Gay and Bisexual Men who are Educators:

A Narrative Analysis of Space, Identity and Deployment

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Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of gay and bisexual men who are educators and seeks to understand the complexity of their professional and social worlds and their responses to this. Research in this field to date has primarily concentrated on the professional worlds that individuals inhabit. This qualitative study seeks to expand this knowledge by considering the personal, social and sexual worlds that individuals traverse.

A key dimension of the work is the concept of narrative which is present in the form of visual and written texts provided by the researcher and participants. In line with recent developments in qualitative research, the researcher adopts a strategy of generating a thick description in both the narratives that explore his researcher positioning and the narratives that participants tell about their experiences. The strategy of researcher as bricoleur is adopted to develop methods that are responsive to the development of the project.

Feminist and post-structuralist theories provide the main theoretical frame for the consideration of key issues such as masculinity and queer identity. Queer theory is also influential as a strategy for analysing the narratives, disjunctures and fractures providing the main lines of enquiry. Judgements relating to trustworthiness are made via the process of verisimilitude, readers being invited to participate in the hermeneutic process that leads to the generation of multiple, refractory perspectives.

A striking conclusion to emerge from the research is the isolation of gay and bisexual men who are educators. With the exception of occasionally convened bespoke spaces such as teacher-union conferences on LGBT issues there are few spaces where individuals can meet or gain support. Individuals who operate from a position of strength appear to combine assertiveness with activist strategies.

With the emphasis on research into the experiences of young people in schools, there exists no large scale systematic study into the extent of homophobic incidents and their impact on recruitment, retention and promotion among the school work force. In terms of practice and policy we are at the very start of developing an understanding of the implications of working effectively with gay and bisexual men who are educators.

Acknowledgements

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
Cottaging	Sex between men in public toilets
Cruising	Sex between men usually (although not exclusively) in outdoor public locations
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EU	European Union
HIF	Homosexual identity formation
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
ITT	Initial teacher training
LEA	Local Education Authority
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
MESMEN/MSM	Men who have sex with men
NAS/UWT	National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers
NUT	National Union of Teachers
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
Out	To be open about one's sexual orientation
PSE	Public sex environment
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health Education
PSV	Public sex venue eg. gay sauna, bar

QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Schools Out	National support group for LGBT teachers
SRE	Sex and Relationships Education
Stonewall	National LGBT lobbying group established 1989
Switchboard	Lesbian and gay switchboard (telephone helpline)
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
TES/Times Ed.	Times Educational Supplement
Wolfenden	The Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution 1954-57

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INTRODUCTION

0.1   The Context of this Research

At the start of the twenty-first century Education, like other public services, has undergone and is still undergoing major change. Although many initiatives inevitably have a strong strategic and student-centred focus, one aspect of education that has remained constant is the fact that it is primarily concerned with community. This includes not only the students and parents who inhabit the catchment areas that educational institutions serve, but the range of professionals and other staff involved in the process of educating. In this respect schools, for example, can be seen as intimately bound groups of people who interact and do the 'business' of education on a day to day basis. In many ways these micro-communities reflect patterns of interaction that can be found at the greater macro level in society. Individuals are connected and experience 'relatedness' - both between the educators and those being educated and between educators themselves.

A journey through this intricate web of relationships reveals a complex set of characteristics including the professional and personal personae that each individual brings to the arena every day.

The particular focus of this thesis is on one specific group of people who work in education contexts, ie. gay and bisexual men who are educators. As I write, I am struck by the power and complexity that lie behind what is, on the face of it, a simple descriptor. The statement is powerful because it refers to two strong social and political components – gender and sexuality – which make up both personal and professional identities. It is also complex because, in my mind, it conjures a set of relationships and situations that represent 'polarised worlds' in the experiences of individuals. Examples of these polarities include the historical relationship between education and homosexuality that exists in the greater world and the role of 'the professional' and 'the private' that exists in the experience of individual educators. These relationships are sometimes harmonious but sometimes they do not sit comfortably alongside each other. The focus of this research is to discover the nature of these relationships in terms of characteristics and complexity.

0.2   Historical Influences: my debt to Alan Turing

In defining the phenomenon to be researched, it is probably helpful to trace my interest in the experiences of gay and bisexual men who are educators right back to its origins. Narrative is a prominent theme in this thesis and 'my own story' will form

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the basis of an extensive analysis – my experiences as a gay man who is an educator triggered a long-lasting and deep curiosity about the experiences of others.

Some of these experiences are documented in the form of biographical accounts of other men who have achieved fame for a variety of reasons. Andrew Hodges' account (1992) of the life of Alan Turing had a very early significance and resonance with my evolving interest. A brief glance at the Turing story illustrates some of the phenomena that I am hoping to explore in my own research.

Alan Turing was an academic and gay man who lived in the first half of the twentieth century. His upbringing epitomised the lives of the English upper middle classes at the time. Turing was educated in a number of English public schools and went on to study Mathematical Logic at the world-leading department at Princeton University, USA. In 1939, the Second World War intervened in the academic career trajectory of this rising star and a new and unexpected development took him in a new direction. This marked the beginning of a fifteen year relationship with 'the state'. He was deployed to the very secretive government department based at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire, where he became involved in the deciphering of various codes that were used for communication between military units of the Third Reich. Turing used his mathematical genius to great effect in the role and he is widely credited as being the brains behind the team that cracked the German Navy's Enigma code, an achievement for which he received a personal commendation from Churchill himself.

In the years that followed the Second World War, Alan Turing resumed his academic career at the University of Manchester where he undertook research that is now recognised as the foundation for subsequent developments in computing. Turing's work was still seen as being sensitive from a national security point of view, but his security clearance was withdrawn when his homosexuality became known about. A crisis precipitated itself when, in 1954, the police who investigated a burglary at his home also investigated his lifestyle and charged him with gross indecency contrary to Section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885. This is the same legislation that had been used in the trial of Oscar Wilde and has only recently been the subject of a government review at the end of 2002. Turing reluctantly pleaded guilty and was spared the usual two-year prison sentence. Instead, under the Criminal Justice Act of 1948 which 'emphasised the duty of the community to provide treatment for the habitual sex offender' he was put on probation on the condition that he be treated by organo-therapy, which involved being injected with the female sex hormone, oestrogen. The 'treatment', which was administered in Turing's case at the Manchester Royal Infirmary, was based on the research of Glass and Johnson (1944) and Golla

and Sessions Hodge (1949) which asserted that the removal of libido was the only effective way of reducing the risk of future offending.

Despite the public trial and extensive coverage in the local and the national press, Alan Turing's colleagues in the Computer Science Department stood by him. His Head of Department, Max Newman, spoke strongly on his behalf; another colleague of long standing Patrick Blackett went to see the Vice Chancellor Sir John Stopford, Professor of Experimental Neurology. Hodges (1992: 465-466) describes the outcome of the meeting as follows:

> Alan's position was spared, although presumably only after the most thorough of carpetings, for Stopford was no friend of 'slackness'. Max Newman's statement was crucially important; indeed he found himself surprised by the autonomy he enjoyed as head of department. He said he wished Alan Turing to remain, and this sufficed.

In my reading of his biography, I sensed that a pronounced shift was starting to take place in his life in the two years between the end of the trial and his death. Up until this point Alan Turing had lived an intensely intellectual life which had taken him to the point of academic brilliance. The shift that seemed to be taking place was towards a more spiritual understanding of who he was and what his life meant. Although on the face of it he appeared to 'tough it out', the public trial involving his sexuality must have taken its toll. The effects of the organo-therapy also made themselves felt – he grew breasts. Shortly afterwards he killed himself by eating an apple impregnated with cyanide. He was 42.

In the absence of any note explaining why he decided to take his own life, Hodges points out that we can only speculate as to his motivation. I am struck by two very potent themes in his story. In his relationship with the state, his academic brilliance was seen as both useful and acceptable - his sexual orientation was seen at the time as being unacceptable, illegal in fact. The punishment meted out seems particularly harsh, humiliating even. Some questions that I think need to be asked are what is the effect of oestrogen on the male psyche? What did this public shaming mean for his view of his sexuality and self-esteem? How long can one individual keep up a battle against the monolithic power of the state? This role of 'public respectability' and private shame are key themes here – although looking back there is no doubt in my mind as to where the shame really belongs, which is in his shameful treatment by a grossly homophobic state.

The Turing biography left me with a profound feeling of unease for a number of reasons. I recognise the power of shame as an emotion and the ways in which it leads

to secretive behaviour in individuals. In my own experience, I know that it exacts a cost in terms of self-esteem and in terms of 'voice', which in my own case fell silent for a very long time. This is a common experience for gay educators. In 1993 the lesbian and gay lobbying group Stonewall commissioned a survey of two thousand participants into the experience of lesbians and gay men in the work place. Palmer (1993) reports that of the one hundred and twenty six teachers who participated in the study, only ten felt no need to conceal their sexual orientation making teaching the most closeted profession of those identified in the research.

0.3 Defining the focus of this research

Turing's story extends across both education and sexual domains. Rofes (2000:445-446) notes a tendency in previous studies, to edit out references to the sexual lives in the accounts of gay male teachers. He critiques Jennings' (1994) study by saying that it reveals censorship and portrayals of particular forms of relationships. Rofes notes:

> Of the twenty three gay male contributors to this book, only 11 reference their 'partner' or 'lover', or 'life partner', while the others, for the most part, are silent about their sex and relational lives...the gay male teacher narratives in this book lack references to any other form of sexualized male exchanges and authentic gay male community-based patterns of flirtations, casual sex, open relationships or multi-partnerism. On the page at least, gay male teachers are not part of the leather scene, do not engage in sex in parks or highway rest areas and do not trick out in their local bar on a Saturday night.

Given that the professional *and* sexual lives are integral to the participants in this study, my research questions deliberately aim to cross both domains:

How do gay/bisexual men who are educators 'interface' with their environments in terms of the process of constructing and negotiating a gay-teacher identity?

What is the role of past personal/professional experiences in constructing these complex identities?

What are the mechanisms used to present these gay-teacher identities in education contexts and in gay community contexts?

The thesis aims to explore these questions via the process of primary research. In Chapter 1, I will trace what brought me to this research in terms of the 'antecedents' in my personal and professional life. Some of the themes identified here are augmented and developed further in Chapter 2, in which I establish the social context and literature base for the work. Chapters 3 and 4 address methodology. In Chapter 3, I present the research design and rationale for my chosen methodology. In Chapter

4, I present three methods used in the form of research bricolage. In Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, I present my data in the form of the account. In Chapter 9, I synthesise the data from the narratives and offer a model to describe identity deployment strategies used by gay male teachers in both education and gay community settings. Finally, in Chapter 10, I identify the implications that the research has for education practice, relating it to new initiatives and changes in legislation.

In the writing of this introduction, I can see that my thoughts and responses to the Turing story already reflect some of personal values and attitudes. Marecek, Fine and Kidder (1997:634) note that good research questions spring from our values, passions and pre-occupations. In the last twenty years the research community has engaged in an on-going debate with regard to researcher subjectivity and objectivity in the process of collecting data. Ruby (1980:154) argues that the notion of pure, clean unbiased research is an unattainable goal even for the most rigorous of positivists and encourages us to 'stop being "shamans of" objectivity'. Shacklock and Smyth (1996:6-7) put it in much stronger terms when they argue that to assume value-free neutrality is to assume 'an obscene and dishonest position'.

In short, most research is saturated with the biases of those involved in the enterprise in the way that it is presented and communicated. Given that such bias and prejudice can be very subtle and difficult to control and detect, an important step forward for qualitative researchers has been to 'work with bias' in coming to an understanding of its role in the research process. With this aim in mind, I will begin an on-going process through this thesis to identify and understand my own positioning in all its forms. A logical starting point for me is to begin by tracing the historical antecedents that have led me to this work. I begin this in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER ONE :

THE ANTECEDENTS OF THIS THESIS

Don't talk to me about camp darling, I invented it.
Tallulah Bankhead

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1.1   Introduction

This thesis is very much a personal as well as a professional and academic piece of work. In tracing its evolution I can see that there are a number of precursors or antecedents, which have led me to this point. My aim in writing this first chapter is to trace the origins of these events and influences in an attempt to provide a backdrop to the research. In meeting this aim, I have two objectives in mind:

a. The first of these is to initiate a dialogue with my own experience which I see as being quite central to this aim and to the research that I subsequently present. In relating the narratives pertaining to sexuality that I have included here, I am hoping to illuminate the ways in which personal perspectives are influencing professional ones.

b. The second objective of this chapter is to generate a set of themes and issues from the narratives that relate to the particular interface between the environment and the individual, specifically in this case, educational environments and gay/bisexual men who are educators. These themes will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

1.2   Reflexivity and Qualitative Research

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:1063) identify six 'moments' or phases in the evolution of qualitative research with the latest two, 'postmodernism' and 'postexperimental inquiry', taking place in the decade between 1990 and 2000. The first of these, between 1990 and 1995, is identified as the post-modern era in which there has been a shift from seeing the world in terms of fixed entities and certainty to a more fluid and fractured interpretation of phenomena. Atkinson (2000: 150), in her exploration of the implications of this for qualitative researchers, cites MacLure (1995:106):

> as a starting point: think fragmentation, ambiguity, loss of
> certainty. Think of postmodernism as a kind of undoing of all the
> habits of mind of so-called western thought that have prevailed
> over the last two centuries – the decidability of truth, the
> inevitability of progress, the triumph of reason, the possibility of a
> universal modern code, the objectivity of science, the forward
> march of history, the existence of the singular, autonomous self.
> These foundational principles, are all to do with making the world
> knowable, accountable, unambiguous, generalisable, predictable,
> coherent, manageable and mutually comprehensible. They have
> all, at one time or another, been held to be characteristic of
> modernism. And post-modernism says 'No' to them. You will begin
> to understand its widespread unpopularity.

Cheek (1999) agrees that the departure from the comfort zone of certainty, predictability and the notion of a singular reality may indeed lead to discomfort with and the unpopularity of postmodernism. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:1055) are convinced that a new era has been entered and that 'the modernist dream of a grand or master narrative is now a dead project'.

One development that has featured throughout both 'moments' of the 1990s is an on-going interest in the role of reflexivity, Ely et al (1991:179) noting that 'qualitative research is by nature a reflexive and recursive process', and much attention in this regard has been devoted to role of the researcher. Russell and Bohan (1999) argue strongly that researchers cannot be separated from the other stakeholders in the research process and Ahern (1999) acknowledges that researchers are the co-creators of knowledge and therefore have a pivotal role to play in the construction of what passes for new knowledge and understanding. It is in this role that postmodernism embraces the notion of subjectivity, Russell and Kelly (2002) noting that in the postmodernist frame, subjectivity is both assumed and appreciated.

Definitions of reflexivity illuminate the ways in which it is possible to locate the subjective interpretations and positions adopted by the researcher. Barry et al. (1999) argue that researcher reflexivity involves some kind of self-examination and Ahern (ibid) extends this to include a review of personal assumptions. Steir (1991) sees the role of reflexivity as some kind of mediator in the research process, a role that is echoed in the definition by Macbeth (2001:35), who defines reflexivity as 'a deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of author, other, text, and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself.'

