an alternative radical gender politics. I argue that feminist transphobia is morally and politically unacceptable. Transsexuals and transgender people as a group are marginalised and socially excluded. They do not deserve to be scapegoated by feminists because these women have difficulty coming to terms with the identity and political implications which transgender poses. Elizabeth Loxley drew an analogy with the difficulties which Black women had with white, middle class feminists, who dominated the women's movement prior to the development of the various Black critiques of feminism. Black women and

women of colour have developed a more complex analysis because of the simultaneity of oppressions which they experience (Alcoff 1988). Transgender politics follows this, but also includes people who have non-female identities.

What are the implications of transgender politics for feminism? At times during the research I thought that transgender praxis would mean that feminism became defunct. In theoretical terms this makes sense. The aims of feminism and transgender politics, such as gender equality, the deconstruction of stereotyping norms and so forth, are the same. Transgender politics provides a wider spectrum of possibility than feminism, even poststructuralist feminism, as it can include on an equal basis not only genetic women, but transgender people and men. It also moves beyond certain key problems, such as the equation of oppression with masculinity. I feel that feminism as a grand theory must be superseded by praxis which addresses but is not bound by gender divisions. Contributors, such as Kate N' Ha Ysabet, argued that transgender politics is at the leading edge of third wave feminism. Thus, as Hamish notes, there is a shift from a women's right to self-define even if this is at other's expense to a right of people to self-define, towards a type of pluralist radical humanism and politics of androgyny, but not the male dominated androgyny which feminists such as Raymond envisage. However, I feel that that there will continue to be a need for feminism as long as there is a need to work towards women's equality, whether this concerns genetic or transgender women. This can be related to postmodernism-structure debates: postmodernist deconstruction would entail a dissolution of feminism, but social realities demand analytical and political tools for dealing with gender inequalities, and feminism is an important part of this. Transgender politics aims for equality and must not be co-opted by the backlash against feminism (see Faludi 1991, Walby 1996). In addition, a transgender model will also be limited: analysis should concern not just gender but also for example ethnicity, class and ability.

Chapter 7: Transgender Politics and Citizenship

The concept of citizenship can be seen as strategically crucial for transgender politics because it forms a central plank of political strategies across the political spectrum (Roche 1992). Citizenship emerges as an important theme from the research findings, which emphasise transgender equality. This chapter argues that transgender equality requires a representative, pluralist, model of citizenship which includes the social restructuring necessary for full transgender citizenship. This chapter aims to provide an overview and analysis of current developments within transgender politics in the United Kingdom and to relate these to models of citizenship.

The chapter asks the questions:

- what are the current issues for transgender politics?
- how do transgender politics relate to notions of citizenship?

The chapter begins with a short overview of relevant definitions and outlines notions of citizenship. It provides a brief discussion of the literature on New Social Movements. It then outlines key issues in the transgender movement and discusses the transgender political agendas, before relating these to notions of citizenship. Transgender strategies for political change are described. I then explore some of the reasons for tensions within transgender politics and the issue of alliances with other groups. I conclude by discussing the use of various models of citizenship for developing transgender politics.

The term 'politics' is defined as power relations (Reading 1977) and as any power-structured relationship which involves one group of people being controlled by another (Millett 1970). The tension between mainstream and feminist notions of the politics is apparent in this chapter: feminists theorise the personal as political (Humm 1992), in other words personal experience is viewed as the site for activism and policy making. This challenges mainstream understandings of political, as consisting of, for example, political delegation (Humm 1989). Many research contributors do not identify as political, despite

being involved in activism, and the notion of 'personal as political' is not widespread. 'Radical politics' is defined as a politics which advocates radical reform or thorough political and social change (Simpson and Weiner 1989).

Notions of Citizenship

The modern notion of citizenship stems from the French and American revolutions and the changes brought about by the industrial revolution. In the UK, the work of TH Marshall (1950) was extremely influential. Marshall produced a liberal response to the tensions of democratic politics, emphasising welfare and protection from the problems of market capitalism. He argued for a progressive extension of civil rights (Deakin 1990) in line with the dominant post-war paradigm, which emphasised social rights, policy development and welfare (Roche 1992). This was universalist, in other words characterised by the universal principles of equality and a striving to secure the 'general will' (Cowen and Daly 1999). It was challenged in the 1970s and 1980s by ideological changes, particularly neoconservatism, which emphasises social duties as opposed to rights, and structural changes including post industrialism and the shift towards globalisation (Roche 1992). There has been some movement back towards notions of citizenship based on social justice with Labour's "Third Way", but, overall, the change away from a rights based model of citizenship towards consumer and participatory models sets the context for the current transgender movement.

Citizenship denotes a collection of rights and duties defining socio-political membership, which provides access to resources and benefits (Turner 1994). It can be defined either as a status with rights, or as participation in politics (Lister 1997). Here, rights are emphasised in keeping with research findings. The concept of citizenship is contested in a number of ways, which will be explored below. However, it is important to note that it operates as a mechanism for both inclusion and exclusion, with exclusion of 'outsiders', particularly Black 'outsiders', occurring along national boundaries (Lister 1997). Despite problems with exclusion, the concept of citizenship can also be used to gain social inclusion by Black people and others who are within the system. Thus, as Turner (1994) says, the concept may be ethnocentric. It is certainly culturally relative, with for example differences between concepts of citizenship in the UK, where focus is on welfare, the USA

which is more concerned with radical egalitarianism and Europe, where focus tends to be on the relationship between the state and citizens. In addition, identities are complex and fragmented by religious, cultural, regional and sexual allegiances (Evans 1993). Thus, to draw on Lister (1997), gender can be set within the context of other social divisions including class, 'race', ability, and age. This discussion focuses on gender.

New Social Movements

New Social Movements (NSMs) can be seen to originate in Western Democracies in the anti-Vietnam and CND protests of the 1960s (Dalton and Kuechler 1990), and can be set in the context of the weakening of traditional leftist forms of political action and a wider decline in interest in mainstream political parties, as well as problems with the drive for economic growth (see Rootes 1992, Byrne 1970). During the 1960s and 1970s a range of movements developed, including the student's, women's, peace, ecological and Third World solidarity movements (Byrne 1997) and the gay movement (see Weeks 1989). The term 'NSMs' is difficult to define, as NSMs do not have clear boundaries and the term 'social' is very broad (Byrne 1997). Byrne (1997) describes NSMs as "amorphous entities which resist neat classification" and as complex coalitions which employ a wide range of political stances and strategies. They are characterised on the whole by participatory, democratic, pluralist, decentralized and non-bureaucratic forms of organisation (see Dalton and Kuechler 1990). Many NSMs gain support from a socially diffuse group of individuals rather than people coming from distinct socio-economic backgrounds (see Dalton and Kuechler 1990). Whilst there are constraints on the development of NSMs (Rootes 1992), they are undoubtedly a growing force in the Western political process, with for example Greenpeace outstripping the Labour Party in membership numbers in 1990 (Clark 1991). The transgender movement has all of the hallmarks of an NSM: it is a loose, amorphous, ill-defined coalition consisting of individuals from a range of backgrounds and its structures are largely participatory and decentralised. However, the notion of NSMs does not appear to have entered transgender people's narratives at this stage.

The Transgender Movement

It is important, in discussions concerning the transgender movement, to emphasise the broad spectrum of views amongst transgender people about transgender politics. This section expands briefly on earlier discussions, firstly, by pointing out the lack of consensus in the findings regarding what constitutes the UK transgender movement and the roles of the different groups and, secondly, by picking up on the tensions within the movement concerning organisational politics. A minority of contributors, for example Meredith Malek, did not think there is a UK transgender politics, with apathy and apoliticism being cited as reasons for this. Others, such as Roz Kaveney and Zach Nataf, said that a broad based transgender movement has now come into existence. Stephen Whittle and others described the nineties as being a time of immense change for transgender politics, with the move from the transsexual and cross-dressing community to the transgendered community and continuation of dynamic and unpredictable change.

Tensions between the groups and within them seem to be common. For example, in the case of Press For Change (PFC), Stephen Whittle saw it as being different from hierarchical political structures: although there are self-defined community leaders they dictate terms of diversity. Stephen discussed the movement in terms of grassroots, fragmented, collaborative activism which includes a multiplicity of voices. This can be seen as similar to other movements, for example feminism. Similarly, Mjka Scott said of PFC:

"When Press for Change was formed, we took the view, and I was one of the co-founders, we took the view we wanted to escape all that , because we saw, and this is in purely physical terms, we saw that one of the problems with a lot of transgender organisations however good their intentions were, is that they became top heavy with people who, on committees etc. with people pulling different ways, and so we avoided that by forming a network of concerned individuals who had input and allowing those people to input as often or as little as they wanted. And it has been such a successful modal that there are now Press For Change Organisations in various countries around the world which have taken a networking model from us. And personally you know, being overtly political I see that as a

possible political way forward. We know full well in our own parliament, the old two party system is, well its been shown up for what it is, and I think it hasn't ? 'yes if another party has a good idea then we will go along with that, yet there is still this old rigid walled in idea of 'no it isn't our policy, no we won't look at it' and so on and so forth. In a nutshell, I think that's also been part of the downfall of some of the organisations within the transgender world. But again I think this is all changing. Certainly, as I say, our modal has been taken up-and I hope that it gets taken up more and more"

However, there is considerable resentment towards PFC among some of the more radical people I talked to. This revolves around its perceived conservatism and the dominance of stereotypical transsexual men and women within the organisation. In addition, one respondent argued that PFC claim ownership of all activist events, and that they redefine transgender to mean transsexual, and the latter to mean post operative transsexual. She experienced PFC as being non-inclusive and hierarchical. This was contradicted by Stephen Whittle, who insisted that the key people (the organisers and community representatives) are not in charge. It is also strongly contradicted by PFC literature (1997), which emphasises inclusion of all transgender people and avoidance of hierarchies of transgender, as well as the need to avoid activating for legislation which benefits one group at the expense of another. It is hard to draw conclusions as someone who has been only marginally involved in PFC. It seems that the situation is dynamic and changing. For example, during the time I carried out the research, both androgynes and intersexuals were included for the first time within PFC, illustrating its increasing representativeness of transgender as opposed to purely transsexual people. However, there appear to be some tensions within the organisation between people who wish for traditional identities and lifestyles and people who wish for gender pluralism, and a corresponding tension between assimilationist, civil rights based politics and oppositional, 'radical' and queer politics. These tensions are important within transgender politics as a whole and will be explored later. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that the concerns about inclusion and equality which exist on a wider social level are mirrored at the level of single organisations such as PFC. Tensions concerning models of citizenship are also illustrated. These include the tension between universalism (a transgender politics which includes everyone) and pluralism (where differences are emphasised) and problems with the notion of participatory

democracy, given the way that power appears to be unequally distributed within organisations and some voices are heard more loudly than others.

Issues, Agendas and Citizenship

Calls for civil and cultural rights for transgender people revolve around the establishment of civil identities and corresponding equal rights. I interpret findings to imply that transgender rights include intersexual, androgynous and transient rights, but realise that this is not representative of the views of all contributors. Transsexual rights are foregrounded within a movement which consists mostly of transsexual activists. The following quote, from Pamela Summers, illustrates transsexual agendas concerning the need for basic civil rights and for appropriate, non-pathologising medical treatment to be available:

Pamela: Yes, that's the issue-about pathologisation. For me, anyway, that's the real question. And all this kind of stuff about, 'oh but you know, doctors are playing God with you' and all that stuff, well, no-no more than they are with you when they do a hip-replacement and no more than they are with you when they set your leg.

I: I mean I think there are issues about what's happened in the past but it doesn't have to be like that, that's the point.

Pamela: No, it certainly doesn't have to be like that. But of course in a society which criminalise transsexuals, then it's very difficult to get equal treatment

I: That's the thing.

Pamela: But the great thing about the court case was that it concerned not just employment but also provision of services, which includes of course healthcare. So, you know there is at least a legislative imperative to ensure that treatment of transsexualism is carried out in terms of patient autonomy in the same way in which other medical care is given.

I: Yup.

Pamela: You know, and it is typically a partnership between patient and doctor to achieve the best health possible for the individual, as defined by them

Issues of core concern apparent in the literature on transgender politics are equality, the right to self-determination, and social inclusion. Press For Change outlines its policy in documents such as Health Authority Good Practice Guidelines (undated b) and Legislating for Equality (1997a). The guidelines set out by the International Congress on Transgender Law and Employment (1993) form a useful baseline for transgender rights. These guidelines can be summarised as the rights to freedom from psychiatric diagnosis based on gender identity and to appropriate medical care, the right to equality of employment, the right to freedom from harassment and abuse, the right to self-expression and rights to relationships and parenthood. Emphasis within the movement is currently on issues such as birth certificate change for transsexuals. Several contributors discussed the length of time it will take to achieve changes, although one contributor, who has been involved in transsexual activism for years, says that things have changed more in the last five years than in the entire post-60s period. Change concerning transgender is seen as linked to wider social change by many respondents.

The research findings evidence a diverse set of discourses concerning citizenship. The most important theme concerns equality. As Mjka Scott said, "Well the basic issue is one of equality. That's where it all comes from, that's what it's all based on. To live, in society, as an equal member. However you fractionalise it, that's what it all comes down to". Pamela Summers described the basic inequity of a situation in which transsexuals not being able to get married and adopt children. Roz Kaveney emphasised the importance of civil liberties, and that these should not be determined on the basis of whether people are thinking of having surgery or not. Others stated that people should be treated equally regardless of appearance. Agency is crucial to most contributors and this is echoed in the literature. The PFC (1997a) states the importance of legislation establishing self-definition as the overriding qualification for correcting a previously recorded gender status, and other literature also emphasises autonomy and self-determination (Bornstein 1994, 1998, Feinberg 1996, Wilchins 1997, Israel and Turner 1997). The importance of rights based on

autonomy are emphasised in the findings. For example, Pamela Summers explicitly discussed citizenship, drawing on a model developed by Irigary in which citizenship rights are seen as removed from status or hierarchy of possessions and are based on people's inherent right to be what they are. The notions of agency and autonomy are core tenets of citizenship (Lister 1997, Feldman 1993). Autonomy can mean either freedom from interference (Feldman 1993), which implies non state interventionism and which links with the neoconservative concepts of consumer citizenship, or a positive duty to other's welfare, which involves addressing the structural problems affecting autonomy and agency. The former has been prevalent in the UK in recent years, following the conservative model of citizenship, which rests on individualised notions of consumer choice. Emphasis is on social duties rather than rights, on active citizenship, which means involvement of the individual in the wider community (Roche 1992) and participatory democracy, which rests on the idea that everyone is equally able to have an impact on the democratic process. This individualised, fragmented model of citizenship is linked by Cowen and Daly (1999) with postmodernism: it is a pluralist model rather than one based on earlier liberal notions of the 'general will', or doing what is best for the majority of society.

Some strands of transgender politics link strongly with neoconservative, participatory models of citizenship. This is apparent in the emphasis which several contributors laid on the contribution which transgender people make to society, and the way in which many transgender people strive to be upright, solid citizens. Several participants discussed the contributions they have made to society via their careers as, for example, authors and social activists. For instance Mjka Scott said:

"The fact that I am penalised for being open and honest and for being the person that I, not only that I want to be, want to be, but a person who is an asset to society, the fact that this is all penalised is always going to be a cornerstone of transgender politics, as long as that situation remains. That's basically the issue"

PFC members were clearly aware of the weight which discourses concerning duties and active, worthy citizenship carries when formulating their strategies. For example, "P" is reported to have taken the employment legislation through the European courts (she challenged her dismissal by a Local Authority and won the case, which was a precedent

leading to improved employment rights for transsexuals) with the support of PFC partly because she has a professional position and is a good example of a "worthy" citizen. In addition, the whole notion of engagement with the political process via community groups, such as those described above, fits with the notion of the active citizen, one who carries social responsibilities and who contributes voluntarily to the political process. However, liberal notions are also drawn on by some contributors, including notions of universal will and non-harm. For example Pamela Summers discussed the way in which granting transsexual people marriage rights will not damage other's well-being.

Linked with the neoconservative notions of active citizenship are concerns about morality and social order. As discussed in the chapters on transphobia, the issue of morality is of importance for transgender politics. Transgender politics overlap with sexual minorities, including not only lesbians, gays and bisexuals but also fetishists. Issues affecting one group often impact on others. For example, as Alex Whinnom said, a victory in the courts concerning transgender people will affect gay people and vice versa; similarly, legislation concerning fetishism and SM affects the amount of social space available to transvestites and some other transgender people. The narrow view of morality apparent in dominant discourses of citizenship results in social exclusion of these groups. This is why queer and sex liberationist politics have developed. Weeks (1995a) usefully provides a pluralist reformulation of morality, which includes care and appropriate responsibility for others, non-harm, recognition of autonomy and equality and the support of anti-oppressive measures. As Weeks says: "In the fluid politics of the post-modern world, values are important for gluing together disparate political aims and objectives, and for providing a focus for the clarification of principles and policies (1995, p 43). Thus, there is not necessarily a conflict between transgender agendas and models of participatory democracy, provided transgender people are included within the mainstream. The danger is that transgender people will remain marginalised and structural change will not occur.

Political Strategies

Political activism concerning transgender occurs in many shapes and forms. This section outlines types of activism and discusses people's reasons for involvement, or lack of involvement. Simon Dessloch said "Sometimes it's very deliberate and planned, and

sometimes it's accidental, and some of it is on a very sort of academic theory sort of basis andsome of it works very much on a kind of solidarity community kind of basis". In the UK, there is very little direct action and emphasis is on lobbying and simply 'being transgendered'. Kate More and others, such as Penny Gainsborough, pointed out that being transgendered and out creates reactions within society and social change. This fits with feminist notions of the personal as political (see for example Humm 1989). In addition, (as discussed in the chapter on gender plurality) the literature, for example Cameron et al (1996) and Nataf (1996) describes some people as assuming gender identities for political reasons in a way similar to, for example, some separatist lesbian feminists. Literature suggests that networking and discussion is important in the transgender movement (Bornstein 1994). I witnessed informal contact leading to people engaging in political activism, sometimes partly in reaction to my research. For example, the network which emerged out of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance group and the Transgender Forum workshop in 1996 (which I initiated) produced a letter lobbying the DFEE concerning legislation, and at the GENDYS meeting in May 1999 several people became enthused about activism through the conversation which was sparked off by presentations, including my own. Zach Nataf pointed out the extent of diversity on a wider social level in relation to types of activism which transgender people are engaged in, and that "we don't all have to be the same but we can work together". Collaboration and community occurs because forums are created, whether these are conferences, events based on issue-related activism or other events. Individual people have different contributions to make, whether this includes organising events, writing or filmmaking, lobbying parliament and so on.