1.2.1 The Role of 'the Personal'
Goodson and Sikes (2001:35) initiate an interesting discussion about the role of researcher narratives that explore issues such as our motivations for being involved in

the research project and the resonance of the research with our own experience. They begin the discussion by first of all outlining the case for including them:

> Increasing awareness of researcher reflectivity and reflexivity means that more people take the view that interpretations/explanations/analyses are, inevitably, coloured, and shaped by a range of influences, not least of which is the background, interests, in short the biography, of the researcher. It is for this reason that some commentators have gone as far as suggesting that 'research biographies' should be compulsory because they provide readers with more evidence by which to evaluate research accounts. (Ball, 1990; Denzin and Lincoln 1994a)

The rationale is further expanded by the use of Atkinson's (1990) assertion that the explicit depiction of the researcher's narrative will help to illuminate personal biases, thereby introducing greater criticality and rigour into the work – an argument that was questioned by Troyna (1994). Less 'worthy intentions' such as vanity, self publicity and using narrative as a defence against being vulnerable to attack are cited by Maynard (1993) and Cotterill and Letherby (1993), who are also unconvinced. In constructing the text that I am producing here, it not my conscious intention to produce a 'vanity ethnography' (Maynard 1993:329). My main purposes are to give careful consideration to both the voice that I employ and the content that I include – up until this moment most of this has been unarticulated. With respect to 'voice' I realise that there is a danger of telling either a *victory narrative* or a *victim narrative*. My response to this is that I am uncomfortable with both and my intention in writing the narratives is to not consciously construct a particular story line. I am, however, aware that all narratives are constructed from particular perspectives – it is my intention at the end of this chapter to make a much more distant and critical view of the text.

1.2.2 The Narrative Genre

I would describe the content that I am bringing here as partial – I would like to explain further.

Partiality can be interpreted in a number of ways – I would like to begin by addressing partiality in terms of bias. The 'data' in this first section is largely written from memory – some of it is taken from a personal diary and some from my research journal. To what extent the story that I will write is 'true' depends on your take on truth. Goodson and Sikes (2000:3) argue that truth only exists as a concept in our minds. What passes for 'the truth' is the subjective recollections that we tell in the form of stories about past experiences. Another participant in the same event may well tell a completely different version of what happened with a similarly convincing

rationale that it is 'the truth'. Inevitably, these stories or versions of events become modified and embellished in the telling over a period of time. Perhaps the real issue that matters here is that the accounts that follow represent my phenomenological interpretation of events. This is significant in that it reveals the framework or lens which may influence the telling of the stories that relate to the participants in this research.

I would also use the word 'partiality' in connection with the narratives in a different sense. The stories that I will tell are inevitably partial or incomplete – Grumet (1987:322) notes that 'every telling is a partial prevarication'. There are several reasons for this. In my writing of the narratives I suspect that I have consciously or unconsciously fore-grounded individuals and events at the expense of others. It is conceivable that as with any story, a fuller, more detailed account could be told. Lack of space is also a limiting factor – I am certainly not claiming that the sequence of narratives here forms anything like an auto-ethnography - Denzin and Lincoln (1994) - or life history - Goodson (1992) - which would require a much more detailed script. My accounts are also censored by personal comfort levels in relation to self-disclosure. Powell (1985:49) highlights the emotional risk inherent in writing anything autobiographical and advocates the need for a 'climate of trust'. Abbs (1974: 9) sums up the difficulty as follows:

> In certain students' autobiographies, we detect a nervous evasiveness, an unwillingness to step into dangerous territory, a complex detour around some massively silent obstacle. This must be accepted and respected.

A central theme in this work is sexuality, specifically sexual orientation and sexual identity. For most people, sexuality is a highly sensitive issue and I am no exception. Large parts of my story are deliberately missed out – Winter et al (1999) alert researchers to the danger of 'the confessional' in constructing researcher (auto)biographies, a phenomenon with which I am also uncomfortable for a number of reasons, the most significant one being that there could be a pressure inappropriately to self-disclose. I am also uncomfortable with the notion of confessing, the term suggesting that there is some guilt or misdemeanor that needs to be owned up to.

Breuer (2000) notes that multiple characteristics may draw researchers toward or away from particular projects. In retrospect the timing of my embarkation on this research is not coincidental. Rothman and Friedman (1999) have adapted the earlier work of Stake (1967) in emphasising the role of observed antecedents as one part of the overall research process. In my reflexive process I can identify one critical incident as being a catalyst for what follows here.

1.3   Critical incidents and educational research

Sociologists and educational researchers have had an interest in 'critical incidents' in the professional lives of individuals for over fifty years. Sikes et al (1985) trace this interest to the work of Strauss (1959:67) who noted the significance of key events and interactions and their subsequent implications for the careers and identities of individuals. Becker (1966) expanded on these 'transformations of identity' triggered by the incidents, and noted their role in bringing new aspects of 'the self' into consciousness.

My reading of the literature that defines critical incidents has resonance with the experience of my own critical incident, which I will relate in the next section (1.3.1). My first resonance is that definitions of critical incidents - Strauss, (1959), Schein (1985), Angelides (2001) - frequently include the concept of surprise or the unexpected happening. Strauss (1959:67) describes the disorientation of these unexpected events as:

> the frequent occurrence of misalignment – surprise, shock, chagrin, anxiety, tension and bafflement, self-questioning and also the need to try out the new self, to explore and validate the new and often fearful conceptions.

All of these are very familiar to me as feelings and processes I experienced at various times in the period following my own 'incident'. A second aspect of resonance is the contradiction between the apparent ordinariness of the incident as opposed to the extraordinary significance that is attached to it by the protagonists involved. Tripp (1993, 1994) argues that the vast majority of critical incidents would appear undramatic and everyday to the casual observer. Whilst I understand the point that Tripp is trying to argue here, 'undramatic' is the last word that I would use to describe the intensity of feeling that accompanied my incident.

Despite the fact that the interaction in question can have lasted for no more than ten minutes on that particular morning, the repercussions are profound and made themselves felt for a considerable time. Sikes et al (1985:230) argue that in relation to schools and teachers' careers, critical incidents may be 'highly charged moments and episodes that have enormous consequences for personal change and development.'

Woods (1993:357) identifies a third aspect of resonance for me, ie. what the incident reveals, when he argues that critical incidents are 'like flashpoints that illuminate in an electrifying instant some problematic aspect of the teacher's role.'

Angelides (2001) agrees with Tripp's (1994) subsequent assertion that what makes the incident critical is the meaning or interpretation that is ascribed to the event. This was most definitely the case for me, as is evidenced by the intense period of reflection that followed. Schon (1995:56) attributes this to the concept of 'knowing in action' which is the product of 'reflection in action'. He emphasises that:

> much reflection-in-action hinges on the experience of surprise; when intuitive, spontaneous performance yields nothing more than the results expected for it, then we tend not to think about it. But when the intuitive performance leads to surprises, pleasing and promising or unwanted, we may respond by reflection in action...In such processes, reflection tends to focus interactively on the outcomes of the action itself, and the intuitive knowing implicit in the action.

For me, my first recordings of my 'reflections in action' were in the form of entries into my research journal, a technique advocated by Burgess (1982), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Spradley (1979). These reflections constitute part of the raw material from which I have constructed the account that now follows.

1.3.1   'You're too camp' – the incident unveiled

It was in 1988 that I really started to question my sexual orientation again. I remember teaching PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) at around this time in the secondary school in which I was working. One of the modules that I was teaching focussed on Sex and Relationships Education and I received through the post one morning information about the BBC's drama adaptation of Leslie Stewart's novel *Two of Us* which was broadcast in the schools TV series called *Scene*. The story centres on the relationship between two young teenage men, Matthew and Phil, who grow up in the suburbs in the south of England. Matthew identifies as a young gay man and Phil has a girlfriend while also being sexually and emotionally attracted to Matthew.   I recorded the following in my journal:

> Following the advice in the teacher's notes, I decided to preview the programme before using it with my Year 11 group. Every lunch time for a week I remember retreating to the privacy of my classroom located on the top floor of the school, away from all the noise and bustle. I watched the programme again and again - it had a kind of fascination for me, tapping into a set of personal issues that I was only just becoming aware of.

> The image of me watching the TV in a classroom isolated from the rest of the school is a powerful metaphor for how I was seeing my sexual identity at that time in relation to my other selves. I can only describe this as being a very split off, separate aspect of my identity. Whilst I was increasingly aware of my feelings of isolation and desire for separateness, I was having to address the issue of sexuality on a day to day basis, in my interactions with other members of the school community.

A very difficult aspect of these interactions was the feeling of rejection. In classes, I know that kids have not wanted to sit next to me because they think I am gay; I also know that kids have wanted to change groups because they think I am gay. I have also been verbally abused inside and outside lessons, but there is one incident that really stands out.

Some time later in my career I had been appointed to the role of head of department. This particular day was a training day and the evening before I, together with members of the senior management team, had met with the school's governors to put in place a school equal opportunities policy. I felt pleased with the outcome and my performance and that I had acquitted myself well. A colleague senior to me summoned me into his office on this particular morning, an invitation with which I did not feel particularly comfortable. I had the feeling that he had been 'getting on my case' for the previous six months. The conversation turned to the meeting of the previous evening. My colleague offered some feedback on my performance in the meeting with which he had been impressed, that is with the exception of my 'unfortunate mannerisms'.

I was quite shocked at hearing such a personal remark and was also curious so I asked him what they were. He replied 'Well, you are too camp'. I was stunned. I cannot remember what was said after that, I just had the feeling that I had to get away as soon as I could. Somehow I held on until lunchtime when I hurriedly left the premises with a heterosexual woman friend. We found a quiet corner of a pub and she reached out and held my hand. I broke down - I felt so vulnerable. The image I could not get out of my head was of a giant rock crashing through the walls of my defences. It had penetrated to my core. So what was there that is so painful? The answer is every negative message that I have received about being gay since the day I was born and my own internalised homophobia. This was yet another attack, this time from a person in authority.

The days after this episode were very difficult. Friends tried their best to be supportive - the union advised me to drop the affair in case he started a witch hunt. I became obsessed with the incident, my confidence disappeared and I just did not have the wherewithal to be assertive. I have always been of the opinion that it is important to stick at things, don't give in. Like a lot of gay men, a tape that played subliminally in my head was 'You are a deviant sexually, so it is important that you are successful in at least one area in your life. Be a superman at work instead.' So I worked my socks off as a result.

In the end this did not work – the situation was not going away – at some intuitive level I knew that it would be a mistake to continue in the senior management position that I was in. I handed in my notice and opted to go part time.

Source: Adapted from Journal Entry (April 1995)

1.3.2 Reflections: Beginning an Analysis

The journal entry above was written with considerable distance between myself and the incident (approximately five years) as I was beginning this research project. With even greater distance to the present (eleven years) I can see that the story I would tell now about the incident would be quite different, the passage of time having revealed other perspectives on the event. In terms of this thesis, the sequential model of critical incident analysis as suggested by Francis (1997) guided me in structuring my responses. I see this is quite a pivotal point in the work in that I want to initiate a process of reflexivity that analyses not just my personal journey from the time of the incident but also the methodological implications in terms of researcher positionality.

The literature that explores the technique of analysing critical incidents has a common theme of distancing from the event adopting what is claimed to be a progressively more objective view on the data and its implications - Tripp (1993), Bulman (1994), Tripp (1994), Angelides (2001). There is an assumption in the methods described in these sources that the researcher is positioned as an 'outsider' in terms of the issue, her or his role being to assemble a systematic reportage of the event gleaned from interviews conducted with the key players. Tripp (1994) sees this as being essential for objectivity and is very critical of analyses that attempt to be 'dramatic' or 'sensational'.

In terms of the incident that I have presented here, things are already becoming problematic in the sense that the reflections do not match the rubric of critical incident analysis that requires an 'objective outsider' - Angelides (2001). The fact that I see myself as an insider conducting this research generates a particular set of methodological and epistemological issues – in my view the text of the incident is riddled with subjectivities and, dare I say it, 'emotion' – I may even have committed the cardinal sin of 'being dramatic'. Winter et al (1999) in their critique of traditional critical incident analysis argue that the rigid formula limits the possibilities for interpretation. I have already acknowledged that, despite my ethical intention to 'tell my version of the truth' in the stories that feature in the next section, I still run the risk of creating some fiction. Although this may go against the grain in terms of traditional scientific method, it does, however, open up some interesting possibilities for interpretation in a more postmodern, reflexive way. There are major implications for methodology here which I will explore in more detail in Chapter 4.

In the remainder of this chapter I want to use my journal entry describing the incident as a springboard from which to explore the other antecedents of this research. These

reflections will lead into chapter two in which I will explore the cultural, political and social issues related to the environment in which the incident took place.

1.4   A Critical Period: Tracing the Antecedents to the Incident

When I reflect on the critical incident, it is interesting to consider its timing in terms of other things that were going on in my life. Strauss (1962) and Sikes et al (1985) argue that the timing of critical incidents is rarely coincidental, occurring during periods of strain or critical phases. Sikes et al (1985:57) note that there appeared to be three types of critical phase in the lives of teachers:

a.   extrinsic critical phases, eg. events happening in the world;

b.   intrinsic critical phases, eg. the progression of a career;

c.   personal critical phases, eg. family events, change in personal circumstances.

In my account of the incident, I can identify at least two of the above. I note that I had become a more senior member of staff and that I was questioning my sexual orientation – both these processes brought considerable stress into my life at the time. As I re-read my account of the incident I am struck by how vulnerable I seemed to have become at the time of the event. I wonder in retrospect if my emotional response was disproportional to the actual event itself. This is an interesting question, particularly when I consider the events in my life that rendered it a critical phase.

In sequencing what follows, I will present a series of narratives in a loose chronological order as I have recalled them. I have purposefully changed some of the locations and biographical details of some of the individuals I mention in order to protect their anonymity.

1.4.1 Early Experiences: Counter Script and Dominant Script

I am a child of the 1950s. I grew up in a smoky industrial town in the North Midlands. My early world was the 1920s semi-detached house in a street that was lined with trees – there were few cars parked on the road in those days. I remember the slope of the street and the possibilities it provided – a fast descent in summer for my scooter – in the winter I became a downhill racer when it was covered in snow and ice. A real teddy boy lived from me two doors up the street. I remember watching him come and go, temporarily suspending my game of the moment. Even as a six year old I had a curiosity and interest in this vision of young manhood. Our house was small and intimate and we spent most of our time downstairs in the back room or 'living room' as it was known. A revolution took place at the start of the 1960s when my parents 'modernised' (to use the terminology of the time) this room by installing a new tiled fire place and gas fire. The drudgery of making coal fires every single morning came

to an end and a coal fire became something for Christmas and special occasions when one was lit in the front room. As I grew older the front room became *my* space – it was a place where I played with a Triang train set and Dinky Toys. Apart from the 1940s suite, the only other item of furniture I can remember in this room was something that was referred to as 'the bureau'. This was a rather utilitarian piece, which functioned as storage facility for bills, letters, etc. and accommodated the five serious books we had in the house, which I think my Dad had acquired in his teacher training days. There were three volumes of *Geography and Man* and two older volumes of the *History of Civilisation*. Thirty six years later in 1999, when I attended the American Education Research Association annual conference in Montreal, I remembered a childhood experience involving one of those books.

The insight came during a round table session given by fellow researcher Rob Linné, of Adelphi University, New York. The issue that we were exploring was 'Alternative Reading Lists: Personal Literacy Histories of Lesbians and Gays', (Linné 2003) and as part of the session I was asked to identify any texts that had functioned as a 'counter script' to the dominant discourse of heterosexuality. The incident took place one afternoon in the early 1960s when my playmates on the street had all gone out and I was passing time on my own in the front room, leafing through the one of the volumes of the *History of Civilisation*. I was stopped in my tracks when I came across a photograph of the statue of David by Michelangelo. It was in this moment I recognised consciously for the first time my appreciation of male beauty. Although the image was not a script in the literary sense of the word, this visual image challenged my internalised notion that I was only supposed to be attracted to individuals of the opposite sex and opened up a new realm of possibilities.

Meanwhile, in the outside world, society remained profoundly homophobic and preoccupied with pathologising homosexual men almost to the point of being obsessive. A good example of this is the press furore that surrounded the identification of John Vassall as a soviet agent and gay man. In April 1963, as I was admiring the statue of David in the solitude of the front room, Gardiner (1997:126) points out that *The Sunday Mirror* was pillorying gay men. In an article that aimed to alert the public to the ways in which it is possible to 'spot a possible homo', the newspaper announced that 'as the Admiralty, the Foreign Office and M.I.5 don't seem to know...*The Sunday Mirror* offers some useful advice:

> If is really true that in this day of frankness grown men,
> professional men, men of the world, cannot spot a homo when
> they see him, I think it is high time we had a short course on how
> to pick a pervert. Basically, homos fall into two groups –the
> obvious and the concealed.
>
> **Obvious:** those who dye their hair, touch their lips, and walk with
> a gay little wiggle could be spotted by a One-Eyed-Jack on a foggy
> day in Blackwall tunnel.
>
> **Concealed:** They wear silk suits and sit up at chi-chi bars with full
> bosomed ladies. Or they wear hairy sports jackets and give their
> wives a black eye when they get home from the working men's
> club.

The article has the same sentiments as government warnings issued twenty years previously, when during the Second World War the British public was warned that German agents might be everywhere. The aim is to create fear – the criteria for identifying gay men are almost laughable while at the same time introducing a rather sinister suggestion that they may also be the perpetrators of domestic violence. While this remains a distinct possibility for men trapped in marriages with no prospect of any other life, I am not sure that it relates to the experience of gay men who frequented the bars in Brighton or Soho which constituted this country's embryonic gay scene.

Despite the fact that the 'David' incident constituted my first counter script, the dominant scripts and discourses that I encountered in my environment were very much focussed on heterosexuality. Although in my last year at primary school I sat next to a male friend and had a vague sense of being attached to him, it was not until I went to secondary school that I began to experience my sexuality in a deeper way. My recollections of this experience are that it was both confusing and disorientating. The confusion primarily stemmed from the fact that the development of my sexual identity took place in an almost total vacuum in terms of sex and relationships education (that was not delivered) in the school curriculum. To say that this was minimalist is an understatement. My memory of it was that it was limited to the hour and five minutes in an '0' level Biology lesson in which we took notes on the subject of human reproduction. This brief injection of officially sanctioned information about heterosexuality was concluded by an aside made by the teacher, who warned us that if we ever found ourselves feeling attracted to a person of the same sex we should be extremely worried.

Informal sex and relationships education outside of the taught curriculum was widespread, however, and this took place mainly between peers. Whereas formal education was minimal, peer education was sometimes amusing, sometimes threatening and contradictory. As a younger secondary school pupil I felt intimidated

by older males in the environment who were often the sources of this peer education. My survival strategy was to remove myself to a place of safety; as a result I spent many breaks and lunchtimes in the school library. The dominant discourse in interactions between male peers was aggressively homophobic – 'puff', 'queer', 'bender', etc. being traded as routine forms of address. Despite this, the contradiction came in the form of the homo-eroticism that I observed and experienced between males. Interestingly, it was in PE/Games lessons that much of this occurred. The corners of unsupervised changing rooms offered many opportunities for physical interactions between us – despite the homophobic rhetoric, sexual activity between males was going on. The effect of witnessing and participating in this was extremely confusing and disorientating. The messages being transmitted on the macro scale of 1960s society were very negative in relation to homosexuality. The relationships between boys and young men in school were policed by homophobic discourses and banter – and yet the relationship that I had with my some of my peers had a pronounced homo-erotic charge. This raised many questions for me in terms of what was real and what was false, what was transitory and what was more permanent and, perhaps most significantly, how I fitted into the larger picture.

As time went by I had a growing sense of seeing myself as being different. Initially this perception felt quite intangible and difficult to place. There were some obvious differences between my peers and myself. I was an only child – I was used to a world of solitude and to me they seemed much more confident socially. I also felt physically inadequate in comparison to them. To me they appeared to be more mature physically and I was still quite overweight. In the sixth form, the sexually charged atmosphere of the changing room seemed to have subsided; perhaps it was after all, 'just a phase' in the journey from boyhood to manhood. In my case, my feelings grew stronger and I discovered one Easter in Bordeaux that I could secretly fall in love, albeit from a great distance. There was no communication between myself and the object of my affections, who was the cousin of my French pen friend. In my eyes this guy was a dark-haired Adonis, I melted when he came through the door dressed in motorbike leathers, smoking a Gauloise. These thoughts and fantasies remained undisclosed – I felt that my peers had developed and moved on and that I also needed to make an effort to show an interest in heterosexuality. Despite this, I was aware of 'my other place' in terms of my psyche – I came progressively to associate it with specific aspects of my sixth form experience at school. Geography and General Studies became my heterosexual domain – English and History spoke to my 'other place'. Harris (1990:31) sets out a detailed list of opportunities for including lesbian and gay issues in the English classroom, citing Protherough, Atkinson and Fawcett (1989) for the rationale:

> English is the subject pre-eminently concerned with what it means to be a human being in relationship with other individuals, growing within a culture. By language we create the world that we need to know about, we come to know ourselves and others, we discover how to learn and how to make choices or judgements, and at the heart of these processes is responding to literature.

In my own reflexive project of personal development I can recall two key 'counter scripts' which spoke to me in terms of sexuality in my secondary education, both of which I studied as set texts for English A level. The first one of these was an anthology of poetry from the First World War. Taylor (1989:15) cites Fussell (1975) who observes that:

> No one turning from the poetry of the Second World War to that of the First can fail to notice the unique physical tenderness, the readiness to admire openly the bodily beauty of young men, the unapologetic recognition that men may be in love with each other.

I took great pleasure in reading these poems – I remember being moved and saddened by poems such as 'Futility' by Wilfred Owen – and because of the awful carnage of the trenches I had a sense of the great intimacy that existed between men in that situation. Despite the fact that Woods (1998:121) notes that this poetry is possibly 'the most popular gay literature in English culture', in our analysis I do not recall these themes ever being discussed. In fact, it was very rare for any kind of sexuality to be mentioned in any of our lessons, never mind homosexuality. The result was that I remained isolated in a kind of fog, aware of something in a very abstract sense, but with no tangible discussion or evidence against which to anchor my thoughts.

My second 'A' level counter script was *Father and Son* by Edmund Gosse. Gosse (1907) begins the narrative by stating that it is a record of the struggle between two temperaments, two consciences and almost two epochs. The story of his own boyhood and young manhood in the oppressive atmosphere of his family forms the focus of the work, with his relationship with his father, a member of the Plymouth Brethren, being central. The theme of 'two temperaments' resonated for me on a number of levels. One level related to my own testing of boundaries at this time in my relationship with my parents and the power struggle that ensued. Again, at another level I had a far less tangible sense in which it was resonating with my sexuality.

I also recall sunshine – in the form of some baking hot days in the summer of 1971. I can recall reading *Father and Son* during the morning's lessons and then making way home at lunchtime over a recreation ground where I saw a very public display of sexuality by two of my peers. He was a student at my school, muscular, lithe and lying on top of her – she was soft and surrendering. Lunchtime after lunchtime I passed

them engrossed in a passionate kiss on the grassy slopes of the rec. Like Gosse, I too felt on the edge of something – but was this it? Was it heterosexuality?

1.4.2 Struggle and disconnection

My leaving grammar school at the age of eighteen marked the end of my school-based education. The transition into the next phase was not just a school to university one, it was a social and geographical transition. I left the town of my birth and moved to Manchester. I could not have experienced a greater contrast during that first year, living in what was one of the toughest parts of the city – Moss Side. In the early 1970s the area was in the throes of a painful regeneration. The old terraces built on the grid iron street pattern were being torn down and new housing with its landscaped greenery and sweeping crescents was taking its place. Socially my world had expanded beyond recognition. Living in Moss Side, I rubbed shoulders with a large Afro-Caribbean population. Sexuality was also visible, mainly in the form of sex workers and their clients in this, one of the city's red light areas. I remember the experience of going to university as an enriching and truly educative time – the John Rylands University Library was a source of new ideas which stretched and challenged my view of the world. An elective module I chose as part of my undergraduate studies was Social Geography. This took me to new and unexplored parts of the library, far away from the scientific texts of geographical techniques and geomorphology. Inevitably I strayed in my researching from the texts describing models of urban morphology of the Chicago school to texts that sat alongside in a section called '*ethnography*'. It was here that I first encountered the first academic book I had seen that was written explicitly about homosexuality. Despite the subsequent critique made of the work in terms of research ethics (Warwick, 1982), *Tearoom Trade* by Laud Humphreys (1970) was a landmark ethnography in terms of putting homosexuality under the spotlight in general and cottaging (sex between men in public toilets) as a sexual activity, in particular. Such was my naivety, I had no idea that every time I walked up Oxford Street to my studies in the Central Reference Library, I was in fact not just passing through geographical space I was also in transit through sexual space. Some eighteen years previously, it was here that Alan Turing, another member of the University of Manchester community, had fallen foul of the law by entering into a liaison with one of the men who cruised the railway arches that intersect Oxford Street.

Although homosexual acts had been partly decriminalised in1967, my sense was that it remained a social and political taboo in the early 1970s when I was in Manchester. Jivani (1997) documents the way in which gay pubs and bars in this city remained hidden from the public gaze by citing the experiences of how two local women, Luchia Fitzgerald and

Jose Pickering, found their way to Manchester's Union Bar near Canal Street – see Appendix 1. The account is useful in that it provides an insight not only into the interior of this hidden world but also documents the challenges of a first visit to the gay scene. I return to this later in this section 1.4.3.

Meanwhile I remained in my naivety oblivious to the emerging gay community in Manchester – I simply did not identify with or connect with the issue. My own sexuality, like the model for young men proposed by Walker and Kushner (1997), remained a very private, reflective and solo enterprise. I was just not ready either as an undergraduate or as a PGCE student a year later in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to 'go public' or make contact with a community.

1.4.3 Experimentation and love

Four years on and I found myself in the workplace. My entry into the teaching profession had not been an easy one – I undertook my initial teacher training in Newcastle-upon -Tyne and struggled as a very young PGCE student. It was quite late in the day when I finally got a post as a Scale 1 teacher in a Yorkshire comprehensive school. My probationary year was extremely demanding but, despite this, I liked the school and became immersed in both the day to day activity and the social life that revolved around it. I worked in a close-knit department that was friendly, supportive and extremely heterosexual in the way that colleagues presented themselves. This comment is quite revealing about a new phenomenon that I was starting to understand, ie. the culture of schools and individual units within them. I do not recall any mention of this or of sexuality in my PGCE course. However, these two issues were prominent in the project of 'finding myself' which was as much about me as the school.

The key questions in this enterprise are 'Who am I and how do I fit in here?' I use the present tense here because I think that these are questions that I still ask each time I work within institutions. I had plenty of opportunities to check my responses via my day to day interactions with colleagues and young people. The school staff was quite young and there was a well established programme of social events that revolved around activities such as barbecues, discos and treasure hunts.

My time at university had given me an opportunity to hone my social skills but despite this, there were times when I felt at odds with my colleagues in social situations and I began to realise ways in which I perceived myself as being different. The first of these was in relation to my status as a single male. Some social events became problematic in the sense that it was clear that by default they ended up being for heterosexual

couples in relationships and I ran the risk of feeling left 'high and dry'. My response was to develop a strategy for managing these situations which involved importing close female friends for company. A jack-the-lad type colleague encouraged me to venture out onto the local straight scene in the nearby town, which I did with not very much enthusiasm and success. In my last year at the school a gradual internal shift was taking place in which my interest in sexuality and relationships per se was beginning to develop. I felt that I ought to be doing something about this and felt compelled to move from my state of avoidance and disconnection.

A significant development was that my social life expanded beyond the school into the local theatre – I remember one evening overhearing a group of gay men talking about the gay pubs and clubs in the nearby city of Leeds. The pupils in school also spoke with a mixture of awe and derision about a gay bar called 'The Underground' that was rumoured to exist in the back streets near to the Market Place in the local town. So in July 1979, at the age of twenty four and with one week of my contract left to run at the school, I found myself in the same position as Luchia Fitzgerald (see Appendix 1), about to make a rite of passage by venturing into a gay bar. It was a Saturday night and I decided to walk the four miles into town – in retrospect this was part of my preparation and a way to calm my nerves. On reaching the pub I walked straight in through the door and braced myself for...nothing – no clue or sign that this was anything out of the ordinary. I went to the bar and bought a drink and decided to wait and observe. Within minutes a man at the bar approached me asking if I had 'come for the party.' I was led into the back room on the condition that I would talk to the people who were there – I encountered a scene not far removed from that described by Jose Pickering (see Appendix 1). Many of my stereotypes of gay people were both confirmed and challenged that night – I stayed in the company of a guy until the early hours before I embarked on the long walk home. This liaison quickly progressed in a matter of hours from friendship into a sexual encounter - my new found friend was not like John Inman or Larry Grayson, the gay stereotypes of the time. Instead he was a 'straight-acting' guy of my age who worked for the National Coal Board in the yard of a local pit.

At the end of the following week it was time to say to farewell to the staff who were leaving the school at the end of that academic year. It was the tradition that the speech-makers pointed out the foibles and poked gentle fun at the individual before wishing them well. I was stunned when my speech-maker said that Max didn't get much marking done on a weekend because he was too busy 'down the The Underground'. How did they know?! How had they deduced my sexual orientation?

Had they tracked my movements the previous Saturday? I had no chance for an analysis or reaction...I was leaving and I was gone.

In retrospect, my first venture out onto the South Yorkshire gay scene was quite an important step in my personal journey. The next two years were very much about further exploration and experimentation, progressively pushing against the limits in terms of what I was comfortable doing in terms of my gay visibility. Looking back, I smile at my use of the phrase 'gay visibility', mainly because at the time I felt so invisible. My public and private persona felt totally split. At my next school I worked hard in my role as an up and coming second in department. The department was quite male dominated, quite macho in fact, and I think that this had quite a strong influence on the persona I tried to project in an attempt to blend in. The weekend, however, was a different matter – as dusk fell on the Saturday evening I would enter my gay world, venturing out to clubs and pubs in Birmingham, Leicester and Sheffield...but never my home city. That felt just too close to home and I did not want to be seen.

 This night-time world afforded me the opportunity to be myself and to make contact with other people – I met some lovely men and no doubt had several opportunities for a relationship, which I chose not to pursue. This felt too risky...I might be identified. Such was my fear, I had a pseudonym for the gay me: I was 'Rob' and I worked 'in an office'. Over the years I have heard some pretty damning judgements about the one-night-stand phenomenon. Yes, some of my encounters were shallow and superficial whilst others were intensely intimate. I have driven home as dawn broke on Sunday mornings feeling everything from bleak loneliness to utter fulfilment.

I encountered the complexity of my own sexuality, the need for physical and emotional intimacy becoming more intertwined and less separate, this representing a maturation of my experience in terms of intimacy. I fell in love with a woman with whom I have had a very significant relationship for the last twenty years and which continues to this day albeit in a much changed form. After our marriage I settled into what should have been the image of a respectable heterosexual teacher in the school in which I worked. Whilst this was the case in terms of the life that I then led, a series of incidents took place which shattered this peace. A group of young men in Year 11 let me and the rest of the school community know that as far as they were concerned, I was not heterosexual, I was gay.

The incidents took the form of verbal harassment, 'queer' and 'puff' being used both to my face and behind my back. I started to dislike the environment intensely and dreaded encountering the perpetrators, who were very skilled in the use of *sotto voce*

in their delivery of abuse. When challenged, of course, they denied all association with it, I must have mis-heard and why were they being accused? The homophobic atmosphere around the school was awful: threatening, intimidating, aggressive. I felt powerless to tackle the issue – a sense of shame prevented me from working with colleagues to deal with the problem. I wondered why it seemed to matter so much to me, why I couldn't shrug off or dismiss my feelings of hurt. The situation was resolved two months later when I left the school, much to my relief.

1.4.4 Close Encounters...the Summer of 1987 onwards

Thus far, my emphasis has been very much on 'the personal in professional contexts'. In this section I want to explore the impact of professional development in the period 1987-89, when I embarked on a programme of Human Relations training at the Centre for the Study of Human Relations in the School of Education at the University of Nottingham. This training consisted of a short six-day intensive course, followed a year later by my registration on a one-year full time Masters programme.