Some contributors discussed self-empowerment and ownership in relation to the movement. For example, Phaedra Kelly saw spirituality as being important for politics because it relates to self-identity. For the third gender community, finding a cultural identity and roots is important and spirituality is part of this. Here, authenticity and self-expression are seen as the basis for political change. Thus Kate N' Ha Ysabet discussed how she described herself as being proud to be transsexual at the transgender film festival and that she has now heard someone else say this. There was not much in the findings to support the widespread existence of such feelings, although pride in 'queerness', for example drag, is very much a feature of queer subcultures (as noted earlier). Kate's

discussion is echoed in the literature, for example Chase's (1998) description of pride about being intersexual and Kaveney's (1999) recommendation of a politics in which transgender people are proud of their status as part of creative human variation. Self-expression as a means of activism is also a crucial aspect of the queer strategies of gender fuck and transgression. The extent to which these are effective is debatable; as Kate More, said we are culturally sophisticated about masks and performance. Using poststructuralism, it is possible to see 'the activist' as constructed and performative. However, as discussed earlier, poststructuralism is limited as it overlooks the importance of biology, the possibility of self-essentialism, and the need for a cohesive subject as a basis for politics.

Conscious activism includes changes via publications and the media, for example Kate More described Zach Nataf's (1996) book *Lesbians Talk Transgender* as having a positive impact, as it emphasises pluralism and sets transgender in the context of postmodernism. The expansion of transgender networks in cyberspace is an important development (see Wakeford 2000). Feinberg (1996) states that the third gender pronouns 'ze' and 'hir' came from cyberspace discussions. A brief exploration on the net, for example <http://www.tgforum.com/> and <http://www.symposium.com.ijt/>, reveals a great deal of transgender material, including interesting developments, such as alt.sex (<http://www.halcyon.com/elf/altsex>) explanation of transgender in terms of everyone having butch and femme aspects, and transgender as simply extending this. Whittle (1998) emphasises the importance of cyberspace for transgender activism, allowing mobilisation and a shift away from concerns with passing and social identities. However, it is important to point out that access to the internet is stratified by economic and social circumstances. Christie Elan Cane discussed the way in which ze is excluded from accessing information because ze is not connected to the internet.

Other forms of activism include lobbying politicians and the health authority and seeking changes in legislation. For example, More (1996) notes that 'P' in the case of 'P vs. Cornwall County Court' said that she brought the case against the British government partly to open up the debate about employment rights. For Kaveney (1999) a multi-issue approach based on alliances and broad anti-discriminatory measures is most appropriate, including the normalisation of transsexuals in society. In the interview she discussed single issue politics:

Roz: You have to pursue short-term political goals even when they're very problematic. It's like I couldn't give a damn about birth certificates frankly, but having said that I will say actually yes I do give a damn really because it happened that birth certification was one of the things on which the state, in order to trash the lives of transgender people, shows as a battleground. People chose it as a battleground, we have to fight on that issue.

I: That's right. So what you're really talking about is a kind of single issue..

Roz: But it's a lot of single issues. I mean you take single issues. I mean I think it's very important that we do work around transsexual prisoners and transgendered prisoners. I think it's, you know, even though they're an incredibly tiny minority of the community but they are, you know, there is a matter of solidarity. One of the things one has to do about politics is find areas in which solidarity can be created and in which alliances can be created, not in the sense of the Labour Party's attempt to construct a sort of delegate culture of, you know, they're.. 'Well basically every minority will elect representatives and they all come and tell us what that community wants'

The advocacy of transgender people by non-transgender others is another theme relating to politics which emerges from the findings. Some contributors discussed advocacy in the sense of collaboration between transgender and non-transgender activists. One contributor framed transsexual people as unable to activate on their own behalf and as needing the advocacy of outsiders. This contrasts with the visible and arguably more self-empowering approaches of the many 'out' activists who contributed to this research, but illustrates the sentiment prevalent in sections of the transsexual community as well as the extent to which people are socially excluded.

Motivation seems to be crucial for involvement in politics. For example, Simon Dessloch discussed the way in which involvement in transgender community groups has been empowering for him on a personal level and gives him a sense of community as well as links with the queer groups and culture:

I: In terms of transgender politics, can you say a bit more about your involvement in that? I mean I know you've been involved in Pride

Simon: Yeah, I think the first thing I got involved with was the TV/TS centre, that was my pre-transgender time. And we started a F to M group, we produced a magazine called Mr X. That's something I still feel very proud of. I remember that for me that was a very important thing, because that was the first really political thing I did, because I mean I was reading all the usual kind of stuff you get from the self help groups about operations and how to pass, and it was all very conventional, very dodgy. Someone like me didn't feel comfortable about that.

Demotivation appears to occur in some cases when people become 'burnt out', involved in other things, or, according to Hamish Macdonald, older. Penny Gainsborough told me that activism tends to be a stage which people pass through, early on in their transition. It is important to note that most transgender people are not particularly political and, as discussed in the chapter on transphobic discourses, findings indicate the importance of people not becoming involved in activism if they do not want to be or if the sanctions which they would face are too great. Alex Whinnom described how many people just want to get on with having an ordinary life, as they have missed many opportunities because of being transsexual. The concept of an 'ordinary life' is problematic, given feminist notions of the personal as political, but nonetheless it is relevant to the lived experience and needs of many contributors.

Community seems to be important as a means of generating activism. Zach highlighted the cruciality of community in providing a sense of support for people involved in politics as well as a safety net. The importance of community in the postmodern world is emphasised by authors such as Bauman (in Weeks 1995). Levels of community involvement vary widely. For example, one contributor, who wished to fit into mainstream society and 'get on with his life', avoids transgender community groups, while others locate themselves strongly within the transgender communities. Participant observation evidenced friendship networks and interest, support and campaigning groups which could certainly be

described as a community or communities. Transgender community exists in some cases along ethnic as well as gender lines. Zach Nataf described this:

Zach: I belong to a tradition of Black transvestite and transsexual and transgenderists.

I: Right, yeah.

Zach: There's a sort of tradition. There's a real community, like the houses (in the film *Paris is Burning*) are actually clans; they're families and it's an incredible celebration of being transgender.

I: Yeah.

Zach: It's probably, you know, if it keeps people alive, it keeps people from committing suicide because they're isolated, you know. It's just, it's incredible.

I: Yeah. But I mean, that sounds really amazing actually because if that's a really strong feeling of community as well .. I mean, I think that's one of the things about queer, really, it's like if .. well, I suppose if we're moving away from our families of origin or our .. well, I don't know. Some of the other social characteristics, it's like..

Zach: Neighbourhood

I: Yeah. How to form alternative communities.

Zach It's really important to survive.

I: Yeah.

Zach: Especially in the urban environment. And we need to. Simply it's family.

There appears to be a wide variety of activism and attitudes towards it within the transgender communities, ranging from lobbying and partnerships through to partially separatist community building. Many people adopt different strategies at different times, for example direct action on Pride marches as well as lobbying politicians.

Exploring Tensions in the Movement

Why are there conflicts within the transgender community? This section addresses, firstly, psychological reasons, secondly social reasons, then conflicts concerning political agendas and lastly issues concerning radicalism versus assimilationism and issues of outing. Tensions have emerged as an important theme in the research and have already been documented in the introductory chapter and the chapters on transgender pluralism and transphobia.

There are psychological reasons for the conflicts within the transgender communities which can be linked with Sibley's (1995) analysis of social exclusion, in particular the exclusion of people who have ambiguous or 'spoiled' identities or who challenge the subject's construction of identity. As Roz Kaveney argued, people construct their identities in opposition to something else. Many transsexuals and transgender people build their sense of self in opposition to previous identities, which if still present would disrupt these. For example, John Marshall noted the way in which many transsexuals have transvestite origins but wish to break away from these. In addition, Kate N' Ha Ysabet discussed the way in which diversity of transgender is very frightening for many transsexuals, because exclusivity and certainty of categorisation provides psychological safety. Garber (1992) discusses the displacement of prejudice by one embattled minority onto another, with reference to the relationship between African-American groups and transgender groups. She usefully remarks that this is a means of avoiding one's own pain and vulnerability. Perhaps this notion applies in a wider way to the backbiting which sometimes occurs within the transgender communities. Bornstein (1994) notes that transgender people are very diverse and can threaten each other's identities. This is substantiated by the research. As MKP said to me, when I was going through my transphobic phase, "we freak each other out too sometimes you know". I noticed, for example, how one transsexual who transitioned during the time I knew him went through a period of time when he could not handle talking

about transgender. And in some cases people evidenced what seems to be internalised transphobia, which can be defined as the unconscious assumption of social stigmatisation and prejudice concerning transgender. For example one contributor described himself as a "bit mad", because of his transgender status, and feels unable to contend with mainstream society. Sometimes transphobia is directed at others, for example one transvestite contributor describes transsexuals as "weird".

Internalised transphobia can be seen to disempower some transgender people. One way in which this occurs is via assumption of victim status. Roz Kaveney discussed how being trapped in victim status prevents transgender people from assuming control of their lives. She sees this as a trap laid on transgender people by the medical profession, but one which is seductive, as it allows people to deny responsibility. This seemed apparent in one contributor's descriptions of their willingness to be 'ill, mad, outside' as this person feels he cannot be inside society. Another participant likens the experience of being transsexual to experience of sexual abuse, or being a spy or in a concentration camp because effectively being transsexual is to be long-term undercover as experiences of marginalisation are so severe. This experience is not shared by all transsexuals, which begs the question as to how much is a pathologised identity being assumed by this person? This is a difficult question to ask, as it is important to validate people's pain and experiences of what is undoubtedly severe oppression. Internal oppression around transgender and transsexuality can be intense: James Green noted how many people use pathologisation as a justification for their identity because being faced with being transsexual is so frightening. Findings emphasise the importance of locating transphobia at the level of the social, but also suggest that a rejection of self-denigrating attitudes where these are present will help strengthen people to work towards gaining equal rights if they are politically inclined. This can be likened to strategies developed in, for example, feminist and disability politics.

Conflict within the communities because of the processes of internalised and projected stigmatisation are linked to wider social pressures. These are certainly key in causing problems within the transgender communities. For example Kaveney (1999) notes the way that traditional gender roles affect transgender people in such a way that those who have had surgery and pass can fit social norms, and are privileged over those who do not succeed in passing. This links with class tensions, as discussed by Zach Nataf, and with

the operation of dominant discourses among the underclasses in a way which cause fragmentation (i.e. 'divide and rule'). Conflicts may also be related to the difficulties socially excluded people face and resentment of people who are seen as facing less exclusion. For example, Hamish discussed how transgender people such as her/himself can be seen by transsexuals to be failing to take the plight of transsexual people seriously because they play with gender.

Another reason for the conflicts is the fairly obvious differences in political agendas. This includes tensions between assimilationism and radicalism, which will be discussed below. Participants have diverse political goals. Some contributors wished for non-male/female categorisation or the abolition of gender as we know it. In contrast, many transsexuals supported traditional male-female classification, and sought inclusion within this. Pamela Summers discussed how inclusion in the binaried gender system is an important way of gaining civil rights, given the denial of third states. Whether this is valid, given the way it may contribute to the further denial of those states, is debatable; however campaigning for rights for both binary-oriented transsexuals and third sex people is now occurring and is clearly the way forward as it involves emphasis on diversity and self-determination. Ann Goodley discussed conflicts within the movement regarding politics. Here, it is apparent that greater visibility and social inclusion of transgender people is related to cohesion of aims:

"Now, even in Press for Change, working along those lines, there's a big debate as to whether people should be issued with a new birth certificate, or have an amended birth certificate which still isn't ended. There's a great deal of difference in aims - and this causes very very strong feelings, so much so that people resign, or others join, or whatever. People get very uptight about the "how" we go about getting the equality that is needed. That's one thing. But, increasingly there are people who are self-confident and active enough to appear on the telly, or write articles or whatever and say, 'Yes, I'm a transsexual woman or I am a transsexual man, and I'm standing up for our rights, treat us like people, not like some sub-species'. So to that extent, that's one movement happening. There are also individuals who are challenging the legal system, outside Press For Change, and there's suspicion and

hostility one to the other in that respect, which is a shame. I think everybody has the same aim, essentially, that is acceptance"

An important theme to emerge from the research concerns the tension between what I have dubbed 'radical' and 'assimilationist' strategies. In other words, confrontational methods aiming at fundamental social change versus reformist strategies, which seek to alter the existing system. Marked conflicts concerning these strategies and attendant ideologies and lifestyles became apparent early on in the research, exemplified particularly well in the current transgender movement because of the extremes of conservatism on the one hand and transgression on the other. Tensions between assimilationist and radical approaches manifest starkly in transgender politics. These tensions can be set within the context of wider political conflicts concerning the issue of whether transgender replicates or challenges gender norms. The replication/challenge issue is of crucial importance to both moral conservatives, who wish to preserve gender inequality and the dominance of heterosexuality, to feminists, especially radical feminists, who have framed transsexuality as reinforcing the status quo and thus politically retrogressive (as discussed in the previous chapter).

Findings suggest that, within the transgender communities, radical politics tend to be associated with transgender. Thus, Kaveney (1999) describes transgender politics as being likely to "blow wide open" the more traditional, assimilationist transsexual politics. This relates, explained Simon Desseloch, to the difference between transsexuals who identify as assigned sex and seek to disappear into the mainstream and those who have some sense of pride in being 'trans', wish to change the system and recognise that they have issues which are different from biological men and that solidarity is necessary to achieve aims. This dichotomy is reflected in the literature, for example More (1996) contrasts Rees' (1996) liberal/assimilationist autobiography with Bornstein's (1994) *Gender Outlaw*. However, non-transsexuals currently falling under the heading 'transgender' may also adopt an assimilationist political position.

Assimilationism can be contrasted with radicalism, where no attempt to fit existing social structures is made and where these are actively challenged. Salmacis described one radical strategy:

"Basically, if we took on more lessons from feminism, and started being a little bit more militant in it's viewpoint. Like, it was OK for people like Germaine Greer to say this is unfair for women because ..., and there are people in the men's movement doing exactly the same thing now, saying this is unfair to men because... If say the gender movement turned around and started saying that in the same militant sense, and we did have a few extremists who said the hermaphrodite version of what Valerie Solanis said, and people said oh my god, this is loopy hermaphroditism, then in twenty or so years, people would start accepting it in the same way as feminism has been accepted. But the problem is I think normals would be confused by it because they won't understand the underlying principles"

In general, the tensions between radicalism and assimilationism appeared as broad ones, with much overlap between the two positions. For example Kate N' Ha Ysabet described conformity and being outrageous as polarities, and that she moved towards the latter but is now balancing them out. However, as Simon Dessloch pointed out, there may be direct conflicts, particularly concerning visibility. Thus, if some transgender people are out it undermines others who are closeted, as it is easier to pass if wider society does not recognise the possibility of transgender.

Being out as transsexual versus being closeted is inextricably bound up with assimilationism and radicalism. Being out is itself a radical act for many people, even when this is unintentional, given the levels of social erasure of transgender. Kate N' Ha Ysabet saw transgender people as being at the cutting edge of gender movements because they cannot be closeted; the alternative is to stay socially repressed. However, as Elizabeth Loxley and others said, most transsexuals stay closeted to avoid hostility. According to Kate More, the majority of transsexuals are terrified of coming out, and informal discussion with members of Press For Change suggested that strategies such as gender fuck arouse a great deal of fear amongst many transsexuals, because of the links between rebellion and becoming socially outcast. Where people are outed involuntarily, as was the case with for example Kate More, this can have the effect of propelling them into a political role which they had no intention of fulfilling (Kate was outed at work and forced to take a position as spokesperson for transsexual people). For many people, outing is very difficult to deal with

and can lead to loss of jobs and families. As Elizabeth Loxley and many others discussed, being closeted erodes the basis for activism, but is a better recipe for the quiet life which the majority seek. Zach Nataf described the contradiction this provokes, as he has a need to be seen as a man on the streets, but also wishes to explode gender binaries. This mirrors Week's (1995) description of the need to go public in order to protect private identities. It is important however to point out that not everyone does pass, and that closeting makes life particularly challenging for these people, and also forces them to take a political role, whether this is conscious or not.

Issues concerning outing are a cause of tension within the transgender community. For example, Mjka Scott was critical of closeting:

"What I, I have to put a personal note in here, what I find most obnoxious about some of the people, not all of the people who want to fit in, is that some of them still today will go, you know they've been through the whole process and they will go about pretending that they are not transsexual. That they haven't had that history, etc. etc. etc. Now I find that quite obnoxious, I also find it quite, I just don't understand it. Because I can identify certainly with hiding things, I hid things when I lived as a male, for a long long time. I don't have to do that now. What is the sense of jumping out of the frying pan into the fire? That's my point and that's what I don't understand"

Assimilationism/radicalism needs to be understood in terms of context. For example, Zach Nataf discussed the way in which queer and transgressive politics are useful for a community that is already savvy about gender issues, but is likely to create a backlash in the mainstream. This is hardly radical, he pointed out, and he cited useful strategies as being assimilationist ones which alert the world to the normalcy of transsexuality, change public opinion and lead to legislation being altered. This was echoed by Ann Goodley, who points out that although more 'in your face' groups, such as the Gender and Sexuality Alliance, are good at fostering pride, but they are negative in that they frighten conformist transsexuals and members of mainstream society. Kate More described the danger of perpetuating opposites if transgression is advocated: this causes alienation.

The assimilationism/radicalism dichotomy is quite clearly overcome by many transgender people. Roz Kaveney described how, although her analysis is quite radical, her strategy is reformist. She also rejected the concept of assimilation: the idea that there is a mainstream is a myth. "It's a myth held by loose alliances which try and pretend to themselves that they're single unitary groups in order to maintain hegemony". Kate More discussed having a foot in both camps and coalition politics. This is echoed in the literature, for example Weeks (1995a) argues that there is a need for both civil rights/assimilationist and transgressive politics. He points out that the new sexual movements have had both transgression and citizenship as characteristics, with constant reinvention of identities and new challenges to inherited institutions and traditions that have previously excluded people. Transgression is necessary in order to face tradition with its problems; then a claim to citizenship is made.

Despite the conflicts within the transgender community, there seems to be evidence that divisions are surmounted to an extent, as well as clear awareness of the need to collaborate. For example, Alex Whinnom pointed out that conflict between the different groups is politically disadvantageous and that it is wrong to say that one section is better than another, and this is substantiated in the literature (Kaveney 1999). Feinberg (1996) makes the important point that there is no conflict between the struggles of for example intersexual and transsexual people: both are fighting for the right to control their own bodies. In addition, in practice there is a good deal of support shared between different groups. High levels of collaboration are evidenced by participant observation, for example at the TrAnsGENDER AGENDA conference (1998), the 1998 film festival, the GENDYS workshop (1999) and the 1996 GEMS workshop, all of which included people with varying gender identities attended, and where I experienced a sense of community spirit, collaboration and goodwill. In fact, this research would not have been possible if people had not passed me on from contact to contact in a way that illustrates community. Stephen Whittle described the way that identity differences are bridged:

"I think that within the community there is a transcendence of gender. I don't think we can transcend, you know, the community's a very small place, but I think within the community, you know, from my place I see it being transcended all the time. I just see people strike up the most amazing conversations, talk together, sit together,

dance together, eat together, you know, do activism together. That's the most amazing thing, is to see activism like that, you know, done by people, you know. You see somebody who's a senior civil servant, right, who wears, you know, suspenders and tights underneath their suit, doing activism with somebody who appears to be some dyke, you know, from some, sort of, radical separatist scene, and they'll be actually not from a radical separatist scene at all, they're actually out doing activism together.