My decision to pursue both courses was influenced by a team staff-development strategy within my third school, in which I was working as a Head of Humanities Department. The school itself was located on an outer city council estate and had a catchment area which was wedge-shaped, stretching into the inner city. The young people with whom I worked were not socially or economically advantaged – because of this, I have fond memories of these individuals whom I remember in many ways, sometimes as very challenging, sometimes very appreciative and mostly very likeable. They had a very 'grounded' approach to education – so grounded in fact that some of them took their own initiative and skived off school, preferring to spend a day fishing or hanging around town. In a strange kind of way this rubbed off on me too – working in that institution taught me to how to maintain a sense of reality and proportion. I learned that sometimes, despite the best efforts of governments and teachers, there are greater influences in communities and young people's lives, which militate against academic achievement. The school presented me with a new challenge, which was how to deliver teaching in a more engaging way that would motivate young people to participate in the process of learning.

Given this scenario, the school had identified Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) as an important subject for underpinning the more academic subjects in the curriculum and which provided an opportunity for the personal development of both pupils and staff. The teaching team was inspired by a woman who is a very gifted teacher and committed team leader. In retrospect, her role as a facilitator was quite pivotal in terms of both staff development and the quality of the PSHE programme

that was delivered to the young people. She recognised the fact that out of a multitude of variables, including curricula, resources, teaching and learning styles, etc. it is the self-awareness of the teachers themselves that is significant to both the quality of the relationship with those being taught and the effectiveness of the learning experience.

Although I had been engaged in an informal internal dialogue in relation to 'the self' for some time in my role as a teacher, I had never had any opportunity to engage formally with this in a professional development context. On reflection, there are two aspects of both courses that facilitated this process. The first aspect relates to the philosophical and theoretical orientation of the courses which is steeped in the tradition of humanistic education as advocated by Maslow (1998), Egan (1998) and Rogers and Freiburg (1994). In this tradition there is a strong emphasis on what is described as the 'client or person-centred' relationship - Rogers (1951) - between educator and learner, in which the core conditions of empathy, positive regard and non-judgementalism are foregrounded. The second aspect relates to their mode of delivery using the medium of experiential learning, which in my experience resulted in very potent learning both during and afterwards. Jarvis (1995:75), basing his discussion on the seminal work of Kolb and Fry (1975), Kolb, (1976) and Kolb (1984), defines experiential learning as 'learning from primary experience'. In this instance, the primary experience was known as the Rogerian Small Group. This was based on the encounter group model as described by Rogers (1971) and Egan (1970) in which the fifteen members of our small group met on a regular basis with a staff member in the role of facilitator to study our relatedness as it evolves 'here and now.' I can still vividly remember my first experience of the Rogerian Small Group on the short course. Two feelings stand out. The first was a feeling of complete paralysis – I felt totally disorientated and disabled by the situation. My usual ability to interact and communicate seemed to have deserted me. The second feeling was a kind of overwhelming fear, an emotion that that generated a lot of reflection in the months and years after the experience. I had to ask myself the difficult and painful question about why I would want to remain invisible. I am at risk of portraying these experiences in a very negative light in the way that I describe them here. In fact, I now look back on them as being key triggers for subsequent reflection, learning, growth and development.

Fifteen years later, I came across an index card that I had completed during a goal-setting exercise towards the end of the short course. It said that in the future I wanted to have more intimacy in my relationships with men. This may not sound significant but in fact it was a major step for me to acknowledge in writing a part of

me that had until that point remained a private thought locked in my head. In my Masters dissertation I explored this in terms of the way that other men and I perform masculinity in our gender role. This review of gender was an important piece of 'spade work' in a much bigger project of personal development and feels like a true antecedent to my interest in this research. The bigger project extended to include sexuality, and specifically my sexual orientation. In retrospect, I was much more daunted by this exploration – hence my vulnerability at the time of the critical incident. It is interesting for me to reflect on the role that professional development has played in what I see as my personal growth. On the very difficult weekend in which I came out to some friends, they shared a perception, which must be put in the context of their initial reaction of shock and anger, that I had been 'contaminated' by the knowledge I had acquired in Higher Education.

1.5   Distilling themes

In this final section of the chapter I want to adopt a more distant, analytical position in relation to the narratives I have told. In tracing the antecedents to this research I can identify a number of themes that emerge. The first of these relates to environment. In many respects the environments in which the narratives are set are quite specific in terms of their geographical, cultural and historical situation. The intersection of these variables produces a particular milieu in which my experience is recounted. I note that the way in which I have described this is not very positive. The accent in the education environments, for example, is on threat, silence and homophobia; only occasionally do I move away from these themes in my identification of counter scripts and supportive colleagues.

A second theme relates to the task of monitoring and understanding these environments. This is quite prominent in my professional work in school contexts, where the process of splitting and separating the personal self from the professional self features strongly. Although I am using the professional context as an example, I have a sense that this was a process that I became involved with a long time before adulthood. In a way, the 'David' incident triggered the start of a process of self-education in which I strove to understand not just myself but my relationship with the environment in which I was living. This 'self-educating' has some interesting characteristics – in the way that I present it here, this process has some interesting contradictions. On the one hand, I note my caution and defensiveness in interactions with pupils in school. On the other, I note an element of risk-taking with my forays out on the gay scene. A really interesting aspect of the stories is the way I present a variety of personae in a variety of contexts and situations. An important question that surfaces here is 'What is "self" comprised of and how is it managed?'

Viewed from a distance, I can see that I have used the professional context as the main vehicle from which to deliver the story. I do this in the role of pupil, student and teacher. It is interesting to reflect on my reasons for doing this. Apart from providing an on-going educational perspective, the foregrounding of the professional context also functions as a kind of protection. What is not emphasised here are the raw emotions and the details of sexuality and intimacy. I want to acknowledge that the writing of some of this text has been emotionally painful. I am also aware of the dangers of slipping into the 'confessional' when revealing sexual intimacy. It is only towards the end that some of the complexity of my sexual identity begins to emerge – through the time frame of the narratives I note that I variously identified as being heterosexual, bisexual and gay.

Underneath these observations lie some highly complex sub-questions that are related to my main research questions:

How do society and environment influence individuals in their development? This relates to my main research question about past personal/professional experiences in constructing identities.

What is the relationship between society and schooling and how does this shape education environment? What are the social and emotional effects of hierarchy in collegial relationships in this environment? This relates to my main research question about the mechanisms used to present gay-teacher in different environments.

What is the 'self' of the individual and how is it managed? This relates to my main research question about the process of constructing a gay-teacher identity.

These sub-questions form an agenda for a review of literature, which now follows in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER TWO

ESTABLISHING A SOCIAL CONTEXT: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

'Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught'.

Critic as Artist, Oscar Wilde

My main aim in this chapter is to undertake a review of the literature relating to this piece of research with the aim of providing a conceptual framework In structuring what follows, I am directed by the sub-questions emerging from the narratives in Chapter 1, ie. sexuality, education and the management of identities in education environments. Hence, I have identified four key areas relating to the sub-questions to explore here. These are:

a.   Society and sexuality

b.   The state and schooling

c.   Homosexuality and education

d.   Personal and professional identities

2.1 Society and Sexuality

2.1.1 Epistemology and the 'problem' of history

Duberman et al (1991), Halperin (2000) and Bhattacharyya (2002) all advocate the usefulness of examining the past as a mechanism for understanding present perspectives on sexuality. Bhattacharyya (2002:37) argues that there is a timelessness and commonality about sexual experience, which enables it to cross the boundaries of time and space:

> This is the position that arranges bodies into timeless essence of sexuality - that absolute kernel of human experience that transcends all context, all cultural influence, any trace of fashion – to grip limbs and genitals into the same special feeling that all lovers have felt through time. Despite the unpromising premise that there is nothing new under the sun and that every gasp and caress is no more than a repetition of rituals so old that they have no origin, in fact this is some exciting position. In this embrace, all lovers feel their easy connection to the eternal.

While there may be an element of truth in this view, the extent to which the meanings attached to sexual behaviours are transferable through time has been the subject of intense debate at the end of the twentieth century. Halperin (1993: 416) points to the important distinction between sex and sexuality:

> Sex has no history. It is a natural fact, grounded in the functioning
> of the body, and, as such, it lies outside history and culture.
> Sexuality by contrast does not properly refer to some aspect or
> attribute of bodies. Unlike sex, sexuality is a cultural production: it
> represents the appropriation of the human body and its
> physiological capacities by an ideological discourse.

In subsequent writing on the subject, Halperin (2000) notes that there has been profound disagreement between the 'essentialists' - Bullough (1979), Boswell (1980), Dover (1985), Norton (1997) - and the 'social-constructionists' - Katz (1976), Foucault (1979), (1985), (1986); Weeks (1981a), (1981b) - about the extent to which it is possible to trace a common definition of homosexuality through time. Duberman et al (1990:5) describe the essentialist perspective as being based on the idea that gay identity and gay people exist as a distinct social category throughout history. The social constructionist critique of this assertion is that rather than a history of unchanging gay people through time, what is needed is a history of the changes in sexual categories themselves – this is based on the premise that sexual categories and identities are socially constructed and historically specific. Halperin (2000:89) notes that :

> The essence of the constructionist approach to the history of
> homosexuality...was to argue that homosexuality is a modern
> construction, not because no same-sex sexual acts or erotic labels
> existed before 1869, when the term 'homosexuality' first appeared
> in print, but because no single category of discourse or experience
> existed in the premodern and western worlds that comprehended
> exactly the same range of same-sex sexual behaviours, desires,
> psychologies and socialities, as well as the various form of gender
> deviance, that now fall within the definitional boundaries of
> homosexuality.

Towards the end of the above quotation, there is reference to the thinking that has informed the formulation of an analytical model that supersedes the essentialist-constructionist paradigms. Halperin (2000:88-89) suggests that neither of the these models can capture the complexity of the issues at stake in the new histories of sexual subjectivity that are available to us and proposes a new model that takes into account the 'long historical process of accumulation, accretion and overlay'. In fact he argues that there is no such thing as a 'singular history of male homosexuality', a claim informed by Sedgwick's (1993) critique of social-constructionist theory in which she points to the dangers of oversimplfying homosexual narrative. Instead, Halperin argues, there are 'histories to be written of at least four different but simultaneous categories or traditions of discourse pertaining to what we now define as homosexuality.' It is via the study of the genealogy of homosexuality that Halperin hopes to rehabilitate the old constructionist paradigm. His analysis focuses on pederasty or 'active sodomy', friendship or 'male love' and passivity or 'inversion' –

this model builds on the earlier writings of Trumbach (1977); Adam (1986);
Greenberg (1988); Adam (1996).

The contribution of new paradigm writers such as Sedgwick and Halperin offers a way
forward for considering the historical evolution of societal attitudes in the environment
in which this research is conducted. The aim of the next three sections is to review
retrospectively some key developments that have influenced a societal view of
homosexuality in an English context.

2.1.2   **An English Pastiche**

The cultural and chronological milieu in which this research is conducted is quite
specific, ie. in England at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The use
of the term 'England' is deliberate here in delineating a particular geographical area of
the United Kingdom. The remit of this section will be to gain an understanding of
historical influences in conceptualising homosexuality in this context.

The literature that discusses the early references to homosexuality in England, Weeks,
(1977), Coxon 1996; Norton (1997); Robertson and Monsen (2001); Spencer (1995);
Taylor, (2002), highlights the role of legislation, particularly ecclesiastical law, as a
medium through which it is possible to gain an insight into how the phenomenon was
viewed. In early English history, there seems to be no concept of a homosexual
identity – the emphasis instead appears to be on same-sex acts or behaviours. Coxon
(1996) emphasises the role of the Judaeo-Christian tradition as a major influence in
communicating a view of acceptable versus unacceptable sexual behaviour. Central to
this is the concept of sodomy (derived from biblical references to the sins of the cities
of the plain: Sodom and Gomorrah), which was a punishable offence. Weeks
(1977:14), notes that: '"Sodomy" was a portmanteau term for any forms of sex that
did not have conception as their aim, from homosexual acts to birth control'. In its
extreme form, Robertson and Monsen (2001) point out that the punishment meted out
to individuals convicted of sodomy was to be burned at the stake; Henry VIII
extended the death penalty for sodomy into secular law in 1533; this remained until
1861. The peak of these punishments appears to be the mid seventeenth century
when the rise of Puritanism led to 'the systematic, cruel and zealous persecution of
homosexuals' (Robertson and Monsen 2001:14).

For Trumbach (1989: 134), the early eighteenth century is a significant watershed for
public perceptions of homosexual behaviour in London. Prior to this era, the public
were accustomed to the bisexual behaviour of 'the rake' – this was soon to be
replaced by a new breed of exclusively gay man 'the fop' or 'molly':

> After 1720, the fop's effeminacy in real life and on the stage came
> to be identified with the effeminacy of the then emerging role of
> the exclusive adult sodomite – known in the ordinary language of
> his day as a *molly*, and later as a *queen*.

Not only were such individuals discernible but the 'molly house' – Norton (1992) -
became a place where they gathered for sexual entertainment.

This trend of the homosexual being a recognisable type continued into the nineteenth
century which is frequently cited as the era in which heterosexuality and
homosexuality were 'invented' as social definitions. Foucault (1981:43) observes that:
'The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.'
Taylor (2002) argues that this process of 'essentialization' changed perceptions and
this was once again inextricably linked with changes in English law. Weeks (1977,
1991, 1995) documents the introduction by Henry Labouchere of the infamous section
11 of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act that was to criminalise acts of 'gross
indecency' between men until 2003. A series of high profile trials also raised public
consciousness of homosexuality – the scandal of the Cleveland Street messenger boys
in 1889-90 was to be eclipsed by the Wilde trials in 1895. When the verdict was
announced the press had a field day – contemporary perspectives on same-sex
relations were there for all to read. Spencer (1995:286) quotes an editorial from the
London Evening News on the day of Wilde's conviction:

> He was one of the high priests of a school which attacks all the
> wholesome, manly, simple ideals of English life and sets up false
> gods of decadent culture and intellectual debauchery.

This set the tone for the next half century when homosexual men in England lived
their lives within a marginalised subculture. Plummer (2000) bemoans the lack of
sociological research into lesbian and gay experience in the first half of the twentieth
century. Unlike in Germany, where significant research into sexuality was undertaken
– Hirschfeld (1914, 1924, 1930, 1935) – the academy in England produced very little.
In the peace that followed Jivani (1997:96) reports that convictions for gross
indecency reached new heights in the 1950s. However, the winds of change began to
blow. Research undertaken in the United States by Alfred Kinsey made its UK landfall
in 1948 with dramatic effect in the form of *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* or
'Kinsey Report' (Kinsey et al 1948), to be followed *by Sexual Behaviour in the Human
Female* published in 1953. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that public
perceptions of sexuality were about to take a significant shift.

2.1.3 The Kinsey Legacy

Robinson (1976:115), in his review of sex research during the twentieth century, identifies Alfred Kinsey as the person that 'had probably a greater influence on modern sexual consciousness than any other thinker since Freud.' To this day, Kinsey's research remains one of the largest empirical studies of human sexuality ever conducted. The lynch pin of the data collection exercise was the research interview or 'sexual history taking' which Robinson (1976:44) describes as:

> Kinsey's most brilliant creation, an authentic tour de force in which every scrap of sexual information available to memory was wrenched from the subject in less than two hours. Between 1938 and 1956 Kinsey and his three associates – Wardell Pomeroy, Clyde Martin and Paul Gebhard – secured eighteen thousand such individual records. Kinsey personally conducted some eight thousand of the interviews.

In 1947, Kinsey and his colleagues established the Institute for Sex Research as a separate, non-profit organization and published the first phase of their research in the form of *Sexual Behavior In The Human Male* in 1948. The findings immediately created controversy for their revelations of the sexuality of mainly white American males, particularly in relation to homosexuality. Kinsey et al. (1948) reported that a third of American males claimed to have had at least one same-sex orgasmic experience by the age of 45. Furthermore, approximately 10 percent of the sample disclosed having been predominantly homosexual for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55, and four percent described themselves as exclusively homosexual. Kinsey's research refuted the widely held notion that heterosexuality and homosexuality are mutually exclusive forms of behaviour and he suggested that a person's sexual orientation could change over the course of his or her lifetime. These concepts were encompassed in his seven point heterosexual-homosexual rating scale (see Figure 2.1 below).

Figure: 2.1 The Kinsey Scale

Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale
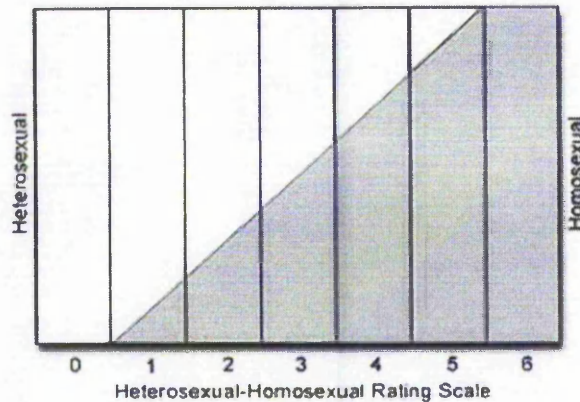
0- Exclusively heterosexual with no homosexual
1- Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual
2- Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual
3- Equally heterosexual and homosexual
4- Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual
5- Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual
6- Exclusively homosexual

Source: Kinsey, et al. (1948: 639,656)

Weeks (1977:152) notes that 'Kinsey's major impact was on public opinion – which raged in a torrent of discussion for the next decade over the validity of his findings – and for the first time, sex reformers could break through to a wider public already aware of the latest ideas.' In the English context, following another series of high profile trials including that of Lord Montagu in 1954, Maxwell Fyfe Home Secretary came under pressure from the Church of England and from the Hardwicke Society to reform the law relating to same-sex offences. As a result the Vice Chancellor of Reading University, John Wolfenden, was invited to chair *The Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution* which began its work on 4 August, 1954. In October of the following year, Gathorne-Hardy (1999:421) notes that Kinsey met members of the Wolfenden committee in London and Jivani (1997:143) argues that the Kinsey findings were a strong influence on the recommendations made in the final report. The *Report of the Committee on Sexual Offences and Prostitution* finally appeared on 5 September 1957, and recommended that sex between men in private should be decriminalised. The government immediately dismissed it as being too far ahead of public attitudes and it was not until 5.50am on 4 July 1967, that male homosexual acts in England and Wales were decriminalised with the passage of 1967 Sexual Offences Act. Barbara Castle, MP noted that during the all night sitting, some of the votes had passed by a majority of only three and she wearily left the chamber as dawn broke after 'doing her bit for the boys' (David 1997:220-21).

The findings of Kinsey et al. (1948) prompt two questions:

a.   Why does the suggestion that a certain percentage of men are homosexual in any given population generate such a strong reaction? I will return to this question in section 2.4 of this chapter

b.   What is the role of the State in operating mechanisms that confer systems of power and advantage depending on an individual's sexual orientation?

2.2   Perspectives on the State

2.2.1 Sexuality, Culture and the 21st Century State

Altman (2001) and Bhattacharya (2002) argue that, at its most expansive on the macro scale, globalisation at the start of the new millennium is producing a more connected and communicative world in terms of discourse relating to sexuality. Given this potential for greater connectivity, it is interesting to speculate on of the complexity of influences that shape attitudes towards and experiences of homosexuality in any given point in time and place, particularly in relation to 'the state'. Cooper 1993; 2002, critiques Marxist analyses of the malevolent, homophobic state, eg. Spencer (1995), Hill, (2001), as being too crude and failing to capture the complexity of power relations. In offering an alternative view of 'the state' Cooper argues that a post-structuralist model of power relations sees greater fragmentation, less consensus and a de-centring in the exercise of state agency and power.

Central to this paradigm is the Foucauldian construct of the role of the subject. Foucault (1980) argues that at any site where power is exercised there is always a response by way of resistance or counter discourse. It is by monitoring the boundaries between expressions of power and resistant responses that an understanding of hegemonic structures within societies can be understood. Spargo (1999:23) asserts that

> It is difficult to view power except in traditional terms as a negative force acting upon individuals and groups, but Foucault's subtler analysis of its status as a relation that simultaneously polices and produces, demands that we think beyond a conventional logic of domination and resistance.

For Cooper (1993:192), this enables the state to be conceptualised as having

> multiple identities: it is a set of institutions, a condensation of social relations, a national, corporate identity and monopolist of legitimate violence. These identities slide over each other, and the articulation between them, to the extent it exists, is temporary and contingent.

The state therefore, need not be a one way street in terms of power – in theory at least, in most states individuals and groups have the ability to mobilise and become politically active if they so choose.

Epstein and Johnson (1998) argue that nationality or 'nationhood' is significant in determining discourses of sexuality in any geographical location. Not only are nations geographically distinct, but they are culturally distinct also. Conceptualising the discourse around sexuality in this way enables an insight into the extraordinary variety that this creates. Not only will nations have culturally specific discourses about sexuality but so will regions within them, cities, districts, individual schools and social sub groups within those school communities.

It can be argued that 'culture' is not a construction of the moment; it is usually the product of a historical process that has shaped and influenced its development over time. The very notion of culture is problematic, Cooper (1993:193) arguing that there is rarely any degree of consensus and homogeneity of view to create 'a permanent, stable culture' within any given society.

2.2.2   The State and Sexual Formations

The contribution of Rubin (1984) is widely acknowledged in the literature (Epstein and Johnson 1998, Plummer 2001), as having made an important contribution to the theorising of sexuality formation in western societies. Her paradigm of the 'Charmed Circle' (see Fig 2.2 below) reveals the ways in which certain practices and identities are privileged over others in a hegemonic and hierarchical formation of sexuality:

The charmed circle:
Good, Normal, Natural, Blessed Sexuality

Heterosexual
Married
Monogamous
Procreative
Non-commercial
In pairs
In a relationship
Same generation
In private
No pornography
Bodies only
Vanilla
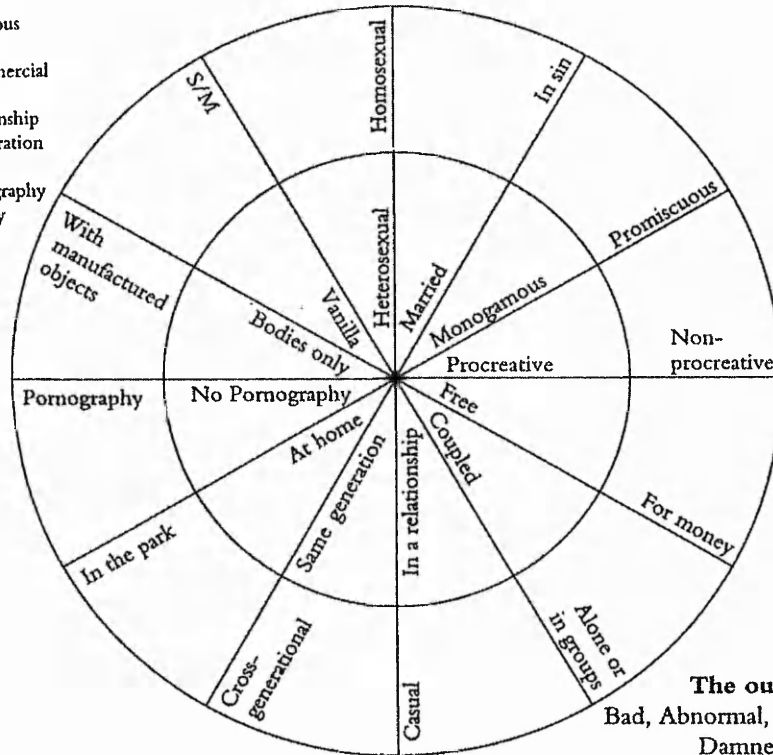
The outer limits:
Bad, Abnormal, Unnatural,
Damned Sexuality

Homosexual
Unmarried
Promiscuous
Non-procreative
Commercial
Alone or in groups
Casual
Cross-generational
In public
Pornography
With manufactured objects
Sadomasochistic

Figure 2. 2 The Charmed Circle of Sexuality: Rubin (1984)

According to the inner circle, good, natural and blessed sexuality is that which is heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive and non-commercial. Other expressions of sexuality are therefore, by implication, 'deviant' and 'other'.

A number of critiques have been made of the model. Epstein and Johnson (1998) point out that it lacks a sustained historical or cross-cultural dimension. It is significant that Gayle Rubin wrote her essay during the 'sex wars' of the 1980s as a response to the new right campaigns in sexual politics of that era that were taking place in the United States. The Charmed Circle paradigm is both chronologically and culturally specific to one particular nation. In a later version of this essay (Rubin 1992)

acknowledges that her diagrams were perhaps oversimplified to make a point. For Cooper (2002) the model is useful but is too one-dimensional in terms of power relations – subsequent writing has conceptualised these relations as being more systemic by acknowledging the role of activism and emerging sexual citizenship as described by Richardson (1998) and Bell and Binnie (2002).

Despite its limitations, in the decades that followed the Rubin paradigm initiated a much wider discussion of the function of sexuality formation and its mechanisms. Key concepts to emerge from this work are *heteronormativity* (Seidman 1996, Atkinson 2002, Epstein et al 2002, Ingraham 2002), *heterosexual hegemony* (Milceli 2002), *homophobia* (Blumenfeld 1992, Davies and Neal 1996, O'Brien 2001); *biphobia*, (Davies and Neal 1996) and *heterosexism* (Davies and Neal 1996, O'Brien 2001).

Epstein and Johnson (1998:6) explain the centrality of heterosexuality as follows:

> marginalised categories turn out to be crucial in the self-production of the "centred" ones (white, heterosexual, middle class and so on), a process most noticeable (in relation to sexuality) in public displays of homophobia by politicians in the media, but also important in the daily lives of those in schools.

Ingraham (2002:76), in responding to Seidman's (1996) call for a more critical view of normative heterosexuality, points out that heteronormativity:

> ensures the organization of heterosexuality in everything from gender to weddings to marital status is held up as both a model and as "normal".

For young people in particular, Miceli (2002) emphasises the role of institutions in hegemonising heteronormative practices – the question is, exactly how?

2.2.3 The State and Schooling: the Nature of the Relationship

Schools are interesting places of contradiction. An observer of a lively play ground or busy staff room will see the public business of the school being acted out in countless day to day interactions between members of the school community. What may be less obvious is what lies below the surface in terms of the private worlds of individuals. The dynamic that pushes individuals to categorise aspects of their experience into either the public or the private domain is at the heart of understanding how sexuality is organised in school contexts.

Rowling (1996) provides a useful overview of the elements that constitute sensitive issues such as sexuality in schools, noting the central role of values as criteria for defining 'sensitivity'. Each day, individuals communicate a particular set of messages

to all members of the school community, adults and young people alike, in terms of formal and informal institutional values on a whole range of matters. There is a kind of expectation from many stakeholders in the enterprise ranging from parents to 'the state', that adults in schools should be proactive in this function as being the moral/spiritual arbiters in society.

Bhattacharyya (2002) argues that this is clearly about the maintenance of moral and social order drawing on the observations of Reich (1973), who saw the authoritarian family and role of schooling as the chief vehicles for producing obedience and suppressing the sexuality of children. For Foucault (1979a: 104-105), the social control of children's sexuality has its origins at the beginning of the eighteenth century when, in western society, children were seen as repositories of latent sexuality that needed to be controlled through education. In contrast, Epstein and Johnson (1998) connect with other discourses where children are seen as being pre or asexual beings who are innocent and need protection from the outside world. Recent media attention to children actually being sexually abused by adults inevitably makes this a highly charged, emotive and controversial issue. Epstein et al (2002) draw on the work of Kitzinger (1988; 1990) to argue that the media portrayal of children as either victims or encouragers of abuse is, in itself, profoundly unhelpful leading to the eroticisation of children in the way that these cases are reported.

For Duncan (1999:135) at least, the situation is clear cut. The line schools take is one of disavowal when it comes to sexuality:

> Schools openly control and order, manage and measure just about every other aspect of their pupils' experience but sexuality. Any human quality can be qualified and commended by praise from the assembly-hall podium: honesty, diligence; sporting and academic success but not sexuality. The official silence surrounding the topic is deathly with curricular remit halting at procreation and AIDS awareness; 'relationships' being discussed only fleetingly in PSE lessons.

Duncan, drawing the earlier ideas of Wolpe (1988), goes on to argue that although there may be official disavowal of pupil sexuality, the regime in schools rarely accepts a laissez-faire approach. Instead it displaces sexuality for moral order, officially sanctioned as discreet and heterosexual romance. Atkinson (2002) and Epstein et al (2002) agree with this to a point whilst acknowledging that a key location that is revealing about the relationship between the school, the state and sexuality, is the curriculum. As far as homosexuality is concerned, the curriculum became a major site of contest in England and Wales between the 1980s and the present day.

2.2.2   **State Intervention and Curriculum**

A number of emerging trends are described in the literature that charts the developments in school curricula in England and Wales from the mid-1980s to the present day. One theme is the move to a more centralised curriculum since the inception of the National Curriculum in 1988. This is currently overseen by its successor the *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)*. Hill (2001), writing from a structuralist, neo-marxist perspective, expresses his frustration with postmodern scholars in relation to their failure to see clear evidence of state apparatus operating as a mechanism for social control. The evidence in question is the centralising of national curriculum and curriculum for initial teacher training, the resultant loss of teacher autonomy and the implementation of systems for surveillance in the form of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). In the literature that discusses curriculum development from a postmodern perspective, there is some resonance (as well as some difference) with Hill's argument. Epstein et al (2002), in their review of homosexuality in the school curriculum of England and Wales, also deploy the Foucauldian theories of power/knowledge and surveillance (Foucault 1980) as a lens through which to analyse these changes. Central to their argument is the legacy of Thatcherism and the New Right (as described in Epstein and Johnson 1998:45-56) with their emphasis on 'standards' and 'traditional family values'. These not only impacted on the curriculum but on the ways schools are run, the 1980s and 1990s being influenced by 'marketisation' and 'managerialism' and in the new millennium by 'performance' and 'school effectiveness'. Atkinson (2002) argues that the preoccupation with league tables in the form of academic achievement in core national curriculum subjects, may be one factor that has marginalised subjects like Personal, Health and Social Education (PSHE) where subjects such as sexuality may be addressed. Whilst there may be some evidence to support this view, in practice one piece of government legislation stands out above all others in terms of influencing practice in the PSHE sex and relationships education curriculum. In passing Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, not only did Margaret Thatcher's government demonstrate that they had clear surveillance of the activities of local authorities, but that they were determined to send out a particular message about homosexuality.

Watney (1991) traces the origins of the bill to a number of sources. In the year after her 1986 election victory, Margaret Thatcher set about making reforms to both school curricula and local government. Speaking in the Winter Gardens, Blackpool at the party conference of 1987 she was met with rapturous applause when she said:

> Children who should be taught to respect traditional moral values
> are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay.

(Thatcher, 1987)

The political response to this scenario appeared in government guidance to teachers on the teaching of sex education. The then Department for Education and Science (DES) issued DES Circular 11/87 where it was made clear that:

> There is no place in any school in any circumstances for teaching which advocates homosexual behaviour, which presents it as "the norm" or which encourages homosexual experimentation by pupils.

David Wilshire, Conservative MP for Spelthorne, who together with Dame Jill Knight MP was instrumental in getting Section 28 on to the statute book, said at the time that:

> My actions were motivated wholly by the principle of supporting normality....homosexuality is being promoted at the taxpayer's expense and the traditional family as we know it is under attack.