Alliances

The importance for alliances for transgender politics is discussed by a number of contributors to the research. Several people mentioned the small numbers of transgender people, and the difficulties of effecting social change with such a limited basis for activism thus necessitating alliances. This point is supported in the literature, for example Bornstein (1994) and Feinberg (1996). Alliances include those based on common experience of social exclusion, alliances with queer people as well as alliances with feminists and people from the men's movement, sex liberationists, and others.

One theme to emerge from the findings is alliances of all groups who experience social exclusion. For Annie Cox, the alliances were with people who share common enemies: i.e. intolerant members of the general public, who feel threatened by people who are different but do no harm, and react with fear and hatred; right wingers and gutter press journalists, who have a vested interest in scapegoating people who are different in order to profit from whipping up hysteria amongst intolerant members of the general public, and politicians and other public figures who seek to profit politically by portraying themselves as defenders of the general public. Here, there is a sense of 'sides', which was reinforced by Christie Elan Cane's comment that ze will only forge alliances with people ze feels are on hir side. Others discussed alliances between oppressed groups, for example Zach Nataf cited the work of Leslie Feinberg in the USA, who conceptualises political alliances across a range of issues based on shared oppression and social exclusion, for example transgender people taking part in demonstrations concerning violence towards for example around AIDS activism. Weeks (1995a) discusses Laclaus' analysis of political articulation as

dependent on the construction of us/them binaries. This is relevant to transgender politics, but problematic given claims for social inclusion.

Alliances with queer people are discussed by many contributors. The key to understanding the relationship between transgender politics and queer politics can be seen to be the overlap between the two groups. As discussed in the introduction, until relatively recently transgender and homosexuality overlapped or were undifferentiated. The distinction of these categories has subsequently been disputed in feminist and queer circles, for example Wittig's (see 1992) controversial work places 'lesbian' outside of the category of 'woman'. Moreover, as noted above, gay space has been crucial for the development of transgender and transsexual culture. For example, Yvonne Sinclair describes how she and other transvestites used a gay group to launch their TV/TS group in the 1970s. Findings suggest much current overlap between queer and transgender identities. Simon Dessloch noted that most transsexuals identify at some time as gay, which puts transsexuals into the queer arena whether they like it or not. And, conversely, many gay, lesbian and bisexual people can be read as having gender issues. For Kate N' Ha Ysabet, queer was an umbrella term under which transgender falls, because transgender people are "not straight". This included for Kate N' Ha Ysabet transsexuals who do not identify as transgender, because they challenge social assumptions concerning gender, but she acknowledged that these people might not agree. Identity overlaps are discussed by Chase (1998), who describes many intersexuals as sharing her queer identity even though they are not homosexual, while intersexual Kaldera (1998) marches at Pride as pansexual.

Findings indicate that alliances with queer groups are important for transgender politics. For some research contributors, gay liberation is crucial to transgender liberation, based on the understanding that there are the links between the oppression of transgender and homosexual people, as discussed in the chapter on transphobic discourse. Alex Whinnom and others likened the transgender movement to the early gay and lesbian liberation movement. Elizabeth Loxley saw the best basis for transgender politics as being gay and lesbian politics: this is therefore key, but transgender liberation is not necessarily possible until gay and lesbian rights are achieved. Joanna/Dave Scott elaborated:

I: Yeah. I mean I'm interested in what you said about kind of queer liberation because it sounds as if for you that's pretty fundamental to transgender liberation, is that...

Joanna/Dave: Very much so, it's sort of the case of once that's been knocked on the head, it opens the floodgates for everybody else to be um, every other issue to be broken down

I: Right, right yeah. So do you see that as being sort of more important than separate transgender politics, maybe not more important, but what's the relationship between the two, do you think?

Joanna/Dave: Well I think that's basically the lead, once that has been broken down, once that's been made more acceptable to the public, then the issues on transgender, transsexuals and things like that, that'll be broken down, that'll become more and more acceptable. But I mean having said that it is becoming more and more acceptable

I: Well yeah, it is actually, yeah

Joanna/Dave: Just like gays were accepted a long time ago. There will always be bigots, there will always be people who oppose it, that ridicule it, but it's becoming more acceptable. Where as trannies, things like that that's becoming, it's like avant garde, it's like 'oh wow! trannies, next door, we've got trannies living next door'

There is considerable evidence of alliances between transgender people and lesbians, gays and bisexuals. The inclusion of transgender under the London Pride banner in 1996 seems to have been an important landmark. Kate N' Ha Ysabet described gay environment as allowing cross-dressing and John Marshall said that transvestites are usually supportive of gays, because they see it as "one oppressed minority supporting another" and they hope for spin-offs which will benefit them. Support for lesbians is for some transvestites due to their fantasises about being women and lesbian, a phenomenon which many lesbians appear to find difficult. I came across both support for and criticism of transvestites in the

gay and lesbian communities, with various subsections of the communities 'doing' gender differently. Transvestites are accepted in queer space in a way that they are not anywhere else except in a few cross-dressing and fetish clubs and a few mixed clubs usually located in big urban centres.

Research findings point to alliances between transgender people and bisexuals. For example, there was a strong transgender presence at the national annual bisexual convention (BICON) when I attended in 1998. Bisexuals and transgender people share experience of fluidity concerning sexuality. As Hutchins and Kaahamanu (1991) say, bisexuality exposes the rigid framework imposed on fluid sexuality. Bisexuality, like transgender, is problematic for lesbian and gay communities and bisexual people are sometimes excluded. Drawing on Sibley (1995), this would seem to be because of their ambiguity and the anxiety this provokes.

Conflicts between queer and transgender groups concern contested social and cultural space (see chapters 3 and 5). Thus, for example, the lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* (Radcliffe Hall, 1928) is reclaimed by Prosser (1998) as transgenderist. Prosser describes the way in which FTMs were displaced to the margins in order to make room for the development of "lesbian" as a female identity. This trend continued as the gay and lesbian rights movement developed. Kate N' Ha Ysabet discussed the way in which transgender people: butches, drag queens and kings led the Stonewall march which sparked the gay liberation movement and this is substantiated by authors such as Morgan (1996). Initially, this movement was based on challenging fixed categories and it assumed the polymorphous sexual potential of all (Weeks 1995). However, in time categories tightened. Transgender, except in the highly stylised form which much drag takes and butch, which has been subsequently redefined as a lesbian and a female form of expression, was policed and to some extent erased from queer culture following conflicts in the 1970s around separatism and transsexuality as well as the well-founded suspicion that psychiatrists were attempting to use surgery to 'cure' homosexuals. As Kate N' Ha Ysabet said, the definitions of gay became smaller and smaller. Currently, there is a broadening out, but the overlap between identities which fall into opposing camps, but are actually extremely similar or part of the same phenomenon, is marked. The issue of identity overlap and the conflicts this provokes manifests in a number of tensions between

subgroups. For example, Zach Nataf described the difference between butch dykes, who identify as women and for whom butch is a "special" form of lesbian sexuality, and FTMs, who identify as male.

Another area of conflict concerns radical/assimilationist tensions discussed above, which are mirrored in the gay and lesbian movement. A further issue for transgender-queer alliances is the way in which some transgender people find little common ground with queers, in particular because gay and lesbian categories rest on a gender binary system:

"Well, the problem I've got with Pride is, I'm not male, I am not homosexual, I am not lesbian, I identify myself as female because I'm physically predominantly female, and I'm comfortable with that, but I'm not a lesbian. I'm not a heterosexual because I'm celibate. Apart from the fact that in most respects sex would be an impossibility anyway, because it's been botched up. But to be put into a situation like that, I can relate to lesbians because they seem to be more motivated by affectionate relationships, whereas men seem to be more physical. I think that's just part of the dictatorship again, though. Which in itself misses the point of what something hermaphrodite would represent, because that definition - that a man is more physical, a woman is more affectionate, is again something that I find repugnant" (Salmacis)

Another area of conflict in relation to alliances is the problem with larger groups subsuming smaller ones. Thus, where transgender is included under the gay banner issues directly pertaining to transgender people are often marginalised. For example there have only been a few transgender-related items on the briefings from the Outrage newsgroup, which I received regularly for over a year. Other conflicts relate to sexism, homophobia and transphobia. As John Marshall said, "quite a lot of gays don't like women, and quite a lot of lesbians don't like men." There has also been a great deal of homophobia among transsexuals and transvestites, although as Simon Dessloch said, this is now changing. And, similarly, there has been considerable transphobia among some sections of the gay and lesbian community. More recently, I have noticed a number of instances of favourable coverage of transsexuals in the pink press as well as the full inclusion of transgender people at various Pride events.

There are a number of further alliances between transgender people and other groups. A minority of contributors discuss alliances with feminists and as noted above, some identify with the women's liberation movement. For example, Phaedra Kelly said that she has feminists on her network while this quote from Salmacis illustrates the way in which cultural change concerning gender, which is partly the result of feminism, has made life easier for her:

I: I was just wondering about space really, social space.

Salmacis: Well my social space is restricted, it was so restricted until about five years ago, and then with the rise of all the super assertive, post Germaine Greer and women with these heavy metal figures, these comic book figures, since all that came out (which to me is damnably stereotypical) and then the association of that with this sort of dominant, assertive female, I found life a hell of a lot easier

Literature indicates alliances between transgender politics and feminism. Feinberg (1996) documents the contributions feminism has made to the transgender movement, including the separation of sex and gender and the analysis of values attached to male and female categories. Transgender people have, likewise, contributed to feminism. For instance, Morgan (1996) describes how the first Gay Liberation Front action to get mainstream publicity was radical drag done in support of lesbians and feminists on trial for disrupting a Miss World contest. Feinberg (1996) argues for strong alliances with feminists. This is echoed in the findings. Some contributors discussed transgender issues in relation to feminism, while others do not relate to feminism but have principles similar to those of feminists, for example Yvonne Sinclair and John Marshall discussed equality. Problems in creating alliances with feminists are discussed above, in the chapter on transphobic discourse.

In addition to alliances with feminists, findings suggest possible alliances with progressive men. Kate N' Ha Ysabet discussed links between the men's movement and the transgender movement:

"The transgender movement has probably come from a bunch of people who have come out of the gay movement and various other things included, and then started to bump into a lot more of the men's movement and there are people on the men's movement who are doing transgender behaviour and in terms of the clothing, you know probably the goths are doing this already, the Rocky Horror Picture Show, (?) lots of stuff out there. There are tonnes of men who are challenging gender assumptions and are too fucking scared to get off their arses and do anything about it because it's too dangerous. Because its, all their wives are going 'If you do that then our marriage is over because, well I feel scared about my gender being taken away from me'. Men I know are currently going through the stage of going 'shit how am I going to make me a man, how am I going to prove I'm a man?' Most men are going through the process of redefining how they are as men"

One area of alliances for some contributors and alienation for others concerns sexuality and sexual minorities. A few contributors seemed to feel a sense of alienation from queer culture because of the overt sexuality at for example Pride. As noted above, some also dislike the fetish aspects of transvestism. In contrast, others feel a sense of belonging at Pride, and (less frequently) at events such as fetish parties, which have an overtly sexual content and where transgender as well as other types of identity are explicitly sexualised. The fetish scene is, itself, split into different overlapping sections, including for example the heterosexual, gay and dyke scenes, as well as special interest events such as transvestite 'training schools'. Transvestism is one of the most acceptable dress codes on the fetish scene and in most S and M clubs. There appears to be a welcoming of all types of transgenderists at many fetish events, based on the condoning of pluralist, consensual sexual expression and an acceptance of the transgressive within the context of sex play. "Gender play", where transgender behaviour is explored in a sexual context, is part of the SM scene. John Marshall discussed the way transgender links with submissive and dominant role-play. This includes women exploring identities as "lesbian boys", which in some cases seems to lead to identification as transgender or at least an open-minded affiliation with transgender people. Simon Dessloch discussed the cruciality of consent as a basis for S and M, and he sees this notion of consent as of relevance to transgender politics. Consent links with agency and self-determination, which are vital for transgender people. Simon also pointed out that much S and M sex does not involve genital

penetration or the removal of clothes. These things are problematic for many transgender people, so the fetish scene may be a safer space to explore sexuality for some.

There are other alliances which could be of political use to transgender people. Zach Nataf noted some shared ground with those concerned with ethnicity, including mixed 'race' people, although there were also differences. Some contributors, particularly Pamela Summers, drew strong comparisons between the oppression of Black people and transgender people. Pamela and others also used the Black civil rights movement as a prototype for transgender rights. This is echoed in the literature, for instance Rothblatt (1994) uses the example of the change in identity among Black people, from negro to Black and African American, as model of the possibility of social change concerning categorisation. Other alliances mentioned by contributors include links with African women organising against genital mutilation (Chase 1998). Another area for alliances may be with the disability movement. N' Ha Ysabet discussed transsexuality as a minor disability and the potential for alliances concerning this. She also mentions the green movement. Non-transgender people are also described as allies by some contributors and this is echoed in some of the literature. Feinberg (1996) points out that non-transgender people have a stake in transgender liberation, as it concerns the right to explore and define identity. Groups such as Press for Change, the GENDYs network and the Gender and Sexuality Alliance are open to supportive non-transgender people, as is Phaedra's organisation. Phaedra discussed building alliances with heterosexual non-transgender people and others. She argued that:

"we can create alliances anywhere where anybody is willing and open to be allied with us. Its a difficult thing. My network actually isn't just transpeople, I have very positive-minded, confident, well balanced heterosexual people in it who are not gay, not trans, not anything, but friends of trans. Like Graham in Hong Kong, who is a photo journalist who worked with me in '97 out there and he is an agent and he emails me and helps me out with information and things and vice versa"

Transgender and Citizenship

Transgender challenges the dominant models of citizenship. There have been a number of such challenges, in particular development of feminist alternatives (Lister 1997) and the notion of sexual citizenship (Evans 1993, Plummer 1995, Weeks 1998 and Richardson 2000). Some alternative models of citizenship are of limited use to transgender people. For example, Giddens's (1992) notion of intimate citizenship is based on the idea that reflexive, affectional relationships are increasing and contribute to processes of democracy. However, the development of intimate citizenship is very difficult when structural constraints (including some cases the imposition of surgery on people in a way which damages sexual functioning) impede this. Notions of sexual citizenship are more useful. Sexual citizenship is of relevance to transgender politics because of the overlap in agendas and identities and because the moral policing which forms part of currently dominant models of citizenship acts against the interests of transgender people. The notion of sexual citizenship provides a means of changing oppressive social norms concerning sexuality. Sexual citizenship concerns intimate desires and ways of relating (Plummer 1995). The notion of sexual citizenship is based on the rights of people to be sexually different; rights which are unacknowledged by participative and other models of citizenship (Weeks 1995). So, for example, whilst consumer democracy may allow for and, to an extent, enable, the existence of sexual minorities (including transgender people), such minorities are simultaneously ghettoised away from the mainstream, thus maintaining the 'purity' of the moral communities and dulling dissent (Evans 1993). Traditional models of citizenship assume a certain type of moral subject, excluding homosexuals, bisexuals and transgender people. This conflicts with citizenship policies which are rights-based, for example the stated right to live according to one's sexual identity (European Parliament Session Documents 1989-1990).

The feminist challenge to traditional notions of citizenship can be taken as a prototype for development of a transgender model, as it concerns gender rather than sexuality. Lister (1997) discusses the historical exclusion of women from citizenship at conceptual and policy levels; traditional notions of citizenship have been male and heterosexual. The inclusion of women entails legislative and other structural change, for example destabilisation of the rigid public/private divide upon which much liberal ideology rests. As

Roche (1992) says, the claim for equal rights for women entails state assistance as well as the acknowledgement by men of patriarchy, and the need to act against the patriarchal system to create equality. This means a basic and difficult reordering of society. Such fundamental change is necessary for transgender people to be socially included, and for the ideals of equality and self-determination which form the basis for notions of citizenship to be realised.

How inclusive are current models of citizenship and how useful are these for transgender politics? The 'Third Way', New Labour's attempt to fuse neoconservative and interventionist, rights-based strategies is a form of revamped participatory democracy (Cowen and Daly 1999). Thus, there is a concern with social justice, autonomy, cosmopolitan pluralism, and rights as dependent on the meeting of responsibilities. Emphasis is on active citizenship and on new forms of community groups, and more varied, fragmented identities. This allows more space for the development of transgender politics than previous administrations. However, there are serious problems with the Third Way. Structural inequalities are insufficiently addressed. For example, New Labour has ruled out direct economic redistribution, which means that many people will be economically excluded from the political process (Cowen and Daly 1999). As shown in chapter 5, transgender people face considerable challenges regarding (for example) employment, which means that they may lack the resources to engage politically. There are other difficulties with ensuring inclusion. The concept of the 'active citizen' is tied up with moral control. As shown above, this works against the interests of transgender people if traditional notions of morality are used. In addition, the Third Way is less engaged with collectivist, oppositional social action (Waltzer 1993, in Cowen and Daly 1999) than models used by previous Labour governments, and may act to defuse urban political movements (Cowen and Daly 1999). Cowen and Daly criticise the participative democracy model in a number of ways, in particular because it compounds structural inequalities, which affect people's ability to participate, and because it has not, in fact, produced autonomous subjects. They point to the dangers of a fractured political agenda, overlooking the general will of communities. These criticisms mirror the earlier exploration of transgender and postmodernism/poststructuralist analysis, where the latter was shown to be individualistic, and to lack structural analysis and a means to effect social change. Thus, the Third Way is of limited value to transgender politics.

Transgender can be seen to exemplify the failure of participative and consumer democracy, and the 'Third Way', to include socially marginalised groups. As described above, many transgender people are active citizens, and the groups involved in the research are examples of the community-based, tertiary-sector citizen involvement so beloved of both neoconservatives and New Labour. However, transgender people continue to be socially excluded. Some, such as Pamela Summers, operated very much within a participatory democratic model whilst also drawing on universalist notions of equity:

Pamela: Um. In the end I mean in the end what interests me about organisations like PFC is that they are immanent. They represent people saying 'for us, in our circumstances, this won't do and we are going to assert our reasonable right to have a voice and to make arguments and to be heard'. And if the arguments get smacked down, so be it, that is the nature of democracy. And then what we'll do is we'll say, well that's tough shit on us, and then we'll go away, and we'll think of some more arguments and then we'll come back and we'll go at you again. As long as it takes. Unless you can show us otherwise. And yes, that may take a goodish while but we can't see why it would, we're willing to offer to think of middle ways and solutions that work for everyone within ordinary social structures (sic) and within that you know it seems to me to lie the human condition, and this is why I say, in any event therefore, if we take that kind of notion forward, why do we talk about masculine and feminine?, why do we have a society that is so charged with these terms? why do we need to think of it in these ways? how is that helpful? what is the benefit to us? Apart from, attempting to redress historical inequity

I: I, I'm just wondering what alternatives there are?