The Guardian, 23 November 1988

The 'attack' is generally thought to have been the storm surrounding the publication of *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin*, which the tabloid press of the time alleged was an affront to decency. Originally *Mette bor hos Morten og Erik*, *Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin* was written by Danish author Susanne Bösche and published in the UK in 1983. The story is a photo-narrative about a little girl who lived with her father and his gay partner. Bösche (2000) writing in *The Guardian* on 31.1.00 recalls that:

> I was overwhelmed by journalists from different British papers who all hoped to get a story about how badly life had turned out for the little family in my book, Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin. They were very disappointed to discover that it was a fictional story, that the real people who inspired it hadn't fallen victim to any unmentionable disease - and, not least, that I was straight. When they concluded there were no scandals to be found, they lost interest and I didn't have any contact with the British press until recently when my Jenny book was sucked once again into the argument over section 28

Durham (1991:112) notes how the tabloid story became integrated into political rhetoric with Kenneth Baker's criticism made in September (1987), the book was allegedly appearing in every school library of the then Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). On 24 May 1988, Section 28 of the Local Government Act became law with the following wording:

1.   A local authority shall not:

(a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality;

(b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.

2.   Nothing in sub-section (1) shall be taken to prohibit the doing of anything for the purpose of treating or preventing the spread of disease.

Cooper (1994) argues that the passing of Section 28 was not just an attempt to control discussions relating to homosexuality. It also enabled the showcasing of neo-conservative traditional values relating to the family and provided a convenient mechanism by which the activities of Labour Party-controlled local authorities could be constrained. Watney (1991) observes that the clumsiness of the phraseology used in part (2) of the section already suggested that there might be some conflict with teaching about sexually transmitted infections such as HIV.

The response to the act was immediate and multi-faceted. Anger in the gay community was matched elsewhere by confusion in professional circles as to what exactly what was meant by 'promotion'. By November 1988 another government department, the then Department for the Environment, stepped in to clarify the situation by issuing DoE Circular 12/88 which stated:

> Section 28 does not affect the activities of school governors, nor of teachers. It will not prevent the objective discussion of homosexuality in the classroom, nor the counselling of pupils concerned about their sexuality.

However, in the minds of many teachers, the confusion now appeared to be complete, my own experience of training teachers revealing this right up until its repeal in England and Wales on Monday 17 November 2003.

Two pertinent questions will now be explored in the next section:

a.   how did Section 28 impact on sexual politics in education, school environments and the lives of individuals in school communities?

b.   what does this reveal about the relationship between homosexuality and education in the English context?

2.3   Homosexuality and Education

Epstein and Johnson (1998:1) note that 'putting the terms "schooling" and "sexuality" together is the stuff of which scandal can be, and often is, made'. When the dimension of homosexuality is introduced into the equation, I want to argue that the tension between these two phenomena is further increased due to the level of taboo surrounding homosexuality that still exists in English society.

A useful point to begin an examination of this notion is via an analysis of a number of discourses that are revealed in the literature relating to homosexuality and education. These are:

a.   discourses that implicitly identify homosexuality as a pathology;

b.   discourses that present childhood as a time of innocence;

c.   discourses that advocate the need to protect children in schools from 'contaminating' sexual knowledge.

The examination will focus on two 'sites of tension' in the English context that feature prominently in the literature in the last fifteen years. The first site - the impact of Section 28 of the Local Government Act - is a very pervasive theme. This has connections with the second site, which examines the nature of school environments, drawing on evidence from research into the experiences of LGBT young people and critiques of the sex and relationships education curriculum in PSHE.

2.3.1 Reviewing Impact: Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988

The enactment of Section 28 of the Local Government Act in May 1988 was preceded by a period of manoeuvring by a number of interest groups in the UK that was to set the pattern for the next sixteen years. Watney (1991) argues that one of the reasons that Section 28 became law relatively easily was the absence of any voice of organised gay political activism. Interestingly, Stacey (1991) argues that the impact of Section 28 was contradictory, the apparent blocking effects of the legislation being counterbalanced by the subsequent catalytic effect on political activism. Lucas (1998:5) documents the initial response in the months prior to May 1988 as follows:

> The emergence of Clause 28 coincided with the funding of OLGA [Organisation for Lesbian and Gay Action]...OLGA co-ordinated a vigorous campaign against the proposed legislation, beginning with a 10,000-strong march in London on 9 January. Thirty-two people were arrested in the course of the protest. Further marches were organised in London and Manchester. All over the country, walls were spray painted with anti-Clause 28 graffiti. High profile zaps, such as a group of lesbians abseiling into the House of Lords, and invading a BBC News studio during a live transmission, highlighted how media 'events' could be used to focus attention on lesbian and gay issues.

The description of the tactics used in the extract above is actually quite revealing about a schism that was opening up in terms of the strategic operation of activism. The direct action approach now had a rival in the form of the 'professional homosexual' as espoused by the lesbian and gay lobbying group, Stonewall formed in 1989. As a result, the two key UK-based gay political organisations were established to confront the challenge of Section 28. Countering Stonewall, Outrage! headed by Peter Tatchell and Lisa Power, took its strategy directly from the *AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power* (ACT UP), established in New York in March 1987 to combat the vilification of people diagnosed with AIDS, and the continuing government inertia and refusal to deal with the epidemic. Lucas (1998:9), citing Lisa Power, offers an insight of the Outrage! view of Stonewall:

> Stonewall wasn't a gay organisation as we know it. It was much more of a small company, talking to parliamentarians, which nobody had done before. It had been greeted by a huge amount of resentment by the existing right-on professional activists, who were horrified by the 'straightening' of gay activism which it represented. And it did represent that – taking on the straight world, on its own terms.

Jarman (2000) provides a critique of the public persona of Stonewall embodied in celebrities such as Ian McKellen and Michael Cashman, which, he argues, did little appease those calling for a more 'purist' approach to strategy.

Strategic operations were not the only aspect of activism to be mirrored on both sides of the Atlantic. Gonsiorek (1991) and Gough (2002) note the political alliances made between republicans and religious groups in the United States, Reisman and Eichel (1990) attacking the more progressive sex education curricula of SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States) as a Kinsey-influenced conspiracy to corrupt young minds. In the UK context, Waites (2001) and Gough (2002) note that in the 1990s, attempts to repeal Section 28 and to lower the age of consent for gay and bisexual men are closely intertwined, both in terms of the political alliances of both sides and of the discourses deployed. Waites (2001: 500) explains:

> Debates about the age of consent and section 28 can be
> characterised as taking place between two broad alliances, though
> it is important to recognise the diversity on each side. 'Moralists'
> espouse more traditional or conservative sexual values, believe in
> the state's role in prescribing these values, and are particularly
> associated with the Christian right. ' Progressives' are critical of
> traditional sexual values, are sceptical of the states role in
> enforcing sexual values and are disproportionately associated with
> centre and left of the political spectrum.

> Baroness Young became a focus of moralist networking and
> influence in Westminster. Her cross-party alliance of peers drew
> support and funding from a range of family-values campaigning
> groups, particularly the Christian Institute, a registered charity of
> which she is patron. The Lords alliance drew support from religious
> leaders, though with varying emphases on different issues....such
> religious organisations as the Evangelical Alliance and the Moslem
> Council of Great Britain were also frequently cited, allowing the
> claim of backing from an impressive multi-faith alliance of religious
> authorities.

Atkinson (2002) illustrates how the membership of the moralist alliance was expanded
to include the involvement of business in the campaign to retain Section 28 in
Scotland. Brian Souter, chair of the Stagecoach bus company, fronted £500,000 in an
advertising campaign to support his 'people's referendum' on the issue (see Appendix
2).

In the arguments used by the moralists, there is a strong theme of needing to protect
vulnerable young people. The age of consent issue arose in 1997 following a ruling in
the case of Euan Sutherland in the European Court on Human Rights. This concluded
that the UK was in contravention of the European Convention on Human Rights by
having an unequal age of consent for gay and bisexual men. The newly elected Labour
government responded to this by proposing to amend the Crime and Disorder Bill of
1998 by reducing the age of consent for gay and bisexual men from 18 to 16.
Baroness Young attacked this as a 'paedophile's charter' (Waites 2001: 496). Waites
notes that as debates about the age of consent and Section 28 progressed, the
polarisation of the issue in terms of party politics became more evident, this featuring
prominently in the political allegiances of tabloid newspapers. On 8 February 2000,
following the defeat in the House of Lords of a motion to repeal Section 28 the
previous evening, *The Daily Mail* (8.2.00:1-2) under its headline 'Praise be to the
Lords' quoted Baroness Young as saying:

> I believe there is not a moral equivalence between heterosexual
> and homosexual relationships. I believe we need to set in front of
> children an ideal by which they should live. To say to children
> there are alternatives in life which are equally valid is not right and
> one needs to be very careful what one says to vulnerable children,
> growing up, uncertain of the way.

The Sun (8.2.00:2) was equally emphatic in its reporting:

> This is a great victory for the Conservative Party and all parents who are concerned that their children are protected against gay propaganda in the classroom....Critics believed that shelving it (Section 28) would allow gay town hall staff and teachers to target teenagers. It was also feared that 'pro-gay' educational books and videos would flood into schools.

It is interesting to consider the discourses of homosexuality and education identified in section 2.3 in relation to the research of Douglas et al. (1997) who in their survey of 307 secondary schools, reported the following findings in relation to the impact of Section 28:

- 75% of the respondents in the survey were aware of its (Section 28's) existence; more than a quarter were unsure as to whether it made the discussion of homosexuality illegal.

- 58% of respondents incorrectly believed that Section 28 (as opposed to the 1986 Education Act) gives school governors the responsibility for deciding whether homosexuality can be discussed - a further 29% were unsure.

- 44% of the respondents reported that they had encountered difficulty in meeting the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual students.

- 82% of respondents reported that that they would welcome clarification about Section 28.

Clearly, in 1997 there was not only confusion and misunderstanding relating to Section 28, but also some uncertainty about how best to respond to the issue of homosexuality and the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual students. Warwick et al (2001) conclude that the most common response to this scenario is to 'play it safe' by adopting a position of inaction. If this is the case, a pertinent question that is it is useful to ask is 'what are the consequences of this response for individuals in school communities and school environments?'

2.3.2 English School Environments: Silence and Violence?

The word 'silence' is commonly used in the literature relating to homosexuality and education (McLaughlin and Tierney 1993, Squires and Sparkes 1996, Atkinson 2002) perhaps indicating something of the discomfort and avoidance that characterises the relationship. Given the assertion made by Warwick et al (2001) that inaction is a

frequent response to the issue of homosexuality in English schools, perhaps a typical way in which this manifests itself in the classroom is via silence. For Bradley (1990), it is teachers who are, without doubt, to blame for this. There is more than a touch of irony and vitriol in his poem 'You are my good teachers' (see Appendix 3). Atkinson (2002:125) argues strongly that schools and teachers who adopt a position of inaction are in fact making a statement. She argues that every absence constitutes a particular presence:

> Whatever the gaps in policy and guidance, we do teach about homosexuality from children's earliest days in school: through the absence of its representation in discussion, study, inquiry or subject matter; through the policing and perpetuation of heterosexual norms and assumptions; and through the blind eye we turn, collectively, to heterosexist and homophobic practices. Caught in a tangled web between education, morality, religion and the law, we teach it through the absence of non-heterosexual role models among teachers parents and pupils – even when they may be readily available; and through the assumption of heterosexual identities for all those we encounter in 'real life'...Thus the construction of homosexuality as 'other ' remains intact.

Warwick et al (2001:131) argue that the statements made in the public forum about how life 'should be' may contrast with the back home world of some individuals and families:

> The constitution of heterosexuality as 'the norm', through policy, during lessons and by way of everyday conversations, jokes and gossip creates a context where certain young people (and also teachers and parents) come to think of themselves as, in some way, less than normal.

As a result, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered individuals may find themselves at odds with the public persona of schools - this can trigger powerful feelings of shame, which colludes with and reinforces the institutional silence. For young people in schools, the tension between personal difficulties and public shame may surface under the guise of other presenting problems such as truancy, poor academic achievement or behaviour problems. There is a growing body of evidence that supports the manifestation of this (Trenchard and Warren 1984, Rivers 1996, Davies and Neal 1996, Rivers 2001). In addition, recent research and theorising has also revealed the mechanisms by which homophobic discourses and practices operate in school environments (Mac an Ghaill 1994, Mac an Ghaill 1996, Thurlow 2001 and Reay 2001).

The review of the above literature could lead to the formation of a pessimistic view of the relationship between homosexuality and education and the experience of working in school communities. Postmodern approaches to research (Miller 1998, Denzin and Lincoln 2000) encourage the identification of tensions and contradictions in such views

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of the world that are presented in one-dimensional terms. There are contradictions and complexities in both optimistic and pessimistic views of developments in relation to homosexuality as an issue in English schools. It would be easy for example, to see the era of Section 28 as one in which the discussion of homosexuality became closed and where there was little by way of a counter discourse. A contradiction to this view is the fact that the BBC Schools programme *Two of Us* was in the portfolio of the BBC Schools TV series *Scene* for much of the time that Section 28 was in force. Howes (1993:870) lists the programme as follows

> **Two of Us (1988**) Two 17–year olds Matthew (Jason Rush) who believes that he is gay and Phil (Lee Whitlock) who's not at all sure – go on a kind of honeymoon to see if their relationship can be more than a friendship. An already ticklish situation is made impossible by the presence of police, a runaway and Phil's jealous girlfriend.

> W. Leslie Stewart 25.3.88 BBC1 55mins

> This compact and thoughtful film was made under the title *Mates* for BBC Schools Broadcasting in 1986 for showing as part of its SCENE series the following year. By the time it was actually screened (on BBC1 very late at night in 1988), the ending – the boys together and in love – had been removed and a heterosexual denouement indicated. A very brief kiss had also been eliminated.

> The hold-up was due to a changed British moral climate, with media and government whipping up public fears about homosexuality being 'promoted' in the classroom. By making the production available to adults first (over 2 million of them watched) much criticism was diffused and *Two of Us* was seen by large numbers of British schoolchildren the following year. The uncut version, which had been transmitted without any fuss in Australia, finally made it into the country of origin's schools in 1991.

> *Radio Times* published a number of very moving letters after the March 1988 screening. Here are just two extracts: 'For the first time in my life I feel clean about myself' and 'I've tried suicide twice. After seeing this I don't think I'll try again'.

Throughout the 1990s, where teachers and pupils did have access to the programme, the drama was a kind of a first, albeit it in its modified form. Here was a resource to use in the PSHE curriculum that gave a relatively positive view of gay men and the personal implications of what it means to question sexual orientation. My experience of using the film in SRE lessons was that it very rarely met with a neutral response – some young people walked out, those remaining watched in silent rapt attention and over the course of three years of using the resource, two young people came out to me.

If the making of *Two of Us* is an example of progress in the visibility of homosexuality in the PSHE curriculum, a note needs to be cautioned in portraying an overly optimistic view. On the day prior to the repeal of Section 28 in England and Wales in November 2003, BBC News reported that Kent County Council would be retaining its version of the section. Chair Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart reiterated the authority's commitment 'not to publish, purchase or distribute material with the intention of promoting homosexuality'.

Cooper's (1997) observations about the incoherent way in which the state operates on a local and national scale is transferable to the relationship between homosexuality and education described in this section. The juxtaposition of optimism and pessimism reveals a multi-faceted situation, in which there are different attitudes towards homosexuality in different locations in the education world. Where there are liberal attitudes in one location, there may be conservative ones down the road or in the next tier of management. In exploring the relationship between homosexuality and education, some of the arguments I have made in this section refer to general observations or the experiences of young people. Given the fact that the participants in this research are gay and bisexual men who are educators, in the final section of this chapter I will pursue this focus, exploring literature relating to the formation of personal and professional identities of male teachers.

2.4   Male Educators: Personal and Professional Identities

Butler (1993) theorises that persons of both both sexes in public and private spaces perform aspects of gender and sexuality. I will begin this section by exploring the literature relating to masculinity and identity.

2.4.1 Constructions of Self: 21st Century Masculinities

The debate between essentialists and social-constructionists reported on in Section 2.1 of this chapter is replicated in the literature relating to masculinity. Ramazanoglu (1992) in her review of femininism and the critical appraisal of masculinity, identifies the 1980s as a period when the debate as to whether nature is a key influence in the formation of masculinity, was particularly intense. She cites Dworkin (1988) as a feminist scholar who draws on theories of biological essentialism and determinism to support this notion. Archer (2004) revives the debate by critiquing the social-constructionist literature as consistently ignoring an equally convincing body of empirical evidence that supports theories of a biological construction of masculinity (Geary, 1998, Campbell et al 2002, Connellan et al. 2000, Alexander and Hines 2002,

Archer and Lloyd, 2002). In one respect I would agree with Archer (ibid) in that my reading of the literature in the field of social science is that there is a preponderance of writing mainly from a social-constructionist perspective using qualitative research as the main methodology. Prominent writers in this field (Connell et al 1991, Connell 1995, Mac an Ghaill 1996, Fine et al 1997, Connell 2000 and Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2003) argue that the primary influences in constructions of masculinity are learned from social environments. Much of this writing also argues that from a postmodern perspective, it is more appropriate to use the term 'masculinit*ies*', given the plethora of social, political and identity-based influences on the gender of any given male.

Kenway et al (1998) argue that any analysis of social constructions of masculinity must address issues of power in relations with others. Whitson (1990:19) argues that sport, and football in particular, is a good exemplar of this:

> Sport has become, it is fair to suggest, one of the central sites in the social production of masculinity in societies characterised by longer schooling and by a decline in the social currency attached to other ways of demonstrating physical prowess (eg. physical labour or combat).

The mention of physical prowess in the above quotation is a significant dimension in the experience of becoming of a man that has been argued by Oriard (1984) and Connell (1983, 1987). This argument rests on the premise that to be masculine means to embody force and therefore competence. The concept of force, implying power, is a frequently discussed concept in literature relating to masculinity. In the literature, this is related to 'patriarchy' (Walby 1989), this analysis being written at a time which saw the combination of two decades of evolving feminist theory. Carrigan et al (1987), Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) and Archetti, (1999) all theorise models and concepts of patriarchal relations which are part of a hegemony, where male dominance and power are institutionalised. Sabo and Panepinto (1990:115) provide an insight into the mechanisms via which football focuses the concept of hegemony in practice:

> The masculinity-validating dimensions of football ritual have always been one of the game's prominent cultural features (Kimmel, 1987; Messner, 1988). Football's historical prominence in sport media and folk culture has sustained a hegemonic model of masculinity that priortizes competitiveness, asceticism, success (winning), aggression, violence, superiority to women, and respect for and compliance with male authority.

Parker (1996) is broadly in agreement with the notion of a dominant hegemony but argues the case for the use of the term 'a position of male hegemony'. His assertion is that men's dominance in sporting circles and in society at large is sometimes

contested and challenged and therefore the dominance is not total. A second characteristic of the male hegemony that is frequently described is a hierarchical system of relations between men (Carrigan et al 1987). The result is a complex set of identities and power relationships that exist between men. Identity, for example, may intersect with masculinity in a number of ways, apart from gender, e.g. race, age, sexuality, etc. These aspects may position individual males in the hierarchy according to other hegemonies that exist in society. Parker (1996:129) argues that a particular brand of masculinity has emerged around sport with the 'ideal' being focussed on heterosexual males:

> Individuals who do not meet these criteria (be they male or
> female) are necessarily marginalised, and must, therefore, occupy
> a subordinate hierarchical position in terms of gender/sex identity

Apart from identity, behaviours have also been identified as a sorting mechanism for placing individuals in the male hierarchy. Thompson and Pleck (1987) assert that role 'norms' have a significant influence on behaviour. In their research with a large cohort of young male college students, three key norms of behaviour are specified, adherence to which is a vital ingredient to being 'enough of a man'. The norms are: 'toughness', status and anti-femininity. Gilmore (1990) adds 'stoicism' and 'heterosexuality' to the list.

In a bitter/sweet juxtaposition, Simpson (1994) reminds us that for every Bobby Moore who represented beautiful athleticism, there is a Vinny Jones who represents the hard side. The game's beauty depends on the second's ugliness, and both combine in the myth of football. In an earlier paper (Biddulph 1999) I explored the role of football narratives and their contribution to the formation of masculinity focussing on the character of Paul Andrews in Mick Bower's novel *Football Seasons*. Andrews provides a shocking reminder of the way in which violence can erupt when issues of masculinity and sexuality arise. Murphy, Williams and Dunning (1990), in their research into the environment of football hooligans, report on 'the Kingsley Lads', the young men who inhabit Leicester's Kingsley estate. The working class men who took part in this research insisted that being exposed to violence and being violent themselves, was an intrinsic part of growing up on the estate. Thus working class masculinity is constructed around the 3'F's - fighting, fucking and football. The fucking is, in theory at least, strongly heterosexual. Parker (1996:132) illuminates this as follows:

> Sport offers complex and contradictory portrayals of masculine
> construction in relation to sexuality. Physical bonding in the name
> of team spirit, homophobic taboos, blatant misogyny, and the
> objectification of women ....acceptable too are the practices of
> intimate celebration, back slapping, bath sharing and 'pseudo-
> erotic' ritual (Dunning 1986, Kidd 1987). Meaningful emotional
> relations with other males, however, are out of the question.

To transgress these rules means that individuals are at risk of being met with a
homophobic and potentially violent response, as in the case of Paul Andrews. This is a
form of 'policing' to ensure that the norms of masculinity are maintained.

Connell (1992:745) provides some insight into the relationship between hegemonic
masculinity and gay masculinity, describing the criminalisation of gay sex, homophobic
discourse and a bitter history of intimidation and violence. For gay men, when
heterosexual masculinity is encountered in relations with straight men, there is
frequently an undercurrent of threat: *'wariness, controlled disclosure and turning
inward to a gay network are familiar responses.'*

2.4.2 Constructions of Self: 21st Century Homosexualities

Similar shifts in the theorising in the field of masculinity are also apparent in theory
relating to sexual identity. In the sub-section title above, the choice of the plural in
the title, ie. homosexualit*ies*, reflects the movement away from a homogeneous view
of same-sex desire identity. D'Emilio (1983) identifies a defining moment in the
evolution of sexual politics in western contexts as the 29th June, 1969, the night of the
Stonewall riot in New York City. Duberman (1994) acknowledges that this pivotal
event gave birth to the gay liberation movement in the 1970s and 1980s, when the
key to personal individual liberation was to 'come out' to the rest of the world as a gay
person. Krouwel and Duyvendak (2000) assert that even in this period, the mismatch
between identity and behaviour was already in evidence, after the publication of the
Kinsey reports showing that homosexual activity was more widespread than had been
assumed. In the UK, almost twenty years of research into the social impact of HIV
(Weatherburn and Reid 1995, Wetherburn et al 1998) lends support to the notion of
diversity within the community of 'men who have sex with men' (MESMEN 1996). A
significant finding of this research is that within that community of men, it is a mistake
to assume that every individual identifies with the notion of 'gay identity'.

Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003) document the evolution of more sceptical
perspectives on a singular gay identity by charting the writings of Mark Simpson.
Simpson in Branigan (2001:7) takes a much more sceptical view of the singular gay

identity when he argues that the mantra of gay pride that 'gay is good' has become 'gay is goods'. In earlier writing Simpson (1994: cover) asks readers to consider:

> Have you ever wondered (to yourself, in private)...
> Why most gay culture these days is mediocre trash?
> Why so many lesbians have such a problem with long hair and dainty footwear?
> Why being gay is like being a member of a religious cult except not so broad-minded?
> What happens when a gay activist takes 'celebrating diversity' seriously and sleeps with someone of the opposite sex?'

In constructing his critique he argues that the 'de-gaying' of gay is the inevitable result of postmodernism catching up with gay and fragmenting its 'pretentious grand narrative'. His style is a mixture of sarcasm, irony and satire. In 'Gay Dream Believer: Inside the Gay Underwear Cult', Simpson (1994:1-2) remarks:

> All things considered, it's so fabby being gay, that it's difficult to imagine what it must be like to be straight. Imagine the suffering of those poor souls who are doomed by some accident of genetics or underdevelopment of that brain lobe which regulates aesthetic potential, not only to never be able to appreciate Ab Fab or carry off wearing a silver thong but also never to be able to come out. Imagine never being able to experience the joy of discovering your true identity and inheriting all this gladness; imagine being excluded from a world so marvellous, so welcoming, so well-presented, simply because you thought having children and living in the suburbs seemed like the right thing to do.

What Simpson is articulating here is some of the scepticism directed at 'gay' from writing that advocates the need to acknowledge emerging 'queer identities' (Jarman 2001, Edwards 1994, Sinfield 1998, Pinar 1998).

2.4.3 Identity and possibilities

Given the possibility of the existence of multiple identifies at any given point in time within the individual, an important question to ask is how are notions of 'self' conceptualised in terms of identity? Writing from a humanistic psychology perspective earlier in the twentieth century, Rogers (1967) identifies a core or organismic self. Mearns and Thorne (1988:8) define this as follows:

> the real self or "organismic" self as it referred to in the person-centred tradition...can essentially be relied upon to provide the individual with trustworthy messages, and this is discernible in the physiological processes of the entire body and through the process of growth by which an individual's potentialities and capacities are brought to realisation.

In contrast, Pinar (1998) draws attention to the lack of definition in making such simple sweeping descriptions of a self. In the field of sexual identity, queer theorists argue the need to reconceptualize autobiographical narrative. Miller (1998:372) argues that:

> queer versions of autobiographical work threatened to dismantle
> the dominant educational narrative in which one passes from
> ignorance to knowledge about both the "self" and other.

It is possible that there may be other ways of conceptualising self that integrates both essentialist and fragmented models of self-identity. Mearns (1999) acknowledges the work of Schwartz (1997) in suggesting that there may be a core self amongst the many parts that make up an individual's 'gestalt' (Perls 1976). Griffiths (1995:9) in her exploration of self-identity describes the relationship between fragments and a web in the following terms:

> Self-identity is to be understood as a kind of web, the construction
> of which is partly under guidance from the self, though not in its
> control. Thus it is marked by competing constraints which overlap
> and fuse...(thus) the self (the self, the individual) is constrained
> by overlapping, various communities, each of which is changing.
> Such plurality is the norm not the exception.

The notion of a dynamic process responding to various influences, provides a useful frame from which to consider ways in which gay men form their self-identity. Coyle (1992) suggests that it may be helpful to view this as a combination of two things. In his research with a cohort of gay men, he asserts that individuals are engaged in an ongoing process of life story or personal narrative construction. He draws on McAdams (1988) work in describing this 'life story as in a continual process of revision' as a response to the changing perceptions of self. Hence, the stories that individuals tell about themselves will always be slightly different, depending on how 'the self' is construed and positioned in the present.

The second perspective that Coyle (ibid) imports which has resonance with Griffiths' 'overlapping communities' is Breakwell's (1986) model of self-identity formation being the result of an assimilation-accommodation model. This process of 'grafting' via personal narratives of new constructions of self-identity is more likely to succeed when there are advantages in terms of continuity and/or increased self-esteem. Although writers such as Simpson (1996) have criticised the ghetto-like aspect of urban gay communities, Coyle (ibid), Weatherburn et al (2000) suggest that for men living in rural parts of the UK, the gay scene may be an important source of contact, support and self-esteem for individuals.

Clearly the 1990s was a decade of considerable change in the theorising of identity models of masculinity and homosexuality. In the final section of this chapter I will examine the literature that explores how these two phenomena are positioned in relation to male teachers in English schools.

2.4.4   Male Teacher Identities

Francis and Skelton (2001), in their research into gender relations in primary schools, ascribe the preponderance of males in positions of responsibility to two influences. The first relates to the linking of discipline function within schools to particular practices of masculinity. Mac an Ghaill (1994) notes that there is an expectation that male teachers will be strong on discipline, Francis and Skelton (2001) arguing that this explains the frequent presence of male teachers in upper primary classrooms based on the assumption that older children might be harder to control. Skelton (2001:125) is clear that in relation to male teachers, 'manliness has become central to their work'. Mills (2004:31) expands the nature of this work beyond the disciplinarian function to include 'coaching sporting teams and acting as a father figure – whatever that might mean – because men might be more tolerant of boys' "boyish" behaviours.'

The second influence relates to the attractions of managerialism. Mac an Ghaill (1994) offers a useful typology of male teachers in his research based on Parnell School, an English comprehensive school. He summarises his observations as follows, (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2003:63):

> Three particular groups of [male] teachers became visible – the Professionals, the old Collectivists and the New Entrepreneurs – that could be identified by conflicting responses to the political organisation of schooling and educational reforms. Each group's strategic political positioning was underpinned by their collective impressions of what constitutes the labour process or 'proper teaching'. At another level, gender politics are also at work here as masculine styles became contested. These styles are not totally cohesive, but rather contain multiple and contradictory elements. Nevertheless, the Professionals tended to advocate a masculine style that revolved around authority, discipline and control, which appeared to draw on themes of paternalism. The Old Collectivists attached significance to an education system, which emphasised equality, meritocracy, anti-sexist, and anti-racist practices. This can be seen as a masculine style that was drawing on liberal pluralist and feminist ideas. The third group, the New Entrepreneurs were in favour of neo-liberal government interventions and welcomed a labour process which was redefining teachers' work in terms of appraisal, accountability and effective management.

Mac an Ghaill (1994) argues that each in their own way constituted and performed models of masculinity that contribute to the overall process of re-masculinisation of the school environment triggered by reforms of the curriculum and organisation of schools. Interestingly, it is the New Entrepreneurs who are identified as being in the ascendancy, their style being characterised by increasing levels of de-personalisation in relations with students. Dillabough (1999:374) agrees with this analysis, connecting neo-liberal discourses in teacher professionalism with earlier Kantian and Cartesian definitions of teachers as being 'a rational, instrumental actor'. She goes on to explain

(Dillabough 1999:375) how personal and professional aspects of identity become separated as follows:

> Broadly speaking, this more general view of professional identity is characterised in terms of the teacher's 'rational' capacity to 'behave competently' in the name of student achievement, and social and economic change. This conception tends to be defined in terms of instrumentality of the teacher as reform agent and his/her role in subverting personal interests (eg. political concerns, personal wisdom) to accord with objective standards of practice.

In tracing the origins of the discourse incorporated in the neutral descriptions of the 'standards teacher' (Teacher Training Agency 2003), Dillabough (1999:376-77) argues that there are clear connections with patriarchy and the emergence of male rationality and reason as normative political ideals in liberal democratic societies.' Coleman (2003) argues that for individuals in leadership roles in schools there are some orthodoxies that are clearly connected to gender roles in some people's eyes. To defy the orthodoxy that expects male teachers to be manly and heterosexual invites punishment from students and staff alike. Given this expectation it is hardly surprising that in some classrooms, some very clear messages about masculinity are communicated (Mac an Ghaill 1994, Francis and Skelton 2001). For some male teachers this involves the deployment of sexist, misogynistic and homophobic discourses in interactions with students and colleagues.

Given this complex and sometimes supportive, sometimes hostile social landscape, the intriguing question that underpins this particular piece of research is how do non-heterosexual teachers negotiate their role and existence?

In the next chapter I begin the process of narrating and discussing the research design.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN: CHOICES AND METHODS

'Progress in human affairs is not like progress in physical sciences: as we begin to see the lines on which to design a strategy for solving the puzzle, the puzzle itself is changed.'

Stenhouse (1980: 244)

Introduction: Research Design

In their introduction to 'strategies of inquiry', Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 368) pose four basic questions in relation to the design of any research project:

> a. How will the design connect with the paradigm or perspective being used? That is, how will the empirical materials be informed by and interact with the paradigm in question?
>
> b. How will these materials allow the researcher to speak to the problems of praxis and change?
>
> c.   Who or what will be studied?
>
> d. What methods or research tools will be used for collecting and analyzing empirical materials?

Marshall and Rossman (1999: 24) complement these questions by identifying seven elements in terms of research design, namely: overall approach and rationale, site or population selection, data-gathering methods, data analysis procedures, trustworthiness, personal biography, ethical and political considerations.