Pamela: Equal treatment for all people

I: Which would change things drastically

Pamela: Yeah, but you actually don't say 'all men are bastards' well know they're not

I: Well no of course not

Pamela: What you do say is 'They are no different, they are other, that is all. They are people'

I: That's right.

Pamela: And all of us are people. And within that we then affiliate in particular ways. And we recognise that for reproduction and continuation of the human species these people will affiliate and reproduce in these ways, and that's, you know that's a good thing. Its a good thing for society because you know it reproduces itself and people recognise it's a good thing. By providing support to those individuals, those people who replenish our society in this way, through means such as: Schooling, healthcare, family allowance. Well we support it, we all support it. But it's not better than, being like that isn't good and being other evil

The participative democracy model is flawed if structural change does not take place. State intervention and a welfare approach can be seen as necessary because of the health needs of transgender people. However, this raises issues concerning the tension between universalism and diversity. State intervention could erase difference if the diversity within the transgender communities, and the social privileging of white middle-class male models of citizenship, were not recognised. Findings show that many of the issues for transgender people are similar to those described by Lister (1997) with respect to women. For example, there is a need for a combination of policies which acknowledge diversity, which address transgender people as a group and which frame transgender and non-transgender people as having the same rights and duties. This mirrors debates within feminism concerning difference versus universal oppression (see for example Humm 1989), and can be developed with respect to the Black feminist critiques of universalism. The tension between universalism and diversity is evident in the wider literature. For example, Hirst (1994) states that "it is an apparent paradox that an associationalist society (a decentralised, pluralist, society where the state acts as a facilitator), far from being committed to the most pluralistic and relativistic view of human belief and conduct, will have to hold certain

principles and truths in common" (p. 57). Kymlicka (1995), in his discussion of multicultural citizenship, argues for the supplementation of traditional notions of rights with a theory of minority rights, and for the implementation of both universal and differentiated rights. However, even this is problematic given clashes between minority group's claims to rights. For example, there are some conflicts between unpaid carer's (most of whom are women) claims for pay and the rights of disabled people who are dependent on unpaid carers (see Swain, Finkelstein, French and Oliver 1993).

Another, related, area of difficulty concerning transgender citizenship concerns the danger of defusion of the queer end of transgender politics via incorporation into the democratic process, although, paradoxically, this assimilationist incorporation also changes the mainstream. A radical analysis might suggest a collectivist stance against heteropatriarchy rather than direct political participation. However the 'queer as transgressive' approach and other 'radical' strategies are not on their own sufficient, because of the extent of diversity, the fluid movement between conventional and unconventional identities, and the tensions within the movement between radical and assimilationist approaches. Debates concerning transgression as a motor for social change continue, but there are problems with taking an oppositional approach and advantages of appealing to universalism:

Pamela: Anything which doesn't provide equal treatment, well simply doesn't provide equal treatment, is unequal. Now how one then opposes that, well transgression is one form of opposition but er the problem is that if you take an oppositional position then we're back into you know, 'this is good and this is bad' as opposed to a position of saying, 'well this is like this, and this is other'. It's not that I want to get rid of the notion of good and bad, it's that I want to contextualise it. What's good and what's bad in the human dimension? What does this mean, practically? Practically, where's the problem? So, practically for me the problem is that I could be sent to a wrong sexed prison. Now as soon as one puts it into that context and the consequences of that are, we know, almost automatic rape. So under those circumstances we know that that's not fair. I mean it's as simple as, one doesn't need to go beyond the kind of childhood cry of 'that's not fair'.

I: Absolutely

Pamela: Absolutely not fair. And therefore something has to be done, in the same way it's not legal for me to get married, so that's not fair, and it's not legal for me to adopt children and that's not fair, as soon as we put it into a context we have a notion of good and evil which is outside of opposition, which is relational to the whole of the human condition, so it becomes intersubjective

Incorporation via mainstream political processes could nullify radical change, if transgender people compromised sufficiently. However, incorporation in a way which does create structural change is challenging to consumer, participatory and 'Third Way' models of citizenship in the same way that the feminist and sexual citizenship models are. The major social changes required for the social inclusion of transgender people involve notions of participatory citizenship, in which pressure groups and community based activism play a part, but this calls for an extension of citizenship in the direction of rights and social justice-based models.

What are the necessary ingredients for a model of transgender citizenship? The findings are unclear, but seem to suggest an ethically-based pluralism. There are evident tensions between universal claims to equal rights and participatory or oppositional models, which address difference but do little to alter the infrastructure that excludes transgender people. For example, Press For Change (see 1997 a and b) note the importance of ensuring that civil rights activism for one group does not destroy the rights of another. The balancing of the needs of diverse groups against the good of the whole is an important theme. Lister (1997) argues that the 'false universalism' of traditional models of citizenship does not mean rejecting the concept of universal citizenship; what is needed is a universalism that is balanced against diversity and autonomy, and which challenges the inequalities related to this. Similarly, Weeks (1998) discusses radical humanism as a balancing of diversity against common values. Thus, the tensions between postmodern diversity and fluidity could be dealt with by differentiated universalism, entailing sensitivity to differences plus gender neutral approaches (Lister 1997).

Inclusion of transgender people requires state intervention to redress inequalities, for example Press For Change argue for legislation ensuring protection according to the

principles of the European Court of Human Rights (1997a) and members of Press For Change, for example Pamela Summers, have driven forward changes in social structure via the European Courts. This could entail a Bill of Rights supported and enacted by legislation (see Deakin 1990); this has been supported at various times by both Labour and the Liberal Democrats (Evans 1993). In addition, there is an argument for the infusion of the 'Third Way' with representative structures. Cowen and Daly (1999) argue that representation is crucial in preventing the most articulate and powerful members of the public from dominating and preventing the marginalisation of social groups. Representation of transgender people is particularly important because of the small numbers and current levels of exclusion.

Conclusion

Transgender politics occurs at the levels of both the personal and the public. The transgender movement is a grassroots driven, diverse and currently evolving phenomenon which can be easily framed as a NSM (although, as noted above, transgender people do not necessarily use this term). The movement is shot through with issues relating to wider micro-social and macro-social processes. These include tensions between radicalism and assimilationism, and conflicts provoked by the social exclusion of transgender people and other minorities. The transgender political agenda can be framed both within universalist and participatory models of citizenship. Transgender politics is a good example both of the development of citizenship based on participation and the failure of the 'Third Way' to include marginalised groups. Full citizenship of transgender people entails fundamental change to social structures, including change to legal, linguistic, bureaucratic, medical, and other systems. This needs to be informed by recognition of the diverse identities and needs of transgender people via adoption of a pluralist approach. It is hoped that the representation of transgender people via participatory democratic processes will eventually lead to structural changes taking place.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Introduction

My initial aims, in conducting research about transgender politics, were to explore theoretical debates concerning gender binaries and transgression as a motor for social change. As discussed above, these aims changed substantially as I immersed myself in the field and became concerned about human rights issues. I approached the research as a non-transgender identified feminist, poised between the rabid anti-transgender stance of feminists such as Raymond (1980) on the one hand, and the utopian queer postmodernism of transgender theorist Bornstein (1994) on the other. This research was, for me at least, a venture into uncharted territory, territory which has subsequently been mapped out in a number of ways (for example Prosser 1998, Wilchins 1997, Califia 1997 and More and Whittle 1999). However, many questions have remained unanswered; questions concerning gender binarism, postmodern liminality versus gender categorisation, the relationship between the emerging transgender theory and existing sexual politics, and the crucial issue of when and how transgender people are going to gain full human rights and civil status. This thesis is an attempt to address these questions. It is more of an opening statement than a final word, as debates and developments in this field are fast-moving and any contribution is bound to be limited. In addition to contributing to the field of gender studies, the research informs debates concerning research methodologies. Conducting participant, feminist research with a heavily marginalised, extremely diverse group of people provoked questioning of feminist and participative epistemologies and the development of a more finely grained methodological approach. Lastly, the findings indicated a range of research implications.

Theory and Sexual Politics

Postmodernism

There are two key theoretical developments to emerge from the research concerning transgender politics and postmodernism: firstly, the tension between what I have called postmodernism and structure, and secondly, theory concerning third or other sex and social categorisation. The first issue is present in discussions concerning postmodernist feminism (for example Stanley and Wise 1993), and queer theory (Plummer 1996), but has not been properly explored in relation to transgender. The second issue is untheorised, although documentation of third and other sexes and genders is present in a number of sources (Herdt 1993, Feinberg 1996, Ramet 1997, Dreger 2000).

I argue that postmodernism provides a useful starting point when theorising transgender. This is because transgender can involve not only fluidity, complexity, paradox, excess and contextualisation, but, also, serious challenges to gender and sexual orientation binaries. In addition, poststructuralist and postmodernist theory, especially the work of Butler (1990, 1993) is used to inform the developing field of transgender theory (for example Prosser 1998, Stryker 1996). Whilst the approaches of transgender theorists vary, core concepts include the body and gender as constructed rather than fixed and essential, the notion of the body as a commodity, the destabilisation of empiricism, the disruption of sex in relation to gender and the problematisation of sex and gender binaries. On the basis of this it is possible to theorise gender and sex attributes as forming a spectrum of constructed possibilities, from which the individual either chooses, or unconsciously internalises, and then expresses, sex and gender attributes in a way that is far broader and more fluid than currently usual in our society. Technology is important in widening options and allowing new possibilities, such as gender-complex cyber-identities and body modification. Poststructuralist transgender theory is linked with notions of post-human identity, as developed by theorists such as Plant (2000).

Findings suggest that poststructuralist and postmodernist transgender theory is important in a number of ways. It is the only currently available means of theorising the multiple, fluid, expanded spaces which some transgender people inhabit. Moreover, the emphasis on

deconstruction of normative identities is extremely important in destabilising naturalised but restrictive gender and sexual orientation binaries. However, I argue that postmodernist models only address part of the picture, and may in fact simply be an umbrella for a period of conflict and contradiction caused by clashing identities, discourses and power systems. Postmodernist theory fails to account for a number of aspects of transgender people's experiences. These include biological, empiricist factors, the 'essential self' which many transgender people experience, and social realities, especially the social need for categorisation and for cohesive identities as a basis for political activism. Poststructuralism, taken to its extreme, involves deconstruction of identities and structures in a potentially damaging way. I argue that postmodernist theory is only useful insofar as it enables progressive change in the social world, via deconstruction of regressive or limiting structures. Progressive change entails construction of ethical, equal social structures to 'hold' postmodernist complexity safely, as discussed by authors such as Weeks (1995a). The construction of moral structures is especially important, given the opportunities for gender and sexual identity expansion and change which the new technologies provide.

Research findings concerning the postmodernism-structure debate imply the need to develop new theory, which allows for both identity fluidity and the structuring of this. This is, to an extent, explored by transgender authors such as Bornstein (1998). Such a theory would model social reality as involving a continuous movement between structure and fluidity and vice versa. Thus, biology, the 'essential self', subjectivity and social identities and structures are all both constructed and real. The fact that identity construction frequently occurs on a subconscious level or in infancy does not make these identities less constructed. However, humans have a need for structure, and, while perhaps ultimately everything is constructed, we have to live it as real. The extent to which identities are normalised, and thus appear to be real, depends on context. Identities and processes, which are liminal become social reality once named and incorporated into institutional structures. This is currently occurring with regard to transsexuality and may happen in the future in relation to intersexual and third or other genders.

Third or other sex and gender identities appear to be starting to emerge from the midst of the current change and complexity concerning transgender. Third or other sexes and

genders exist at a number of levels: intersexuals and androgynes are biologically third or other, transvestites and cross-dressers are socially both or other, and transsexuals arguably go through a transition time of third or other although they are mostly socially constructed as male or female. The fluidity of cross-dressing and transitioning transsexuality forms a limited basis for any third/other gender category, particularly as this is rejected by the majority of transsexuals and cross-dressers. Most transsexuals identify as male or female and see any transitional phase as something to be moved through as fast as possible, whilst for many cross-dressers, transgender is part-time and recreational. Therefore, third or other sex identities are usually rejected when theorising gender. However, utilising empiricism, it seems clear that something major is missing from current models of sex and gender: the existence of an intersexual biological third or other. Whilst binary-identified people of whatever political and social ilk deny the existence of third/other possibilities, these are only unseen because of the level of social erasure which intersex people experience. Third/other gender and sex identities are as 'real' as male and female identities: all have biological basis, and can be also constructed as social identities. However, the social identities of 'ze/hir', 'third' or 'many' or 'other', sexes and genders are absent in Western cultures.

Findings imply the need for theory that includes third and other sexes. I argue that the constructionist/postmodernist notion of 'third space' (Nataf 1996) is not sufficient, because this does not enable people to take 'third or other' social identities, and thus erases intersexuals and androgynes at the social level. 'Third or other' spaces and identities can be understood in relation to male and female binaries but can include both, be constructed in opposition to both or either, or can stand as independent identities. Gender binaries are still relevant, but are theorised as fuzzy and malleable rather than discrete, and operational in diverse ways. The new theory models gender as a spectrum, with 'male' and 'female' traits as a set of characteristics which are supplemented by 'intersexual traits', all of which combine in many different ways, and which are also affected by other factors, such as ethnicity and class. The new theory draws on poststructuralist transgender theory, which writes all gender and sex as simply mapped onto bodies, allowing for definition by gender characteristics rather than physical form, and movement away from simple binary definition. Male and female identities could be theorised as, on the one hand, 'real' and coherent identities which form a large proportion of a gender spectrum which include third

and other sexes, and on the other, as complex constructed identities which can include aspects of androgyny, characteristics traditionally associated with the opposite sex and so on. If the broadest definition of transgender is used, that in which everyone who transgresses gender norms is transgender, most people could be identified as transgender if they so wished.

Feminism

The research explores the way in which transgender is a contentious issue within feminism. The dominant feminist analysis of transgender stems from 1970s radical and cultural feminism (Raymond 1980, Daly 1984). Findings suggest that the work of authors such as Raymond is deeply transphobic. These feminists assume a privileged position for biological, genetic, females. They deny transgender people agency and self-determination, and frame transgender as simply reinforcing of patriarchal stereotypes. They fail to properly address gender fluidity, androgyny and third and multiple sex positions. Raymond claims that transgender people 'rape' genetic women, and violate women's space by their very existence, and she argues for the legislative and cultural erasure of transsexuality. Evidence supports critiques of traditional feminist discourses concerning transgender, which can be made on methodological, theoretical and political grounds. In terms of methodology, most authors rely on the work of Raymond, which is flawed. Raymond operated unethically and her research has impacted very harmfully on transgender people as well as fouling the pitch for later researchers. There are also irrationalities and factual inaccuracies in the work of Raymond and others.

Transgender poses a serious theoretical challenge to feminism. I argue that this is one reason why most feminists have operated to exclude it. Feminism, particularly radical feminism, are based on the notion of an unequal gender binaried system. Transgender scrambles gender binaries and opens up the space beyond or between simple male-female binaries. Radical feminists are unable to deal with this, except by stigmatising transgender people. Transgender highlights the flaws in feminist theory, for example the simplistic equation of masculinity with oppression. These flaws are evident in the work of transphobic feminists, who fail to adequately address issues such as transgender masculinity and political activism. Transgender also shows that radical feminist's notions

of transcending gender without moving towards androgyny or gender plurality are mistaken. In other words, the idea that women can move beyond gender and still be women, and female feminists, is a fallacy. Postmodernist and poststructuralist feminists (for example Butler 1993) have accounted more fully for the issue of transcending versus embodying gender binaries. Here, there is acknowledgement that gender binaries co-exist with challenges to these, and that it is impossible to escape from categorisation completely. However, there is an absence of discussion of gender plurality as an alternative to binaries, and a tendency to remain 'stuck' in postmodernist liminality.

Critiques of feminist approaches to transgender relating to politics are based on evidence that feminist transphobia stems from a desire to protect feminist ontologies, identities, agendas, social space and academic positions. This manifests as adoption of 'morally privileged' positions and prescriptive politics which rest on a narrow definition of what is acceptable. While this is understandable, given the cultural resistance to feminism, I feel that it is completely inexcusable. Feminist transphobia simply perpetuates a cycle of gender abuse, and creates a hierarchy with transgender people at the bottom. This goes against feminist ethics of equality, the right to self-determination and commitments to non-harm. It excludes transgender feminists and transgender women, who face many of the same issues as 'women born as females'. It also damages the feminist cause, as it alienates potential allies.

Findings imply the need for an upheaval in feminist praxis similar to that resulting from Black and working class women's critiques. The main differences are that transgender problematises the very basis of feminism, necessitating discussion which includes non-female people and people who move between female and male identities. Transgender politics is broader than feminism because it can contain female identities and feminism as part of a gender spectrum, where as gender-binary based feminism cannot deal with transgender except by exclusion. Thus, transgender theory could supercede feminism as a means of conceptualising gender, whilst also incorporating masculinity studies. Core tenets of this theory would include an acknowledgement of constructed, self-essentialist and biological factors, and standpoint approaches. It would allow for difference (both in terms of identity and praxis) but would set this against universalism based on feminist principles such as equality and self-determination. Findings imply that feminism would

become one of several tools in a spectrum of gender praxis, but a crucial tool, given the ongoing inequality of women. The changes would not, as feminists such as Raymond (1980, 1994) fear, lead to a homogenised or male dominated 'androgynous humanism', but, rather, to a spectrum of gender standpoints based on a politics that acknowledges and addresses difference and inequality. This spectrum could include radical, separatist feminism, but only as one of many equal positions, including transgender theory and masculinity studies, and thus not as a fundamentalist position. A remit of equality means that transgender praxis would be related to other matrices of social inequality such as 'race', class and ability.

Queer Theory

Queer theory is aligned with postmodernist feminism and broader postmodernist theory. Queer theory aims towards transcendence of traditional gender and sexual orientation structures, and is built in opposition to them (Plummer 1996). The paradoxical queer 'harking back to the categories, which are superseded' is typical of the postmodernist-structure debate. Findings highlight various problems with queer theory in relation to transgender. Where queer is defined as lesbian, gay and bisexual it is problematised by transgender, which destabilises the gender categories on which these identities are based. Where queer theory involves postmodernist/poststructuralist deconstruction, the criticisms which I have discussed above apply. In addition, queer theorists such as Butler (1990) have used some aspects of transgender experience to develop their ideas whilst invalidating or erasing other aspects, in particular transsexual identities and people's experiences of bodily limitations and self-essentialism. Butler and others rely on the notion of transgression as a motor for social change. However, transgression can only exist in relation to existing structures and is thus limited, and potentially reactionary. Findings show that transgender politics involves transgressive and assimilationist strategies operating hand in hand, something which is echoed in discussions concerning wider strategies for sexual liberation (Weeks 1995). Whilst the queer celebration of sexuality, and the related sex liberationism can be seen as life-affirming and politically progressive in some contexts, it is not sufficient on its own in effecting changes in the social structure. In addition, queer praxis is ultimately limited because it shuts out heterosexual men and women and fails to explicitly include many transgender people, particularly androgynes and intersexuals.

The research implies that transgender theory could supersede queer theory, because it addresses the whole gender and sexual orientation spectrum, including what are currently known as lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual sexual orientations. It includes recognition of the limitations of transgression, includes assimilationism, and enables context based models of identity and activism. The granting of civil status for intersexuals and third or other sex people would necessitate a broader base of sexual orientations as well as gender identities; probably continuation of current forms plus new ones. The term 'pansexual' could be useful, but is limited because it means attraction to all genders, and specific terms are also necessary. Queer praxis would still be relevant and many of the core tenets would be carried forward, including the emphasis on diversity, equality, the 'politics of partying' and transgression as a means (but not the only means) of social change. Transgender theory would include the usual debates concerning universalism versus difference, and localised forms of identification and activism, around for example gay male concerns, would be needed as well as a broad-based gender-pluralist praxis.

Transgender People and Transphobic Social Structures

Transgender people experience transphobia in many and diverse ways. Intersexuals and androgynes experience the greatest levels of transphobia and social exclusion, as intersexuals are usually 'treated' when infants or children to make them fit the gender binary system (Kessler 1998). This sometimes results in serious physical and identity problems (Dreger 2000). Intersex is pathologised by the medical system and is framed as socially problematic. Findings evidence the way that intersexual, third or other identities do not exist as social or civil identities, and there are no widely known terms to describe intersex or gender ambiguous people. Non-male and non-female people are bureaucratically erased, through 'male/female' coding on forms and official documents. Economic exclusion is a very major problem for gender ambiguous people, unless they are able to successfully 'pass' as male or female. Like other transgender people, intersexuals, where visibly gender ambiguous, are frequently victims of violence and abuse. Intersex people are currently socially invisible, with hardly any representation in the media, social policy and sexual minorities, and a lack of service provision in areas such as education, the family and the penal system.

Unlike some intersexuals, transsexuals require medical treatment (in order to transition). Findings indicate that the NHS is both enabling of this and in some cases an institution of control. Attitudes to pathologisation vary, with most contributors rejecting psychiatric and in some cases physical pathologisation but arguing for treatment to be available. Gender-role stereotyping and homophobia within the medical system seems to be a problem in some cases, although this is changing. Medics vary in approach and clearly exist within the constraints of the wider system. In some cases they appear to take a morally policing role, for example where transsexuals resort to prostitution in order to fund themselves. The growth of private medicine is linked with liberalisation concerning medical services for transsexuals, as well as restrictions on the amount of service provision.

Both medical and legislative bodies adhere to a gender binary system, but their models are in opposition, as medics recognise the assigned identity where as transsexuals remain their birth sex in terms of civil status. Transsexuals are denied basic civil rights, such as marriage, and in some cases parenthood. Transsexual rights are limited; only available to those who have had full surgery and emphasise passing. Employment patterns vary, but many are excluded and for those who are in paid employment there is often discrimination. Stigmatisation and abuse are widespread in certain specific contexts, such as prisons. Discrimination sometimes occurs in education, for example bullying at school. Access to social space is problematic, especially for non-passing transsexuals, and experience of violence is very common. Relationships and family life may be difficult, as transsexuals sometimes face discrimination from potential partners and family members, although this is by no means uniform. The media appears to be contested territory; coverage is mixed. Transgender people face exclusion from some minority groups, but are now mostly welcomed or tolerated in the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

Transvestites, drag queens and drag kings have been historically framed as abnormal by the medical system (Bullough and Bullough 1993), but because they do not usually receive medical treatment they have managed to evade the more damaging effects of pathologisation. Findings indicate that transvestites vary in their attitudes towards pathologisation; the early groups took on a pathologised model but later groups mostly celebrate the identity, including the fetishistic aspects. Drag queens, and, later, drag kings,

rejected stigmatising mainstream models of identity and established affirmative subcultures, playing an important role in queer subcultures. Transvestites and cross-dressers face less of the social exclusion which plagues other transgender people. This is because cross-dressing is a part-time, recreational activity for most, and takes place in social space, which supports it. Transvestites, who are usually heterosexual, sometimes face relationship problems and cross-dressers are generally at risk of violence. In addition, they remain socially marginalised and are usually unable to express their identities in the public sphere, except in queer spaces, where they also face a certain level of discrimination as well as celebration. There appears to be a widening of social tolerance for sexual minorities, which makes life easier for some transvestites, cross-dressers and drag queens and kings.

Subjective Processes and Transphobia

Subjective processes can be seen to play an important role in the normalisation of the gender binary system and the continuation of the exclusion of transgender people. The use of psychoanalytic theory, specifically object relations theory, enables recognition of the way in which characteristics associated with transgender trigger unconscious anxieties. These are frequently dealt with by exclusion of people who are perceived as undesirable, and are linked with cultural processes of stereotyping and stigmatisation (Sibley 1993). Relevant characteristics include ambiguity and the blurring of categorisation, physical and mental difference (especially disability) and sexuality. Findings extend understanding of the subjective processes behind transgender social exclusion. Evidence implies that the postmodernist scrambling of sex and gender characteristics, as well as the notion of sex and gender as constructed, may be threatening to some people, who rely on a naturalised gender identity for psychological safety. Furthermore, the containment of conflicting discourses within one psyche (for example separatist feminist androphobia and FTM valorisation of masculinity) can cause anxiety, which may be projected onto others. Transgender people moving away from, or constructing their identity in opposition to, a particular identity may feel particularly challenged by people inhabiting that identity. The existence of these causes of transphobia implies a need for therapeutic models which take them into account, as well as a revision of cultural and social norms concerning gender, so

that people are educated about gender difference in a similar way to ethnic difference and cultural taboos become less pronounced.

Transphobic Discourses

I argue that transphobia plays a key role in the social exclusion of transgender people. Research evidence shows that transphobia can be linked to the dominance of a range of discourses and processes, including ethnocentrism, racism and colonialism, patriarchy, homophobia, sexphobia and religion. With some exceptions, the economic and to an extent cultural interests of Western industrialised countries are currently dominant worldwide. This domination is built on the legacy of colonialism, which wiped out cultural diversity, including many forms of transgender (Nataf 1996). Patriarchy appears to be an important cause of transphobia. The construction of gender categories enables men as a class to dominate women, through structures such as the sexual division of labour and paternity systems. Challenges to the male-female divide, such as intersexuality, are erased. Homophobia is enmeshed with transphobia: transgender people are often stigmatised because they are seen as homosexual, and vice versa. Homosexuality, like transgender, threatens traditional gender binaries and heterosexual power. Body fascism affects many transgender people negatively, for example non-passing transsexuals face greater social discrimination. In the context of this cosmetic surgery becomes a contested issue: it acts to create a smaller range of 'acceptable' appearances (Kessler 1998), yet is used in an empowering way by many transgender people. Sexphobia is another cause of transphobia, particularly where transgender is recreational and linked with sexual expression. This is linked with the taboo concerning non-procreative sexuality, a taboo that finds its roots in religion and patriarchy. Many of the main religions, particularly Christianity, Judaism and Islam, reinforce male-female binaries and frame transgender as an abomination thus legitimising persecution. The spiritual traditions which support gender diversity have often been suppressed by these religions (especially Christianity) (Feinberg 1996). Capitalism is also linked with transphobia, although there are different models: conflict perspectives would frame capitalism as dependent on gender divisions thus enforcing of gender binaries, or alternatively as gender commodification and capitalist exploitation of transgender people; pluralist approaches would argue that capitalism enables transgender

via commodification, which is linked with a loosening of sexual authoritarianism. Other forces, such as disablism, may also contribute to transphobia.

The forces which contribute to transphobia interweave, creating oppositions to diverse gender identification and expression. With the possible exception of capitalism, those people with stakes in maintaining these forces share an interest in supporting restrictions on gender and sexual expression, as freer expression would destabilise existing power structures. While gender diversity would not necessarily affect the personal identities of non-transgender, heterosexual, men and women it would certainly imply a movement towards a more gender pluralist society and reform of the cultures and institutions that block this. In policy terms, there is a great need for exploration of the possibilities and implications of gender pluralism. This would include state support for education, social space and cultural forms which promote diversity and the social citizenship of people of all genders. Gender pluralism could be set within the context of international multiculturalism, because it was cultural hegemony that initially enabled the world-wide erasure of much transgender diversity (although this would be problematic given the religious fundamentalism of some ethnic groups). It can also be related to discourses concerning consumer rights and sexual citizenship, both of which fit within the participatory democracy remit and both of which can act in an empowering way to benefit transgender people. Notions of gender equality (including feminism) are also very important as a means of combating transphobia, both directly, in the sense that gender equality must surely include transgender equality, and also because equality between men and women would lead to a number of gains for transgender people, such as greater ease of transitioning because of a wider breadth of sex roles. In addition, discourses from disability rights could be very useful for transgender people, as these concern physical difference, and challenge social norms concerning identity and social participation. However, this issue has yet to be explored.

Transgender Politics

The research shows that 'transgender politics' is a contested term, with a lack of consensus concerning what constitutes 'the movement', or in some cases, whether a movement or a community exists. There have been a range of UK organisations involved in activism

concerning transgender, characterised by grass-roots membership and organisation. There appears to have been a general shift in recent years from self-help groups to those concerned with changing the social conditions which exclude transgender people, although organisations are usually concerned with both. Some contributors see the transgender movement as taking off during the 1990s. There is to some extent an increase in political activity and gains, social recognition of transsexuals and development of partnerships and alliances. The transgender movement can be seen as a New Social Movement (NSM), as it consists of a loose, pluralist, non-hierarchical network of activists, and is similar to, if much smaller than, movements such as the Women's movement.

Transgender politics seems to be based on a broad set of values: the acceptance of diversity, emphasis on self-definition and agency, equality and inclusion. There is often a move towards 'consumer' models of healthcare provision and depathologisation of transgender, interest in gaining civil rights and legislation for equality, as well as wider social reform to enable transgender equality. Some participants argue for the diversification of gender categories and social reform to support this, while the majority envisage the two-gender system as continuing, and transgender people being included within this. There is considerable awareness of the difficulties of effecting social change, so that, in some cases, participants wished for diversification but felt that this was impossible given structural forces.

Political Strategies

Transgender people use many different forms of political strategy. These include 'simply being transgender', academic activism (particularly publishing), lobbying, challenging legislation by taking test cases through the courts, networking and conference organisation, engagement with the media, filmmaking, art and direct action, although in the UK this seems to be mostly limited to participation in Lesbian and Gay Pride marches. Cyberspace is an increasingly important forum for activism, support and the exploration of transgender identities, but access to this is limited for some people. There is a tension between identity politics and single issue campaigns, given a need for a sense of community and identity on the one hand and the diverse, multiple processes associated with transgender on the other. The movement seems to deal with this tension by a focus on single issue campaigns within

for example the most active organisation, Press For Change, and by supporting diversity and alliances. Opinions concerning advocacy are mixed; most activists self-advocate, but those who are very excluded socially may find advocacy useful. Feelings of solidarity, acceptance of personal sacrifice (particularly concerning being 'out') and in some cases experience of activism as a means of self-empowerment are all factors affecting participation. Some people seem to go through a phase of involvement, often early on in transition if they are transsexual, and some research participants mentioned age and 'burnout' as reasons for non-engagement, while for others there was a strong desire 'simply to get on with life', and yet others were unable to contribute to the extent they wished because of their level of social exclusion.

Tensions and Alliances

Research findings evidence many tensions within the transgender communities, although it is important to emphasise that there is also a lot of collaboration. Tensions include disputes concerning the definition of transgender itself, ownership of the term and in some cases rejection of the term. There are, in some cases, divergences because of the marked differences between the groups currently subsumed under the umbrella of 'transgender' and hierarchies concerning surgery and passing. There are 'border wars' concerning identities and social space where these overlap, for example in the case of butch lesbians and FTM transsexuals. There are tensions between those (the majority) who see transgender as essential, and use this as a means for gaining social legitimacy, and others, who adopt constructionist accounts (see King 1993). Resentment exists in some instances towards those who appear 'less oppressed', for example cross-dressers, and also those who 'disappear' once they have transitioned. Issues concerning sexuality and morality are another area of difficulty; for example many transsexuals and other transgender people distance themselves from transvestites, some of whom have sexual reasons for cross-dressing (some transvestites deny this). Another area of tension concerns third/other identities and transsexuality. Many transsexuals deny the validity of third, other or multiple sex/gender identities, seemingly because these are disruptive of the male and female identities which transsexuals mostly take. A minority of transsexual contributors support gender and sex plurality. In some circles intersexuality is valorised, which becomes problematic if adult intersexual surgery is condemned but transsexuals fail to

activate against infant intersexual surgery. A further area of difficulty concerns political strategies and the assimilationism-radicalism polarity. The transgender movement spans extremes of radicalism and conservatism. Transgender, which tends to be associated with radicalism, pride in identity and queer politics, is more oppositional than the assimilationist transsexual politics. Findings suggest that, on the whole, the assimilationism-radicalism polarity is a creative one, with many organisations and individuals using both types of approach at different times.

Research findings indicate that many of the causes of the tensions in the transgender movement can be traced to the transphobic binary gendered system. Social exclusion and unequal social structures impact on transgender people and their ability to participate in the political process. Thus, for example, political organisation would be much easier if transgender people were better financially resourced via inclusion in the labour market. Similarly, hierarchies of passing and surgery would not occur if passing transsexuals were not socially privileged. Importantly, some transgender identities (androgynous, intersex) are socially unrecognised, so that it is impossible to use them as a basis for campaigning. I argue that the crucial shift in standpoint is from that of individual pathologisation to location of the exclusion and stigmatisation of transgender people at the social level. There do, however, also seem to be linked, subjective and intersubjective processes at work, including in some cases internalised transphobia. The threats which transgender people sometimes present to each other's identities are a factor, perhaps because these identities are frequently constructed in opposition to others, for example assumption of the assigned gender identity for transsexuals involves rejection of the old social identity. Tolerance of difference seems to be more difficult when identities are still in the process of being constructed. Also, many of the people involved in transgender politics appear to have strong personalities and, as in many other 'community politics' settings, this can lead to difficulties as well as advances.

Alliances appear to be crucial for transgender politics, because of the small numbers of people involved as well as the issues of fluid identities and overlaps of interest with other groups. For some people this means alliances with other excluded groups, a finding which is supported in the literature (Feinberg 1996). However, alliances on the basis of experiences of oppression seems to be problematic in some ways, as they do not

necessarily further transgender claims for social inclusion. This has unfortunate spin-offs, for example some transgender people distance themselves from lesbians, gays and bisexuals, despite what one contributor describes as inevitable, if often temporary, identity overlaps. The more assimilationist activists thus seem to seek alliances with 'middle England', health practitioners and policy makers. This is overlaid and in some cases combined with visible and growing alliances between gay, lesbian and bisexual activists and transgender people, although this entails some tensions concerning ownership of identities and social space. There is also indication of alliances with other groups, including feminists, sex liberationists, and members of the men's movement, Black and minority ethnic groups, and the disability movement as well as supportive non-transgender heterosexuals.

Transgender Politics and Citizenship

Research findings suggest that transgender politics are currently set primarily within the context of neoconservative models of participatory democracy and notions of the consumer and the 'active citizen', as opposed to a liberal, rights based, state interventionist model of citizenship. The radical, oppositional parts of the transgender movement are more heavily marginalised and appear to have less impact on policy, although the current parliamentary forum consults with a range of transgender groups. The participatory democratic framework is problematic given the extent of social exclusion which many transgender people face, and the limited amount of social structural change which participatory politics enables. In addition, neoconservative models of citizenship have narrow frameworks of morality, which may act to exclude transgender people who are also members of sexual minorities, and which prevent the formation of broader, more inclusive ethical structures based on principles such as consent, equality and respect.

Implications concerning transgender politics need to be placed within the context of transgender politics as an ongoing process, steered by transgender people themselves. The most that discussions concerning implications can do is contribute to the processes within the community and to policy making, which will increase the social inclusion of transgender people and hence their ability to participate in the political process. Given this caveat, broad implications of the findings concerning policy are as follows: that policy

makers and politicians support full civil rights for all transgender people, including transsexuals, cross-dressers, intersexuals and androgynes. This will entail substantial reform of legislative and bureaucratic systems to enable marriage, employment, parenthood and other rights to be fully established. While the issue of third and other sex is contentious within the transgender communities, I argue that provision must include creation of new linguistic categories to enable social inclusion of intersexuals, androgynes and others who do not wish to identify as male or female, whilst also supporting the rights of transsexual men and women. Transgender should be depathologised except insofar as pathologisation is necessary for transsexuals to gain treatment, and medical care must be provided to all transgender people where necessary. The structures to support changes must be developed in partnership with community groups and funding should be made available to support community groups with this in mind.

I argue that increased state protection and support of diversity is necessary if all transgender people are to become able to participate fully in society and democratic processes. Rights based reform would take place in concurrence with notions of increased responsibility and participation, as transgender people become increasingly included and active as citizens. However, as is often the case in discussions concerning citizenship (Lister 1997), there are tensions between the provision of universal gender equality rights and those which support diversity and the more socially excluded groups. A balance between these polarities will need to be found, including a balance between the interests of the larger groups and the smaller groups within the transgender communities.

Research findings imply a critique of the currently dominant Marshallian models of citizenship, which tend towards universalisation of the white, male, heterosexual, Western, able-bodied subject, even in texts which discuss gender and ethnicity (see Carabine 1996). Gender diversity is written out of these models, which easily act to reinforce the hegemony of the two-gendered/sexed system. Feminist and sexual citizenship theorists (Lister 1997, Carabine 1996 and Richardson 2000) have identified a need to change this universalism by incorporation of gender and sexuality into this model. Research findings indicate the possibility of further development of the notion of gender and sexual citizenship to include transgender, and an exploration of the implications of this for theory and policy concerning citizenship and social exclusion. In addition, further exploration of issues concerning

transgender and citizenship, for example the tensions between universalist and pluralist models, is indicated in relation to transgender.

Methodology

The main contributions which the research makes to the field of methodology are, firstly, illustration of the difficulties associated with conducting research in a very complex and sensitive area and, secondly, to begin to build strategies to enable this. Postmodernist and constructivist epistemologies are found to be useful, but inadequate in themselves, as a basis for the methodology. They allow exploration of complexity and constructedness, but fail to provide a baseline from which research can be conducted. Post-positivist approaches are helpful, as are aspects of feminist methodology. Feminist methodologies are problematised by transgender, because transgender disrupts the male and female categories on which feminist approaches are based. This can be dealt with by adapting Alcoff's (1995, 1998) standpoint approach for use in a multi-gendered field. The research thus necessitated development of a 'hybrid' approach to epistemology. There are also problems with some of the core tenets of feminist and participative approaches, such as the minimisation of hierarchy, the focus on reflexivity and the emphasis on researcher transparency. These guidelines, if taken too far, can lead to researcher over-involvement and disempowerment, as well as inability to meet other stakeholder's requirements. Difficulties are particularly pronounced when there are strong tensions within the field, which can lead to the researcher getting pulled in different directions as ze/she/he tries to meet different agendas. Attention to power dynamics and boundaries, as well as ethics, are crucial for research in this field. Both participative and feminist methods are ultimately helpful, as they enable the collection of rich data, as well as empowerment and inclusion of research participants. In addition, the strong emphasis on ethical practice and progressive politics which these approaches provide is very important for research which is sensitive, and which concerns identity deconstruction and reconstruction.

Implications for further research

The research of transgender politics indicates a number of areas for further research. The implications of transgender for gender theory warrant further investigation, particularly as

transgender theory appears to overtake, and include, feminism, masculinity studies and queer theory. Ideally, a larger, representative, sample, including participants who do not identify as transgender, would be selected in order to test aspects of the theory which I have begun to develop. As noted above, the development of transgender theories of citizenship would also be a useful area for investigation and this would have immediate applications in the political realm. The social exclusion of transgender people is of central importance, and applied research concerning development of policies to address this is crucial. Exploration of the social and political aspects of third and other sexes and genders is a very new area, one which deserves particular attention given the extent of social exclusion which non-male and non-female people experience. Research in this area, like the others, would need to take into account the interests of stakeholders in the transgender community as well as outside and be conducted in close collaboration with community members. In addition, there are specific issues requiring applied research, which are under-researched and which would produce findings, which would be useful for many transgender people, for example concerning transsexuality and sexual health, and service provision for intersexuals.

Summary

Transgender politics involves a range of complex issues, ranging from biological and medical concerns through to issues concerning political participation. Debates are ongoing and fast-moving, and development of knowledge must take place from within the transgender communities or together with transgender people. The shift from individual pathologisation of transgender people towards the location of gender pathology at a social level is crucial for transgender politics. As well as the need to continue with the development of structures to support transsexuals, including medical provision where necessary, full civil rights for all transgender people is likely to necessitate establishment of third, multiple or 'other' sex and gender categories and the legal, bureaucratic and social structures necessary to support this. Such a change is highly contentious within the transgender communities as well as without, and policy reform would need to protect the identities of those people who seek to adhere to the binary gender system. Current political discourse supports diversity, but questions remain as to whether society will allow gender pluralism to emerge and support the needs of the small, diverse and currently very heavily

marginalised group of people who tread outside of the established categories of 'male' and 'female'. Gender theory has a role to play in mapping the territory, particularly when the sophisticated, fluid, multiplicity of postmodernism is grounded in analysis of social structure and political process. Transgender theory provokes the rewriting of current sexual politics: the inclusion of that which has been marginalised opens the way for a more complex understanding of the possibilities of sex and gender. This does not, however, remove the need for postmodernist gender theory to be rooted in analysis of structural inequalities and a commitment to progressive politics. Transgender politics requires a range of strategies, both oppositional and assimilationist, and alliances between a wide range of groups interested in gender equality is crucial if transgender civil rights are to be attained and society is to benefit from the richness of possibilities which the transgender spectrum enables.

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Appendix 1: Research Proposal

Deconstructing Gender and Sexual Orientation? Transsexuality, transgender and bisexuality

Research proposal, Surya Monro, Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield, 7 February 1996

Introduction

Gender and sexual orientation are central to the subjective experience and theoretical understanding of identity.. The deconstruction of gender and sexual orientation binaries these categories and the structural inequalities which they form the basis of. This research aims to explore the subjective experiences of gender and sexual orientation fluidity, focusing on people's agency in defining their gender and sexual orientation and their experiences of identities which are transcendent of gender and sexual orientation. It will address the cultural and political aspects of deconstructed identities, in particular the issues that deconstruction of gender and sexual orientation categories raise for feminism and queer politics.

Background and Rationale

Theoretical Basis: The research will have a primarily constructionist basis. It will utilise a post-modern feminist approach (see for example Butler 1990, Nataf 1996) and will draw on liberationism (for example Rubin 1992) and queer theory (for example Warner 1993) but will retain a structuralist critique of these. The research will be located primarily at the micro level, drawing on interactionism and the subjectivist approaches used by researchers used by researchers such as Plummer (1995) and Simon and Gagnon (1989).

Transsexuality, and Transgender: Transgenderists and transsexuals are a very diverse population, with a wide range of gender identifications and sexual orientations. Some transgenderists and transsexuals have fluid sexual orientations or gender identities (Nataf 1996), and these people are of central importance to the research because of the understandings of identity that they may have gained through their experiences. For example, the San Francisco Weekly (1995) describes FTMs whose sexual orientation flipped from lesbian to gay and others who describe

themselves as pansexual. In another article, drag is discussed as a way of expressing a gender continuum as a challenge to rigid gender binaries. (see also Wilton 1996, in Richardson, forthcoming)).

Bisexuality: Authors such as George (1993) and Rose and Stevens (1996) discuss the challenge that bisexuality poses to sexual orientation binaries. Deconstruction of sexual orientation may challenge heteropatriarchy because sexist and heterosexist power inequalities have their basis in gender and sexual orientation binaries. In some cases, bisexual people may replace notions of sexual identity as dependent on gendered sexual object choice with other determinants.

Identity: Transsexuality, transgender and bisexuality raise many questions concerning identity. How do people construct identities if gender and sexual orientation are malleable? What about alternative models of sexual identity, including third sex models? How do people experience gender if this is felt to be a part of the self which is different to their biological gender? Is there a sense of self which is beyond gender or sexual orientation? How much agency do people have in defining their gender and sexual orientation and how much are they constrained by social or structural factors? To what extent is transgression of gender or sexual orientation norms transformative on a personal and immediate social level and to what extent is it a reaction to outside pressures? What visions do transsexual, transgendered and bisexual people have?

Queer Culture and Politics: Transsexuality, transgender and bisexuality are illustrative of the deconstruction of gender and sexual orientation which is central to queer politics and culture. This deconstruction is problematic because the rejection of categories may leave people with little basis for personal or political identification (Seidman 1993). Thus for example bisexuals have developed little cohesive cultural identity or political base. Feminists have debated the political implications of the deconstruction of binaries, with authors such as Bornstein (1994) suggesting that transsexuality and drag challenge gender binaries and others such as Jeffreys (1996) and Raymond (1979) arguing that they reinforce heteropatriarchal norms and erode lesbian and gay communities and politics. Some feminists, such as Wilton (1996, forthcoming) suggest that diversity may be crucial for transforming debates around sex and gender. This requires that spaces be created for people to explore sexual identity in diverse ways. However, the debates concerning transgender, transsexuality and bisexuality continue and are illustrative of the multiple intersecting struggles described by Richardson in her discussion of queer (1996).

Rationale

The proposed research will contribute to the fields of gender and sexuality studies in a number of ways. There is a paucity of research concerning transsexuality and transgender, particularly analysis of a post structuralist feminist orientation. Bisexuality is also under researched. The two most recent publications in these areas, Nataf (1996) and Rose and Stevens (1996) both indicate a need for further research, particularly research which develop theoretical and political understanding of transsexuality, transgender and bisexuality. There has been a lack of micro level theorisation concerning sexuality, especially research which is not focused on sexual scripts or a psychoanalytic approach (Jackson 1996). The research which has been done has frequently neglected the link between the individual and structural factors.

Findings will contribute to understanding of identity formation among transsexuals, transgendered people and bisexuals. It will develop analysis of the links between identity, culture and politics, particularly ways of forming identities and campaigning bases when the categories which have formed the basis for identity politics are changing. Findings will be relevant to people concerned with sexual identity and emancipatory politics. The research will contribute to the fields of women's studies, queer studies, social theory, the sociology of identity and sexology.

Aims and Objectives

- To explore the way people deconstruct/reconstruct their sexual identities when these are fluid or transgressive of gender and/or sexual orientation binaries
- To develop understanding of the implications of deconstructed identities for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered 'communities'.
- To examine the implications of deconstructed/reconstructed sexual identities for heteropatriarchy.

Research Question

What are the implications of the deconstruction of gender and sexual orientation categories?

Methods

The research will follow the interactionist, ethnographic model and will be based on the use of personal narrative. Literature work comprises the first part of the research. This will be followed by consultation with people who have an interest in the field through either personal or professional experience. The fieldwork will consist of approximately 20 in depth interviews with individuals who have experienced deconstructed or fluid sexual orientations or identities.

Sampling: Interviews with individuals sampled on the basis of their experience of deconstructing/reconstructing sexuality, focusing on transsexuals, bisexuals and transgendered people. The sample will not be representative: this would be impossible given the range of variables and limited resources. However, I will attempt to reach a range of respondents using the following criteria: 1) Experience of deconstruction or transgression relating to gender and/or sexual orientation. 2) Stratification across a range of types of transgression of sexual orientation categories: male and female bisexuals, transgendered, possibly transsexual, possibly lesbians, gays, heterosexuals who do drag or who sometimes have sex with people of a different gender to that associated with their orientation. It is probably advisable to exclude the latter category at this stage because it would make the field too large and because my topic is not well researched and I need a relatively narrow focus in order to get the necessary depth of analysis. 3) Range of experience and political orientations, for example experience of political activism, or of theatrical/cultural expression. 4) Levels of experience: range if possible, to allow comparison between people who are aware and active with more tentative people whose orientations/identities may be inarticulated. 5) Other parameters to include geographical location: London and Yorkshire. The decision to locate partially in London is based on its more diverse and developed bisexual/transgender/lesbian/gay scenes. The inclusion of another area will allow some comparison and a wider range of respondents.

Sampling and access: Sampling will occur through organisations and personal contacts. Access and sampling will occur concurrently, with the aim being to establish a strong base of contacts initially and then to organise the interviews to run within a short space of time to avoid data contamination. A brief, accessible description of the research will be produced for prospective respondents.

The interviews will be 1-2 hours long and will be conducted in appropriate informal settings. After some sense of rapport has been established we will discuss the research contract, addressing confidentiality, ownership, length of interview, returning of transcripts and analysis for feedback etc. The interviews will be conducted as narratives around key themes, but with space for respondents to talk about issues which they think are relevant which I have not included. Themes will include what people think about sexual orientation and gender categorisation; how they do or do not relate to categories, how much choice do they feel they had in building their sexual identity: did they consciously choose aspects of their identity and if so, why, or were they forced to make choices on the basis of structural constraints or essentialist urges; how their orientation has affected their relationships including equality in relationships, what they think about bisexual, transgender and transsexual cultures and the way these relate to sexual orientation and gender categories, what their visions concerning culture and politics are and possible strategies for realising these.

Analysis and writing up: The data will be written up as short anonymised stories for each respondent. This will be followed by analysis using a framework drawn from the literature and themes emerging from the data. The transcripts and the analysis will be checked with participants to ensure that representation is correct.

Dissemination: The findings will be disseminated to the participants and to the wider queer and feminist 'communities' in appropriate ways, for example articles in the pink press and workshops. In addition to the thesis academic papers and other published material will be produced.

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Appendix 2: Research Brief

Transgender and Transsexuality: Towards an emancipatory politics of gender

Thesis

Transsexuality fundamentally destabilises gender binaries and politics based on these. While perhaps epitomising the postmodernism of Judith Butler and others it concurrently highlights the problematic apoliticism associated with the postmodernist approach. Transsexuality illustrates the need for analysis of the construction of gender. Understanding of the structural forces underlying this and the extent to which agency can mediate these is necessary. Transgender/Transsexuality demands development of an alternative to both binary based sexual politics and apolitical postmodernism.

Aims

This research project aims to develop an emancipatory politics of gender based on T peoples experience and of relevance to T people and others as well as the field of transgender studies.

Research questions

How does TS/TG problematise gender binaries and politics based on these?

What are the emancipatory alternatives to binary based sexual politics?

Methods

A variety of methods are being used for the research including: informal and in depth interviews with T people, particularly people involved in T and gender politics, a focus group on T politics, email discussion and literature work.

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

The Political Implications of Deconstructing Gender: Transsexuality and Transgender

Interview Schedule, Surya 11.696

- Consent form
- ~~The collaborative nature of the research. Interview structure: go through themes together first and alter according to their ideas.~~
- Their right to not answer any questions which they do not want to discuss.
- Length of interview (about 1-2 hours).
- Time scale, i.e. results to be available in ~~1997-1998~~ 1999
- Any questions?

Categorisation:

BINARY

- Definitions of TS, TG, third sex, gender fuck, gender bending
- Gender ambiguity
- Fluid gender identities
- Multiple gender identities
- Synthesised gender identities
- Non categorisation, non gendered selves

2. Your identity

- Describe

- Agency structure

- Consciously taking on roles (why?)

- Understandings re the construction of gender

3. Society and Transgender

- Social control of gender
- If no social control, would TS be necessary
- People who challenge gender but are critical of surgical/hormonal change
- Effects of TS/TG on society (extent, replication/challenge to mainstream gender)
- Alternatives to the current gender system

4. Categorisation and TS/TG politics

- Gender as basis for identity politics *- esp. binary issues*
- Fragmented identities and TS/TG identity politics
- Fragmented gender identities and sexual orientation categories

5. Transgender/Transsexual politics

- Are you political re TG/TS (describe/define)
- Importance or not of politics

6. 'The Movement'

- Is there a radical TG/TS politics?
- What issues?

7. Assimilationism and Radicalism

- Effecting social change (basic rights versus challenging society)
- Tensions within TS/TG communities/groups
- TS and assimilation: stigmatised identities, transient identities and the problems of identity politics

8. Alliances

-What, if any

- Issues re feminism and TS/TG
- Separatism
- Sex radical feminism
- Feminism as based on gendered categories
- Potential alliances

trans, gay and bisexual politics

TS/TG

- Gender transient identities and problems with sexual orientation categorisation
- Alliances
- ~~Alternatives to queer (radical deviance)~~

11. The future for TG/TS politics

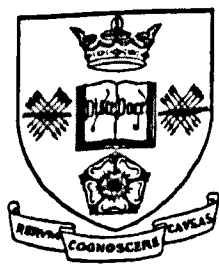
12. Anything else

Thanks

Feedback

Appendix 4: Sample of letters to contributors

The University of Sheffield



Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield, Northumberland Road, Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

Tel: 0114 282 6321

Fax: 0114 276 8125

E mail: s.c.monro@Sheffield.ac.uk

Chair of Department: Alan Walker, D.Litt., FRSA, Professor of Social Policy

Deputy Chair: David Phillips, M.Phil., Senior Lecturer in Social Policy

24 April 1996

Dear Zachary Nataf,

I am writing to ask for your help with my research. I am doing a PhD about Transsexuality and Transgender focusing on the deconstruction of gender and sexual orientation binaries. I am interested in developing an analysis of categorisation and exploring the alternatives as well as examining the implications of this for Transgender politics, feminism and queer politics. My research aims to address some aspects of the agenda you raised in your book: questions concerning identity and challenges to heteropatriarchy. I have enclosed an academic and a non academic proposal.

I found your book really useful, especially the radical orientation (which seems very lacking in a lot of transsexual circles), your discussion of the transgendered dismantling of heteropatriarchy, the links with poststructuralism and the way you deal with the connections and tensions between transgender and transsexual politics and lesbian and feminist politics.

You are clearly a key person in this field and several people have recommended that I talk to you. I realise that you are recovering from surgery and that you are probably very overloaded with requests for help. I also know that there has been a lot of appropriating and misrepresentative research carried out by gennie researchers and that people are often rightly quite disillusioned by this. I have tried to deal with this by being open about my own identity as a lesbian queer feminist who does some gender bending stuff, consulting with Transgendered and Transsexual people as much as possible and sticking to feminist research principles of equality, respect and truthful representation. I am quite clear about putting something back into the community in the form of written material etc. but am also aware that what I can do is limited.

It is really crucial for the research that people like yourself who are politically radical are willing to talk to me. I realise of course that as an author you may well be planning to do more work in this area yourself and that as a transgendered person with long experience of the issues you are in a much better position to do it than myself. It does seem however that there is a lot of work to be done in this area and that alliances are vital for moving things forward. I have got 1 1/2 years of funded time to put into work in this area and certainly hope to do something which will be useful for Transgendered and Transsexual people, feminists and queers as well as getting my thesis done.

What I am hoping is that you might either be willing to talk to me informally on the phone or ideally that you might be willing to be interviewed. This would take about an hour and could either be anonymised or you could be quoted by name. I am also planning to run a workshop in the summer which will be for radical Transgendered and Transsexual people. Part of this will be specifically about my research but the afternoon will hopefully be run by and for radical Transgenderists. If you are interested I can send you further details.

I really hope to hear from you.

With best wishes,

Surya Monro

The University of Sheffield



Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield, Northumberland Road, Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

Tel: 0114 282 6321

Fax: 0114 276 8125

E mail: s.c.monro@Sheffield.ac.uk

Chair of Department: Alan Walker, D.Litt., FRSA, Professor of Social Policy

Deputy Chair: David Phillips, M.Phil., Senior Lecturer in Social Policy

23 April 1996

Dear Mjka,

Thank you again for taking the time to talk to me the other day. I found it really interesting, especially what you said about the tensions between assimilationism and radicalism and the need to avoid the kind of radicalism which ghettoises. Also the critique of essentialism and binary ways of looking at gender which transsexuality demonstrates, and the way you talked about spirituality.

One of the main things that came out of the preliminary research was that there is a very wide range of political and gender orientations among transsexual and transgendered people. Most people are fairly traditional in their approaches to gender but some people are questioning gender stereotypes and indeed the entire binary gender system. These are the people I really need to talk to further. I felt from our conversation that you might be one of these people and that you would in any case have a lot to say about the issues. You said that you would be willing to be interviewed. I wonder if it might be possible to do this sooner rather than later? I am down in London for much of the early May period. I do not know if you could spare an hour or two sometime like Monday 6th or Tuesday 7th in the morning?

I have thought further about the workshop/focus group and discussed it with one of the transsexual people who would like to be involved. It seems that a clear separation of my research and the possible radical political forum aspect is necessary. The morning could perhaps be space for my research and the afternoon could be sessions run by Transsexuals or Transgenderists (this person is already interested in running one). Also, the tone of the day and the advertising would be more professional and academic (without being dry or inaccessible) than that of my early draft suggestions. So if you are interested or know anyone else who might be (timescale: July) please do let me know.

I will be available on the phone until Friday afternoon and can pick up messages next week even though I might not be in Sheffield. I do not have your phone number so I wonder if you might be able to phone me re the interview?

With very best wishes,

Surya

needing to be done in this area and I am in a position where I can do a bit of it but this relies completely on the help of people like yourself.

What I am hoping is that you might be able to give me feedback or discuss the research by telephone, email or letter. This would not need to take much of your time.

I hope to hear from you. If you call me I will of course call back immediately so that the costs to you are minimal.

With best wishes,

Surya Monro

The University of Sheffield



Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield, Northumborland Road, Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

Tel: 0114 282 6321

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E mail: s.c.monro@Sheffield.ac.uk

Chair of Department: *Alan Walker, D.Litt., FRSA, Professor of Social Policy*
Deputy Chair: *David Phillips, M.Phil., Senior Lecturer in Social Policy*

30 May 1996

Dear Yvonne,

Thank you very much for meeting with me the other day and for being so helpful in the interview.

Something really awful happened on Saturday. I went to First Out with a few friends for a drink. I left all my luggage in the locked boot of my friend's car in a seemingly quiet area of Tottenham Court Road. When I came back it had all been stolen.

I feel absolutely dreadful about this because of the loss of research material and the breach of security. I have talked about it with a number of people and everyone agrees that the chances of anything untoward happening with your interview tape are extremely small. However the book you lent me was nicked along with the rest of my gear. What on earth can I do to repay you? I will certainly look for it in the secondhand shops-meanwhile let me know if there is any thing that would go some way to repacing it. Yvonne, I'm really sorry, sorry too because we covered such a lot of ground in the interview and you said so many useful things.

I felt a sense of relief when I remembered that you had said that you might be able to meet with me for another interview in the future. I **really** hope that this will be possible. Your contribution was unique and the research would not be the same without it.

Might you be able to ring me ? (I have also lost your number)

With very best wishes,

27.1.1998

Dear Christie Elan-Cane,

I am writing to apologise for having been out of contact for so long and to let you know what is happening with my PhD. It was ages ago that we were in contact: Just to remind you, I started doing research on T politics during the spring of 1996 and we did an interview at the National Film Theatre. I had research material stolen and then had to take medical leave for a substantial period of time (depression/ME).

Anyway my health and circumstances have improved, although this has taken far longer than I had hoped, and I have resumed my studies. I am aiming to finish in about a year-18 months time: apologies again for this delay. I will of course send you a summary of findings.

Christie, your research material was lost and must have been destroyed. I am terribly sorry about this: it was an unfortunate accident that I could not have foreseen. I do have some notes but it feels like a real shame not to be able to include you more fully. Your viewpoint is really important, as my central arguments are about the need for respecting diversity and a politics which will support people with their gender choices, including third sex and androgeny. My research is critical of rigid male-female categories and the way that society is structured around these. I am aiming for this research to have a positive impact on the way things are for T people and on society in general. The people involved in my research are diverse, but there is no one who is androgenous and who has been involved in creating space/organising specifically around Third sex and Androgeny. I realise that you may have had enough of being interviewed....I am sorry to bother you again but involvement in this research is likely to make an impact. Your contribution would be enormously helpful.

I hope you will feel able to do another interview with me. This would be short (about an hour) and could be done on the phone or face to face, whichever you prefer (phone is easier for me as my energy/time/finances are very limited). My home phone no. is 0114

27.1.1998

Dear Kate,

I am writing to apologise for having been out of contact for so long and to let you know what is happening with my PhD. It was ages ago that we were in contact: Just to remind you, I started doing research on T politics during the spring of 1996 but I took leave because of health problems (ME/depression).

Anyway my health and circumstances have improved, although this has taken far longer than I had hoped, and I have returned to my studies. I am aiming to finish in a year - 18 months time.

I need to do some more interviews for the research and was wondering whether you might still consider taking part. I really hope you will-I was sorry not to get to interview with you the first time around and feel sure that your ideas will be of value to the research. If you can take part the interview will take about an hour and could be done over the telephone or face-face. You choose whether you would like your ideas acknowledged by name in my work or whether you would prefer to be anonymous.

I hope to hear from you. My home phone no. is 0114 2500282: Its best to contact me there as I mostly work from home now. I will be away from around 4-9 Feb.

See you at the Tran theory conference in April hopefully, if not before.

With best wishes,

Appendix 5: Consent Forms

Interview Consent Form

Transgender/Transsexuality: Towards an emancipatory politics of gender. PhD research, Surya Monro, University of Sheffield

Date: Mjha Scott

Name of person taking part in the research:

Conditions of the research:

1. What you say will be ~~anonymised~~/quoted by name (please delete as preferred)
2. Interview recordings will be kept as securely as possible and destroyed once the research is completed.
3. A transcript of your interview, or the parts of it which I will quote, will be sent to you to be checked/alterd if you wish. Your changes will be incorporated in the research provided I receive them within a reasonable period of time i.e. 1 month from postage date.

I would like a copy of the transcript Yes/~~No~~ (please delete as preferred)

4. You will be sent a brief summary of findings when the research is completed (hopefully 1999)

Statement: I agree to taking part in the research under the above conditions

Signature:

Mjha Scott

10/6/98

Interview Consent Form: Research on transsexuality and transgender by
Surya Monro at the University of Sheffield

Date:.....

Name of person taking part in the research..... KATE MORE.....

Conditions of the research:

1. What you ~~say~~ SM ~~will be anonymised~~/you will be quoted by name (please delete as preferred).

2. The tapes will be kept securely and destroyed once the research has been completed.

3. Transcriptions will be anonymised if this is the participant's choice and will be kept as secure as possible.

4. Material from the transcripts may be used indirectly in the text and directly in the form of quotes. Where quotes are used, the quote and the passage it is quoted in will be checked with participants before the results become public. The only exceptions to this would be if it was impossible to contact participants within a reasonable time. Participants could if necessary withdraw or change quotes, again within a reasonable time scale (i.e. at least a month to respond).

5. Notes from any telephone conversations may be used subject to the above conditions

Yes

No (delete as appropriate)

Additional conditions.....

6. Any email messages (past/future) may be used subject to the above conditions

Yes No (delete as appropriate)

Additional conditions.....

7. Any other written material may be quoted subject to acknowledgement by name

Yes No (delete as appropriate)

Additional conditions.....

8. Interview participants to be sent a brief summary of findings in 1997/8.

9. Anything else (please specify)

Statement: I agree to taking part in the research under the above conditions

Signature..... Kate Moxie

**Appendix 6: Summary of findings for
dissemination to contributors**

Transgender Politics: Summary of Research Findings

Surya Monro, University of Sheffield, September 2000, based on research with a range of transgender people

Transgender Studies has developed a great deal since I began this research in 1996, with many interesting contributions being made by transgender people (Bornstein 1998, Prosser 1998, More and Whittle 1999, Stryker 1997 etc). It is important for me to place this research in the context of this, and to point out that it is merely a contribution to ongoing discussions, rather than any attempt at a final say. Also, I have developed ideas based on the research which do not reflect the views of all of the people who took part. This is a summary; I include peoples' interview material and expand more fully on the differences between people's ideas in the thesis, but at the end of the day the synthesis of ideas is mine. It is impossible to fully represent the transgender communities in a project of this size and a larger project would be useful.

The research aimed to inform both the practice of transgender politics and gender theory. It was done via a mixture of my taking part in events, interviewing transgender people (approximately 25 in-depth interviews plus informal conversations with around 70 people), email discussions and a 1 day forum. It attempted to be participative (that is to involve transgender people) as much as possible, but this proved difficult given the guidelines about completing a PhD on my own.

The research findings concern the transgender movement and citizenship rights, the social exclusion of transgender people, transphobia, and transgender and theory (including postmodernism, feminisms and queer theory). I will discuss these in turn.

The Transgender Movement and Citizenship

There is, needless to say, a great deal of diversity within the group currently termed 'transgender'. There is also diversity concerning how people define transgender, what people see as transgender politics, whether people are actively involved in activism or not, whether people think there is a movement or not, and ideas about what the aims of that movement should be and which strategies to use to achieve these aims. Overall, there seems to be some agreement that there has been a shift from the early self-help oriented groups towards emphasis on challenging the social exclusion and oppression of transgender people, and also in some circles celebrating transgender as part of the queer spectrum. There is broad agreement about the values underlying the movement, which include acceptance of diversity, equality and the right to self-determination. There are also strong alliances with other social groups, particularly the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities but also sympathetic heterosexual non-transgender people and others.

There is wide variation among transgender people concerning political aims. These include the full provision of parenthood, employment, and marriage rights, and a general shift towards depathologising transgender whilst supporting the need for appropriate healthcare where necessary. If the rights of everyone are to be supported very substantial

reform is necessary. This is because third and multiple sex people, intersexuals and androgynes are currently unable to exist within society, as there is no legislative or bureaucratic support for them. Establishment of 'other than male and female' sex and gender categories is fiercely resisted by both mainstream society and most transgender people. It is a difficult thing to suggest because of the amount of social change which it would mean, which is hard to comprehend and even harder to fight for, when even relatively minor reforms concerning transsexual inclusion are so difficult to gain. In addition, there seems to be an issue about it possibly making it harder for transsexuals to fit into society as their assigned sex, but not much evidence for this actually being a problem.

People described a wide range of strategies for challenging the social exclusion of transgender people. These include:

- simply being transgender
- lobbying
- challenging legislation
- art, writing, research and education
- engagement with the media
- direct action, for example at Pride marches
- meeting people, discussing things, networking, mutual support

There seems to be some tension in the communities around who is defined as transgender, whether people have had surgery or not, being 'out' as transgender, whether third, other or non-gendered identities are valid (as mentioned above), and whether political strategies should challenge the mainstream or work with it. The reasons for tensions include the extent of social exclusion that transgender people face, which makes it very difficult and in some cases impossible to be 'out' and to find the resources to campaign for equal rights. In addition, because transgender people go through difficult identity changes, they sometimes appear to find people who are different threatening, which may lead to tensions within the community. Overall, it seems that the inclusion of all transgender people within the movement is currently taking place and that people are increasingly valuing diversity. Many people involved in politics work with the mainstream (the government, the NHS and so on), but others are more interested in challenging social inequality via opposition or living in alternative ways. Findings suggest that both strategies are important, and that many people use both at different times.

It seemed as if looking at different models of citizenship might be useful in order to gain a better understanding of the transgender movement. The liberal way of understanding

citizenship is based on the idea of equality and rights for all and state intervention to support this. The model which dominates New Labour's agenda is different from this and is based on the idea of people participating in democracy via interest groups and consumerism. The problem with this model is that it does not take into account the fact that people start from unequal positions and that smaller groups, such as the transgender communities, tend to get left out of the political process. In addition, it has a 'moral policing' element, which means that people involved in activities such as fetishism and sex work get stigmatised. However, participatory democracy does open the way for partnership with government and statutory agencies and transgender groups are using this opportunity to campaign for change. Research findings provide arguments for state support of diversity to enable transgender people to participate fully in society, and also for a widening of the traditional models of citizenship, which are based on white, male, able-bodied, middle class people, and which need to fully include everyone else.

Transgender People, Social Exclusion and Transphobia

It is important to point out that not all transgender people feel themselves to be socially excluded or oppressed. However, many transgender people experience social exclusion, in various ways. Intersexuals and androgynes experience the greatest levels of exclusion, as intersexuals are usually 'treated' when infants or children to make them fit the gender binary system. This sometimes results in serious physical and identity problems. Intersex is pathologised by the medical system and is framed as socially problematic, although some intersex people do not need surgery for physical well-being. There are no pronouns or widely known terms to describe intersex or gender ambiguous people. Non male and female people are bureaucratically erased, through 'male/female' coding on forms and official documents. Economic exclusion is a very major problem for gender ambiguous people, unless they are able to successfully 'pass' as male or female. Like other transgender people, intersexuals where visibly gender ambiguous are frequently victims of violence and abuse. Intersex people are currently socially invisible, with hardly any representation in the media, social policy and sexual minority subcultures and a lack of service provision in areas such as education, the family and the penal system.

Unlike some intersexuals, transsexuals require medical treatment in order to transition. Findings indicate that the NHS is both enabling of this and in some cases an institution of control. Attitudes to pathologisation vary, with most contributors rejecting psychiatric and in some cases physical pathologisation but arguing for treatment to be available where necessary. Gender role stereotyping and homophobia within the medical system seems to be a problem in some cases, although this is changing. Medics vary in approach and clearly exist within the constraints of the wider system. In some cases they appear to take a morally policing role, for example where transsexuals resort to prostitution in order to fund themselves. The growth of private medicine is linked with liberalisation concerning medical services for transsexuals as well as restrictions on the amount of service provision.

Both medical and legislative bodies adhere to a gender binary (male-female) system, but their models are in opposition, as medics recognise the assigned identity where as

transsexuals remain their birth sex in terms of civil status. Transsexuals are denied many basic civil rights, such as marriage and in some cases parenthood. Transsexual rights are limited; only available to those who have had full surgery and with an emphasis on passing. Employment patterns vary, but many people are excluded and for those who are in paid employment there is often discrimination. Stigmatisation and abuse are widespread in certain specific contexts, such as prisons. Discrimination sometimes occurs in education, for example bullying at school. Access to social space is problematic, especially for non-passing transsexuals, and experience of violence is very common. Relationships and family life may be difficult, as transsexuals sometimes face discrimination from potential partners and family members, although this is by no means uniform. The media appears to be contested territory; coverage is mixed. Transgender people face exclusion from some subcultures, but are now mostly welcomed or tolerated in the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

Transvestites, drag queens and drag kings have been historically framed as abnormal by the medical system but because they do not usually receive medical treatment and they have managed to evade the more damaging effects of pathologisation. Findings indicate that transvestites vary in their attitudes towards pathologisation; the early groups took on a pathologised model but later groups mostly celebrate the identity, including the fetishistic aspects. Drag queens, and, later, drag kings, rejected stigmatising mainstream models of identity and established affirmative subcultures, playing an important role in queer subcultures. Transvestites and cross-dressers face less of the social exclusion, which plagues other transgender people. This is because cross-dressing is a part-time, recreational activity for most, and takes place in social space, which supports it. Transvestites, who are usually heterosexual, sometimes face relationship problems and cross-dressers are generally at risk of violence. In addition, they remain socially marginalised and are usually unable to express their identities in the public sphere, except in queer subculture spaces, where they also face a certain level of discrimination as well as celebration. There appears to be a widening of social tolerance for sexual minorities, which makes life easier for some transvestites, cross-dressers and drag queens and kings.

Transphobia, defined here as the fear of and stigmatisation of transgender people, is at the root of the problems that many transgender people experience. This occurs at the individual level, because most people are afraid of people who are 'different', or gender ambiguous, particularly when this is linked with sexuality. These things provoke their own suppressed and unconscious fears and desires, and it is easier to make transgender people 'wrong' or 'sick' than it is to face their own issues. There is also no social category into which people can 'fit' people who are gender-different, and this means that transgender can seem very frightening. Therefore, transgender people get shut out of society instead of society becoming more rich and diverse. In addition, there are powerful forces which support transphobia which operate at cultural, but usually unconscious levels. These are:

- racism and the legacy of colonialism. Many non-Western and pre-colonial societies value or valued transgender people, who are/were important in their cultures (see Ramet 1997, Feinberg 1996)

- patriarchy, or the oppression of women by men, because it relies upon a rigid male-female distinction and operates to support this
- homophobia, which is closely intertwined with transphobia: both act to support the social dominance of heterosexuality
- sexphobia, or fear of sexuality, especially when transgender is linked with sexual expression (for example some transvestism)
- religious traditions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism all condemn transgender and have also in the case of Christianity operated to wipe out indigenous religions which supported transgender
- body fascism, or the stigmatisation and social inequality of people seen as physically different or unattractive. This impacts heavily on some transgender people, especially for example non-passing transsexuals
- disablism, as some transgender people have disabilities (mostly it seems due to the social discrimination they face)

These forces impact in varied ways, depending on the context and the people involved. Awareness of the way in which they work can perhaps help to counteract them, in the same way that naming racism and sexism has helped the Black Civil Rights and the Women's Movements respectively.

Theory

Postmodernism

For postmodernists, there is no 'truth' or overall way of understanding things. Reality is seen as socially constructed. Postmodernists suggest that old structures and identities are breaking down and things are becoming complex, contradictory, context-based and fluid. It is important to point out that most of the contributors to the research did not use postmodernism or necessarily agree with postmodernist ways of looking at things, although a growing number of transgender writers do use postmodernism (for example Stryker 1996, Prosser 1998, Bornstein 1998, Wilchins 1997).

Postmodernism seems to provide a useful starting point when theorising transgender. This is because transgender can involve not only fluidity, complexity, and paradox, contextualisation, but also serious challenges to gender and sexual orientation binaries (distinct male-female and gay-straight distinctions). In addition, poststructuralist and postmodernist theory, especially the work of Butler (1990, 1993) is used to inform the developing field of transgender theory (for example Prosser 1998, Stryker 1996). Whilst the approaches of transgender theorists vary, core concepts include:

- the body and gender as constructed rather than fixed, essential and real
- the notion of the body as a commodity (to be altered as the person sees fit)
- the disruption of sex in relation to gender (so, for example someone has male genitals but identifies as female)
- the problematisation of sex and gender binaries (so, male/female categories are no longer seen as natural and inevitable)

On the basis of this it is possible to theorise gender and sex attributes as forming a spectrum of constructed possibilities, from which the individual either chooses or unconsciously internalises and then expresses sex and gender attributes in a way which is far broader and more fluid than currently usual in our society. Technology is important in widening options and allowing new possibilities, such as gender-complex cyber-identities and body modification.

Findings suggest that postmodernist transgender theory is important in a number of ways. It is the only currently available way of theorising the multiple, fluid, expanded spaces that some transgender people inhabit. It is also extremely important in destabilising gender and sexual orientation binaries, which we are brought up to think of as natural but which are actually restrictive. However, postmodernist models only address part of the picture, and fails to account for a number of aspects of transgender people's experience. These include:

- biological factors, including ageing, problems with surgery and with passing
- the 'essential self' which many transgender people experience (the inner woman/man/androgynous)
- social realities, especially the social need for categorisation and for cohesive identities as a basis for political activism
- Problems with technology, especially the limitations concerning what is actually possible and also unequal access to technology

I feel that postmodernist theory is only useful insofar as it enables progressive change in the social world, by challenging regressive or limiting structures. Progressive change entails construction of ethical, equal social structures to 'hold' postmodernist complexity safely, as discussed by authors such as Weeks (1995). The construction of moral structures is especially important given the opportunities for gender and sexual identity expansion and change that the new technologies provide.

Third and other sexes and genders

Third or other sex and gender identities appear to be starting to emerge from the midst of the current chaos and complexity concerning transgender. As noted above, this is very contentious and transgender people's attitudes to it vary widely. Third or other sexes and genders appear to exist at a number of levels: intersexuals and androgynes are biologically third or other, transvestites and cross-dressers are socially both or other, and transsexuals arguably go through a transition time of third or other although they obviously mostly experience themselves as male or female. The fluidity of cross-dressing and transitioning transsexuality forms a limited basis for any third/other gender category, particularly as this is rejected by the majority of transsexuals and cross-dressers. Most transsexuals identify as male or female and see any transition phase as something to be moved through as fast as possible, whilst for many cross-dressers, transgender is part-time and recreational. Therefore, third or other sex identities are usually rejected when theorising gender. However it seems clear that something major is missing from current models of sex and gender: the existence of an intersexual biological third or other. Whilst binary-identified people of whatever political and social ilk deny the existence of third/other possibilities, these are only unseen because of the level of social erasure which intersex people experience. Third/other gender and sex identities are as 'real' as male and female identities: all have biological basis, and can be also constructed as social identities. However, the social identities of 'ze/hir', 'third' or 'many' or 'other', sexes and genders are absent in Western cultures.

Findings imply the need for theory which includes third and other sexes. I argue that the constructionist/postmodernist notion of 'third space' (Nataf 1996) is not sufficient, because this does not enable people to take 'third or other' social identities and thus erases intersexuals and androgynes at the social level. 'Third or other' spaces and identities can be understood in relation to male and female binaries but can include both, be constructed in opposition to both or either or can stand as independent identities. Gender binaries are still relevant, but are theorised as fuzzy and malleable rather than discrete, and operational in diverse ways. The new theory would draw on postmodernist transgender theory, which writes all gender and sex as simply mapped onto bodies, allowing for definition by gender characteristics rather than physical form and movement away from simple binary definition. Male and female identities could be theorised as, on the one hand, 'real' and coherent identities which form a large proportion of a gender spectrum which includes third and other sexes, and on the other, as complex constructed identities which can include aspects of androgyny, characteristics traditionally associated with the opposite sex and so on. If the broadest definition of transgender is used, that in which everyone who transgresses gender norms is transgender, most people could be identified as transgender if they so wished. This would be problematic if it meant that the needs of specific groups became hidden, however.

Feminism

The research explores the way in which transgender is a contentious issue within feminisms. The dominant feminist analysis of transgender stems from 1970s radical and cultural feminisms (Raymond 1980, Daly 1984). Findings suggest that the work of authors such as Raymond is deeply transphobic, or stigmatising of transgender people. These feminists assume a privileged position for genetic females, deny transgender people agency and self determination, and frame transgender as simply reinforcing of patriarchal stereotypes. They fail to properly address gender fluidity, androgyny and third and multiple sex positions. Raymond claims that transgender people 'rape' genetic women, violate women's space by their very existence and she argues for the legislative and cultural erasure of transsexuality. Evidence supports critiques of traditional feminist discourses concerning transgender, which can be made on methodological, theoretical and political grounds. In terms of methodology, most authors rely on the work of Raymond, which is flawed. Raymond operated unethically and her research has impacted very harmfully on transgender people as well as fouling the pitch for later researchers. There are also irrationalities and factual inaccuracies in the work of Raymond and others.

Transgender poses a serious theoretical challenge to feminism. I argue that this is one reason why most feminists have operated to exclude it. Feminisms, particularly radical feminism, are based on the notion of an unequal gender binaried system. Transgender scrambles gender binaries and opens up the space beyond or between simple male-female binaries. Radical feminists are unable to deal with this, except by stigmatising transgender people. Transgender highlights the flaws in feminist theory, for example the simplistic equation of masculinity with oppression. These flaws are evident in the work of transphobic feminists, who fail to adequately address issues such as transgender masculinity and political activism. Transgender also shows that radical feminist's notions of transcending gender without moving towards androgyny or gender plurality are mistaken. In other words, the idea that women can move beyond gender and still be women and female feminists is a fallacy. Postmodernist and poststructuralist feminists (for example Butler 1993) have accounted more fully for the issue of transcending versus embodying gender binaries. Here, there is acknowledgement that gender binaries co-exist with challenges to these, and that it is impossible to escape from categorisation completely. However, there is an absence of discussion of gender plurality as an alternative to binaries and a tendency to remain 'stuck' in postmodernist liminality.

Critiques of feminist approaches to transgender relating to politics are based on evidence that feminist transphobia stems from a desire to protect feminist's interests. This manifests as adoption of 'morally privileged' positions and prescriptive politics which rest on a narrow definition of what is acceptable. While this is understandable, given the backlash to feminism, it is completely inexcusable. Feminist transphobia simply perpetuates a cycle of gender abuse and creates a hierarchy with transgender people at the bottom. This goes against feminist ethics of equality, the right to self-determination and commitments to non-harm. It excludes transgender feminists and transgender women,

who face many of the same issues as 'women born as women'. It also damages the feminist cause, as it alienates potential allies.

Transgender politics is broader than feminisms because it can contain female identities and feminism as part of a gender spectrum, where as gender-binary based feminism cannot deal with transgender except by exclusion. Thus, transgender theory could overtake feminism as a means of conceptualising gender and could also incorporate masculinity studies. Core tenets of this theory would include:

- an acknowledgement of constructed, self-essentialist and biological factors
- standpoint approaches, where people acknowledge their own social and identity position and respect difference
- feminist principles such as equality and self determination
- a balance between focus on differences between people and groups and universal experience and rights

Findings imply that feminism would become one of several tools in a spectrum of gender theory and politics, but a crucial tool, given the ongoing inequality of women. It would not, as feminists such as Raymond (1980) fear, lead to a homogenised or male dominated 'androgynous humanism' but rather to a spectrum of gender standpoints based on a humanism that acknowledges and addresses difference and inequality. This spectrum could include radical, separatist feminism, but only as one of many equal positions, including transgender theory and masculinity studies, and thus not as a fundamentalist position. A remit of equality means that transgender praxis would be related to other forces of social inequality such as 'race', class and ability.

Queer Theory

Queer theory is aligned with postmodernist feminism and broader postmodernist theory. Queer theory aims towards transcendence of traditional gender and sexual orientation binaries and is built in opposition to them (Plummer 1996). Research findings highlight various problems with queer theory in relation to transgender:

- where queer is defined as lesbian, gay and bisexual it is problematised by transgender, which destabilises the gender categories on which these identities are based
- postmodernist queer theory fails to address the limitations of bodies and technology and the social need for categorisation (see above)

- the queer idea of transgression as a motor for social change is problematic. Transgression can only exist in relation to existing structures and is thus limited and potentially reactionary, also many transgender people do not want to be transgressive
- queer theorists such as Butler (1990) have used some aspects of transgender experience to develop their ideas whilst invalidating or erasing other aspects, in particular transsexual people's experiences self-essentialism
- queer praxis (politics and theory) is limited because it shuts out heterosexual men and women and fails to explicitly include many transgender people, particularly androgynes and intersexuals

The research implies that transgender theory could supersede queer theory, because addresses the whole gender and sexual orientation spectrum, including what are currently known as lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual sexual orientations. It includes recognition of the limitations of transgression, includes assimilationism (working within and being part of mainstream society), and enables context based models of identity and activism. The granting of civil status for intersexuals and third or other sex people would necessitate a broader base of sexual orientations as well as gender identities; probably continuation of current forms plus new ones.

Conclusion

A considerable amount of social change will be necessary if transgender people are to be included fully in society, without facing the high levels of discrimination which they currently experience. The currently trendy ideas of active citizenship and people participating in the political process through partnerships with policy makers may have opened a window of opportunity. However, radical challenges to restrictive social structures are also important ways of creating change.

Postmodernism appears to be a good way of understanding transgender, and whilst useful is actually limited in various ways. Transgender provides a major challenge to current theories of gender, which are based on male-female and gay-straight binaries. Traditional feminist critiques of transgender are based on self-interest and a restricted outlook. Feminism is important in understanding gender politics, because of women's inequality, but it needs rethinking because of the issues which transgender raises. Queer theory is also limited, particularly because of the focus on transgression, which is only one part of political strategies for gender equality. There is therefore a need for the development of new gender theory.

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Appendix 7: Useful Organisations

Useful Organisations*

The Beaumont Society, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3XX, 01582 412220,
<http://members.aol.com/Bmontsoc>

The Beaumont Trust, BM CHARITY, London WC1N 3XX, tel. 07000 287878,
<http://members.aol.com/Bmonttrust>

BM Androgyne, London WC1N 3XX

FtM Network, BM Network, London WC1N 3XX, tel. 0161 4321915

CHANGE, BM Box 34, London WC1N 3XX

The Gender Centre, 75 Morgan Street, Petersham, NSW 2049, Australia

GENDYS Network, BM GENDYS, London WC1N 3XX,
<http://www.gendys.mcmail.com>

The Gender Identity Research and Educational Society (gires), Molverley, The Warren,
Ashted, Surrey, KT21 25P

Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPac), 332 Bleecker Street, K-86 New York,
NY 10014-2980, <http://www.gpac.org>

Gender and Sexuality Alliance (G&SA), Cynthia Street, London

The Gender Trust, BM GENTRUST, London WC1N 3XX,
<http://www3.mistral.co.uk/gentrust/index/html>

Humanitas, PO Box 71, 1000AB, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Interchange Counselling Service, BM Box 8431, London WC1N 3XX, tel. 01638720077

The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA), <http://www.isna.org/>

Mermaids, BM Mermaids London, WC1n 3XX, 07071 225895,
<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Village/2671>

Northern Concord, PO Box 25, Manchester M60 1LN,
<http://www.nwnet.co.uk/concord/home.htm>

Press For Change, <http://www.pfc.org.uk/>

Seahorse Society, BM SEAHORSE London WC1N 3XX,
seahorse.society@btinternet.com.

TransEssex, PO Box 3, Basildon, Essex SS14 1PT

* These are not all organisations which I have personal experience of

Appendix 8: Glossary

Glossary of Transgender Terms (adapted from the Gender Trust Glossary)

Androgen.

A generic name for male sex hormones.

Androgynes.

Individuals whose assumed characteristics are not limited to either of the two traditionally accepted gender classifications, masculine and feminine. This can include a variety of experiences including androgynous presentation, behavior, wardrobe and social roles. Androgynes usually are not interested in Sex Reassignment Surgery although they occasionally seek out hormone therapy and/or secondary sex characteristic repressive surgeries.

Androgynous (Andro).

Usually applied to a person whose gender identity is not apparent.

Being Read.

A slang term for being identified as one's gender of origin.

Bigendered (BG).

One who has a significant gender identity that encompasses both genders, masculine and feminine. Transsexuals normally do not consider themselves to be bigendered.

Biological Sex.

Being male or female, as determined by gonads, genitals, chromosomes, secondary sexual characteristics and hormones.

Bottom.

Person who assumes a submissive role in the context of sadomasochistic role-play.

Brain Sex.

The physical 'sex' of the brain. Based on the theory/evidence that the human brain is

uniquely different for genetic males and genetic females.

Butch.

Masculine or macho dress and behavior, regardless of sex or gender identity.

Camp (adjective or verb).

As an adjective, exaggerated feminine or 'frilly' behaviour. As a verb, to exaggerate feminine behaviors, usually for others entertainment (usually men do this) Also, "to camp it up".

Chicks with Dicks

Lesbian subculture and sex industry term for women who wear strap-ons (see below).

Cross-Dressing.

Refers to the adoption, fully or partially, of the clothes normally identified as belonging to the opposite sex. People may cross-dress for a variety of reasons of which transvestism, transsexualism and fetishism are the commonest. Some people may also cross-dress as part of a disguise or for entertainment. Others may cross-dress as part of masochistic activities.

Crossdresser (CD).

One who, regardless of the motivation, wears the clothes, makeup and other accessories assigned by society to the opposite sex. Generally, these persons do not alter their bodies. Clinically called a Transvestite, the term 'Crossdresser' is preferred by many.

Drag (noun, verb).

The attire usually belonging to the opposite sex. As a verb it means to put on drag, or to construct a gender identity.

Drag Queen (DQ).

Generally a gay crossdresser who usually goes to wild extremes, whether towards a glamorous or campy end, often for other people's entertainment, appreciation or for its shock value. Historically and currently important, as part of the culture, in some gay scenes.

Drag King.

Woman who dresses as a man for the purposes of entertainment or self-expression. Linked with lesbian sub-cultures in many cases.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV). (IV denotes that this is the most recent version)

The guideline that the American Psychiatric Association publishes which determines what is and is not seen as a psychiatric illness. Transsexualism and transvestism are included in the list of psychiatric disorders.

Electrolysis.

Process of killing hair follicles, especially of facial and neck hair usually with an electric needle.

En Femme.

Projecting one's person to society as a female through clothing and mannerisms (i.e. dressed as a woman).

En Homme.

Projecting one's person to society as a male through clothing and mannerisms (i.e. dressed as a man).

FTM or F2M.

Female-to-Male. Used to specify the direction of a change of sex or gender role.

Female Impersonator (FI).

A male who on specific occasions crossdresses and employs stereotypical feminine dialogue, voice and mannerisms for the entertainment of other people (see Camp).

Femme.

Feminine or effeminate dress and behavior, regardless of sex or gender identity (see Butch).

Female.

One of the two most common physical sexes. Normally based on the primary sex characteristic of having a vagina. (see Primary Sex Characteristics).

Feminine.

The gender role assigned to females (also woman).

Fetish, Fetishism.

The eroticisation of specific items or practices.

Fetishistic Transvestite.

A transvestite whose primary crossdressing motivation is erotic response.

Gender Dysphoria (GD) or Gender Identity Disorder (GID).

Refers to the profound dissatisfaction with one's gender (masculinity or femininity) which is in

conflict with one's physical sex. The term is usually restricted to those who seek medical and surgical assistance to resolve their difficulty.

Gender Bending.

To play around with gender, to transgress gender norms

Gender Blending.

To mix different genders.

Gender Community.

Colloquial for transgender community. People who identify as not having a gender identity that matches society's norms for their birth physical sex, or those who identify with the gender community.

Gender Folk/People.

Transgender people.

G E N D E R I D E N T I T Y

To consciously and visibly transgress gender norms and stereotypes .

Gender Identity.

The gender to which one feels they belong.

Gender Neutral.

Clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and relationships. which are considered appropriate to both genders/sexes.

Gender Play.

Playing with gender roles in a sexual context, usually associated with sadomasochism.

Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS).

Term used in the UK for Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS) (see below).

Gender Role.

Social norms concerning the activities and identities which are linked with having a male, female, or intersexual body.

Gender Transient

Someone who moves between two (or more) genders.

Genetic Girl (GG).

Female at birth regardless of one's present sex or gender identity. (Also, GW for Genetic Woman or GF for Genetic Female).

Genetic Male (GM).

Male at birth regardless of one's present sex or gender identity.

Genetic sex.

Having to do with the chromosomes which most heavily influence primary sex characteristics.

Hermaphroditism (Herm) and Intersexuality.

Where the anatomical sex is ambiguous. The situation may, or may not, be accompanied by various degrees of gender dysphoria. The condition may be due to chromosomal complexes, such as Turner's or Klinefelter's syndromes, congenital errors of metabolism such as androgen insensitivity syndrome and adrenogenital syndrome. There may also be effects from the hormone balance in the foetus or the placenta.

Hermaphrodyke.

Lesbian who identifies as androgynous.

Hir.

Third or multiple sex/gender pronoun, to complement 'him/her'. 'Hirs' can complement 'hers/his'.

Hormonal Reassignment Therapy (HRT).

The introduction of the body to the hormones that affect the secondary sex characteristics of a transsexual.

In Drab [DRessed As a Boy].

Wearing clothes and an attitude supposedly deemed appropriate to one's gender of origin.

In Drag [DRessed As a Girl].

Wearing clothes considered appropriate to the other sex.

Inbetweenie.

Someone who is between gender or other gender-related categories.

Intersex, Intersexuality.

A term for a number of conditions, including hermaphroditism, where some or all of the male and female physiological traits are combined, or where there is an absence of both.

Normally based on the primary sex characteristic of having a penis .

Male Impersonator (MI).

A female who, on specific occasions, crossdresses and employs stereotypical masculine dialog, voice, and mannerisms for the entertainment of other people.

Man. (*Men*)

One who identifies with the masculine gender role, regardless of present sex or sexual identity.

Masculine.

The gender role assigned to males.

MTF or M2F.

Male-to-Female. Used to specify the direction of a change in sex or gender role.

Mahu.

A traditional Hawaiian term for M2F transgendered individuals.

Neuter.

One who has neither a penis nor a vagina (see Primary Sex Characteristics).

No-op or Non-op.

Transsexual who does not intend to change her/his primary sex characteristics to match her gender identity (i.e. have SRS).

Oestrogen.

Generic name for one of the main groups of female sex hormones (U.S.A. spelling 'Estrogen').

Out.

Being open about one's gender or sexual identity. 'Outing' and 'Outed': When someone is forced to reveal their gender or sexual identity.

Pack.

Slang term for wearing a dildo or other object under the clothes, in order to appear to have a penis.

Passing.

The opposite of "Being Read". A term often used to describe your ability to be accepted by most people as your preferred gender.

Post-op.

Post operative (after SRS) transsexual. May not be considered a transsexual at this point.

Pre-op.

Pre operative (before SRS) transsexual. Usually implies the individual is planning SRS (see No-Op).

Primary sex characteristics.

Those primary physical characteristics that society relies on to separate the sexes. Penis (male) or vagina (female). (see Female, Male, Hermaphrodite, neuter.)

Progesterone.

One of the female sex hormones.

Progestrogen.

Generic name for synthetic Progesterone.

Real Life Test (RLT).

That period (usually a minimum of 1 year) imposed on the individual by the medical community in which s/he is required to live full time in the role of the opposite sex before sexual reassignment surgery.

Sadomasochism (S and M).

Umbrella term for a range of sexual practices and fringe sexual cultures, overlapping closely with the fetish scene.

Secondary Sex Characteristics.

Facial and body hair, vocal timbre and range, breast size, weight distribution.

Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS).

A surgical procedure designed to modify one's primary sexual characteristics (genitalia) from those of one sex to those of another (penis to vagina, or vagina to penis). May also include secondary surgery such as breast implants or removing the Adam's apple.

She-Male.

A popular - if sometimes considered demeaning - term, generally used by non-transgendered males seeking sex (and pre-op MTF transsexuals selling sex) to describe pre-op MTF transsexuals.

Standards of Care (SOC).

The guidelines established by the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, as the minimum guidelines for a Transsexual Physical and Psychological Transition.

Strap-on.

Colloquial term for a dildo and harness.

T.

Abbreviation for transgender.

Third Sex.

Person who is neither male nor female, physically.

Third Gender.

Person whose social identity is neither male nor female.

Trans.

An umbrella term covering transgender and people in the transgender community.

Transman.

Transsexual man, FTM.

Tranny.

A popular term, not derogatory, used in Britain, Australia and New Zealand to refer to a transgender individual.

Transgender (TG).

Debated term (see introduction). Can be used to include everyone who challenges gender norms, or more narrowly as a term used to include Transsexuals, Transvestites, and Crossdressers, androgynes and intersexuals.

Transition.

The period of time between the points when the individual first starts the sex-reassignment procedure and when the individual is living totally as a member of the opposite sex.

Transsexual (TS).

A person who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to undergo sex and gender transition and live their lives as members of the opposite sex. Most transsexuals actively desire and complete Sexual-Reassignment Surgery.

Transvestite (TV).

The clinical name for a crossdresser. A person who dresses in the clothing of the opposite sex. Generally, these persons do not alter their body.

Transwoman.

Transsexual woman, MTF transsexual.

Winyanktecha (Wintke).

Lacota Indian word meaning Gender-Crosser - Literal translation "Two-souls person"

Woman (*Women*).

Those who identify with the feminine gender role, regardless of present sex or sexual identity.

Ze.

Third or multiple sex/gender term, to complement s/he.