In structuring the following two chapters, I have synthesized the above questions and elements as follows:

In Chapter 3 I will construct a rationale for the use of my chosen research paradigm. I then go on to consider the trustworthiness of qualitative data. The origins of the research questions are described and key pieces of learning from the pilot interview are then discussed, including ethical considerations. I then turn my attention to the more technical aspects of the design process by addressing participant recruitment, data-gathering methods, data analysis procedures.

The quotation from Stenhouse (1980) at the start of this chapter reveals ways in which research is a dynamic process, often posing new challenges as the process

unfolds. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the ways in which I have worked as a bricoleur, devising methods that have responded to the evolving nature of the inquiry. Three methods are described: presenting data as narrative fiction, queering the data in the analysis and reviewing my researcher biography in order to reveal political implications for the process.

I begin by establishing a rationale for my choice of qualitative methodology.

3.1 Overall approach and rationale

3.1.1 Context and focus as influencing factors

Punch (1998:252) argues that a decision in any research enterprise is the choice of methodology which from the outset needs to form a good match with the phenomena under investigation. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define 'match' as the methodology that is most likely to produce the richest data from which the question can be considered in relation to information from the field. The quality of knowledge and understanding elicited has in turn implications for the researcher in speaking to the problems of praxis and change, an issue that is addressed in Chapter 10 of this thesis.

In presenting a rationale for the methodology and methods employed in this study, it is useful to return to the process of formulating the research questions to clarify the nature and scope of the phenomena under investigation.

3.1.2 Formulation of the research questions

In Chapter 1 of this thesis, I described the antecedents of this research and identified the moment of its germination as being the critical incident described in section 1.3.1. My reflection on this experience produced a very rich and extended set of perspectives that fired my curiosity about the experiences of other gay/bisexual men who are educators. The first step in formalizing these reflections began with their recording in the form of written text in my research journal. I subsequently extended my exploration by using a technique suggested by Evertson and Green (1995) which is designed to enable researchers at the beginning of the research process to identify and clarify the nature of the terrain that they are proposing to research. My adaptation of their technique produced six questions – see Appendix 4 – which generated a large number of responses that I recorded and then grouped into the key domains of gay identity, self-esteem, professional contexts and environments and interface with environment. The results of this exploratory process generated the main research aim and four sets of research aims and objectives. It became apparent that to investigate all of the domains identified in Appendix 4 would take the research beyond the word

limit of this thesis. As a result it was necessary to undertake a process of focussing that identified group d objectives on interface with environment as the main research objectives to be addressed in this study (see research question stated in the introduction and below). In exploring this specific territory, connections are also inevitably made to some of the issues identified in groups a-c of Appendix 4.

The objectives were then formulated into research questions as follows:

- **How do gay/bisexual men who are educators 'interface' with their environments in terms of the process of constructing and negotiating a gay-teacher identity?**

- **What is the role of past personal/professional experiences in constructing these complex identities?**

- **What are the mechanisms used to present these gay-teacher identities in education contexts and in gay community contexts?**

In Table 3.1 below I have attempted to sketch some of the main themes and issues that relate to the research questions. Some phrases are deliberately repeated as I see them as crossing over main thematic categories. The sequencing of the main categories of identity, human social environments and processes is also intentional as a starting point for an exploration of the question of main thematic category relations. It is interesting to ask if it is it sequential as the table suggests or is it less organised in terms of relationship and interaction?

**Table 3.1: Main Thematic Categories and Sub-themes related
to the Research Questions**

1. Identity:

constructions of self

personal identity, ie. sexual identity

professional identity, ie.teacher identity

historical influences on the evolution of identity

relationships between identities

↓

2. Human social environments:

concept of social-geographical space

professional space

personal space: private space

community space: public space

crossing interface between social environments

transitions from one social context to another: 'world travelling'

↓

3. Processes:

personal history

assessment and monitoring of social environment

deployment of self/selves in response to social environment

management of selves over time in social environments: negotiation of identity in
professional relationships

transitions from one social context to another: 'world travelling'

My reading of the themes described in the table above is that they describe profoundly human phenomena. Behind the themes is a search for an understanding of their characteristics and of their relatedness. There is a suggestion that there are complex processes at work here. These observations are important in that they provide useful information that informs the types of the data that needs to be collected. To gain any understanding of relatedness, complexity and processes in this research, the data that is required needs to be rich in detail.

The choice of qualitative research methodology in this case is intended to be sensitive and responsive to this requirement.

Hughes (2003:7) makes an important distinction between methodology and methods in research terminology:

> the term 'methodology' has a more philosophical meaning and usually refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research. Punch (1998:29) suggests that the method includes research design, data collection and data analysis. He notes that the noun methodology is more problematic. He states that 'technically, it [methodology] refers to the study of method(s), the overall analysis of how research proceeds...It is often used more loosely, as in the phrase "the research methodology of this study". In such a case "research method(s)" would be a more accurate term'.

Given that the way of working functions at two levels here ie. methodology and methods, I will now address each in turn.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003:3) assert that historically, from the start of the twentieth century onwards, two main research paradigms emerged, ie. the quantitative and qualitative traditions. In the literature, there are frequent references to the competitive nature of these research traditions (Atkinson 1997, Atkinson and Silverman 1997, Bochner 2001). Stereotypes also abound where quantitative research located in the positivist and post-positivist paradigms is portrayed as being the superior and dominant tradition which produces 'hard knowledge' and unquestionable 'truths' that carry greater political clout, (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, Hughes 2003). Conversely, qualitative research has been critiqued as being abstract, threatening to the positivist project of knowledge creation, lacking in rigour, merely producing a critique and 'soft knowledge'. All these descriptors may contain elements of familiarity and they are not particularly flattering to either tradition.

3.1.3 Previous research with gay and bisexual men as an influencing factor

In establishing a rationale for the choice of research methodology in this case, I want to begin by drawing on examples other recent research that has been made into the lives of gay/bisexual men living in the UK. Since the late 1980s a considerable amount of Department of Health funded research has been undertaken with gay/bisexual men, frequently with an HIV remit, (Hunt et al 1991, Hickson et al 1996, Hickson et al 2003). Initially, much of this research was exclusively quantitative in nature, reflecting the culture of the commissioning agency and the knowledge that was deemed important in the early stages of the HIV epidemic in the gay community. An example of such knowledge is the incidence of unsafe sexual activity that was ascertained from the completion of questionnaires issued to a large cohort of gay men (n = >1000), (Davies et al 1993). Hughes (2003:4) points to the ways in which quantitative

methods like these use a variety of sophisticated technical solutions such as statistical and sampling techniques to elicit evidence to show that the research findings are generalisable.

In contrast, more recently the same research team has deployed a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methodologies or exclusively qualitative methodology in research in this field. The reasons for this seem to emerge from the long term process of the research (over almost eighteen years) and the need to generate new types of knowledge. The early quantitative phase revealed gaps in understanding, eg. in relation to unsafe sexual behaviour. Findings suggested that this may be correlated to lower levels of self-esteem and lower levels of educational achievement (Hickson et al 2001). Qualitative methods have subsequently been used to research ways in which the lived experience of gay men is related to the quantitative findings. The phenomenon of isolation experienced by gay men living in rural areas or in new communities of asylum seekers and its connection with lower levels of self-esteem is not easily quantifiable – hence the choice of qualitative method in recent research with these groups, (Keogh at al 2004b).

3.1.4 Researcher biography as an influencing factor

Clearly, as can be seen from the above example, the issue of best-fit between the data to be collected and the methodology employed is a primary consideration in any research project. In this case my choice of qualitative methodology was influenced by four additional factors:

a. practical constraints, eg. time, budget

b. an interest in creativity and the use of multi-methods

c. the fact that as a person and as a gay man, I am deeply implicated in the research

d. the research questions, and the richest data that it is possible to collect

In terms of (a) above, the practical constraints of being a part-time unfunded doctoral student inevitably bring with them constraints of time and money. A large-scale quantitative study therefore seemed out of the question. Such considerations to one side, I need to state that the choice of qualitative methodology is deliberate and not by default. My own researcher biography reveals an academic interest in the field of human science that I can trace back to my undergraduate study. This training for a first degree in Geography at the University of Manchester in the 1970s was heavily

influenced by the drive to measure human and physical phenomena. Hence the bias towards the quantitative paradigm. My choice of undergraduate electives also gave an entrée into the more anthropological aspects of Human Geography and I was introduced to one North American city again and again in studies ranging from models of urban land use to sociological perspectives on migration. This was my first exposure to 'the Chicago school', still frequently referred to by historians of the qualitative paradigm to this day, (Bulmer 1984, Denzin and Lincoln 2000:1). I pursued an interest in creative media, particularly fiction, in my Postgraduate Certificate in Education course when I studied adolescence through literature.

The notion of narrative or story is deeply embedded in this research also, as the umbrella heading for several of the methods used. In Chapter 1 I reflected on its antecedents via a review of my own experience – the gay aspect of life story has been the focus of many similar published stories (Hall-Carpenter Archives 1989, Cant 1993, Davidovich 1996). The coming-out story is frequently portrayed by these sources as pivotal, life changing and profoundly significant for the individual. One of the significant developments for me, has been an interest in HIV/AIDS and gay rights in the form of political activism. The qualitative genre is a very broad church and within it some traditions welcome and embrace researcher subjectivity. I explore this in greater depth in Section 4.4 of Chapter 4.

3.1.5 Type of data as an influencing factor

In terms of the use of qualitative methods in generating rich data, there are frequent references to this in the literature (Dey 1993, Lather 1993, Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Mason (1996:4) asserts that:

> Qualitative research is...grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly 'interpretivist' in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted and understood, experienced or produced....Qualitative research aims to produce rounded understandings on the basis of rich, contextual and detailed data.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also point to the fact that qualitative research is multi-method and by implication, generates data that is both diverse and detailed. In terms of this research, Table 3.2 below summarises the methods used:

Table 3.2: Qualitative Methods used in this research

a. by the researcher on the researcher:
Reflexivity via:
- research journal
- mural construction
- narrative fiction construction

b. by the researcher with the participants:
- semi-structured interviews
- participant questionnaire on perceptions of the researcher
- participant feedback on the account

Some of the methods described above may not fit the concept of what constitutes qualitative data in some quarters of the academy. The process of mural making as a method (see section 4.3) involves the juxtaposition of visual as well as conventional written texts. Harper (2000), for example, notes that the field of visual sociology is very much in its early stage of development. Historically, photographic evidence as a type of data has been viewed with either scepticism or through an extremely conservative lens. Can such data be relied upon? The question of what constitutes trustworthy data in this research will be considered in the next section of this chapter.

3.2 Trustworthiness

A key component of any research design is the mechanism by which the data can be assessed and deemed to be reliable or trustworthy. This is probably the one statement on which all researchers would be agreed. What constitutes 'trustworthiness' has been the subject of intense debate both outside and within the qualitative paradigm. In this section I aim to:

a. briefly explore the difference between positivist post-modern perspectives on trustworthiness;
b. consider particular issues relating to the trustworthiness of narrative.

3.2.1 Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research: Positivist, Post-positivist and Post-modern Perspectives

Harper (2000:717) traces the origins of logical positivism to the sixteenth century when Roger Bacon suggested that observable data are the basis of knowledge. Bacon in turn based his insights on the rationalist philosophers of sixth century BC in ancient Greece. The potency of the positivist paradigm is evident in that it has both endured and dominated research to the present day. Its main manifestation is in the form of

the traditional 'hard' scientific method, which is based on the premise that data are measurable and that an objective reality exists. By proving or disproving hypotheses, conclusions can be reached that are then translated into generalizable truths. Hence, in the positivist tradition, validation is the process by which the quality of the data is verified via a numerical or factual triangulation of data, Hughes (2003:4) noting the role of technical solutions such as the use of statistical and sampling techniques in this process. There is no doubt that for some kinds of research in which data are quantifiable, eg. phenomena in the physical environment, the positivist model of validity is a potent and effective tool.

McLeod (2003) articulates an important tension when he points out that research into phenomena in human environments is quite different to that in the physical environment. Although some aspects of human activity and behaviour are easily quantifiable, other aspects are less so. The quality of human experience is a good example of this and one which tends to be investigated by researchers using the qualitative paradigm. In such cases, Richardson (2000), argues that given the absence of quantifiable data and clear reference points for numerical triangulation, the positivist concept of validity is neither applicable nor appropriate. This rather innocent observation belies a much greater tension that exists between positivist and post-modern scholars. Denzin and Lincoln (2003:9) note that the positivist and post-positivist traditions 'linger like long shadows over the qualitative research project'. Their assertion that positivism is intent on legislating one version of the truth over another communicates a sense of weariness felt by some scholars working in the qualitative paradigm. The labeling of qualitative research as 'soft research' or 'journalism' by positivist scholars, gives a sense of how important the issue of trustworthiness of data is. The last thirty years of rationalization and justification of trustworthiness within the qualitative methodology have had some important benefits too, Lather (1993) describing this as leading to 'a fertile obsession' with the issue.

The commencement of the project to find an alternative measure of trustworthiness to the positivist notion of validity can be traced back to the mid-1980s, to an era that Denzin and Linclon (2003) identify as the fourth moment or 'crisis of representation'. Tracing the debate that continues to this day, Denzin and Lincoln (2003:4) cite Denzin (1989a, 1989b); Fielding and Fielding (1986) and Flick (1992) as key writers in the evolution of the argument which is based on an alternative definition of triangulation. Their assertion is that triangulation is not a tool or strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. 'The combination of multi-methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study...adds rigour, breadth and depth to any investigation.' In short the trustworthiness of the data, is ensured via the depth of

exploration and the enhanced levels of rigour in the research process. I return to the issue of trustworthiness in Chapter 10.

3.3 Data gathering methods

3.3.1 The Primary Method: Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative research has traditionally used face to face tape recorded interviews with participants as a method for collecting data. Fontana and Frey (2000) note that the formal, rigid approach of the structured interview has given way to the more informal approach of the semi-structured or unstructured interview in the postmodern era. My decision to use semi-structured interviews as the primary tool for data collection in this research was influenced by the existing relationship that I had with the participants established at the conference workshops and the fact that I am bringing an agenda in the form of questions to this process.

Kvale (1996) argues that the construction of the interview schedule in terms of the content and sequence of questions is a key element in securing a rich body of data. In structuring the interview schedule used in this research, the notion of the interview as a process was foremost in my mind. In this, participants are taken through a sequence of interactions with the researcher that progress the conversation from introduction, main part of the interview and finally to closure. The way in which this is adapted for this research context is outlined in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3 Interview schedule summary

- Introduction, information about the research, myself as a researcher and ethical issues.
- biographical questions using a chronological structure, eg.experience of school and family; experience of higher education
- questions exploring sexual identity
- questions exploring educator identity: PGCE and early educating years; recent experience
- questions exploring interface issues
- open-ended questions leading to closure

Kong et al (2002: 241-242) in their review of the changing nature of same-sex experience interviews document three eras of interview technique, ie. traditional, modernizing and post-modern. The traditional and modernizing categories are critiqued for being highly positivist and distanced in relation to the former and for being overly concerned with the 'coming out story' in relation to the latter. Clearly,

both approaches have limitations. Kong et al (2002:241) argue for a postmodern approach to interviewing in which the interview schedule uses:

> Fragmenting; de-essentialised questions, often going well beyond the issue of homosexualities, 'queering' the field.

Although the structure detailed in Table 3.3 does reflect some of characteristics of the modernist interview by employing a chronological sequence in part, the scope of the questions goes beyond an assumption and concern with gay sexuality into other aspects of identity and their relationship with social and professional environments.

3.3.2 Experience and learning from the pilot interview

Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) identify a number of advantages of conducting a pilot interview which is likened to a 'dress rehearsal' for the real thing. It provides an opportunity for numerous elements of the whole process to be tested and experimented with, that go way beyond the content of the interview schedule. Kong et al (2002) note that the relationship with the researcher in research with lesbian and gay participants is particularly significant, in that it constitutes part of the ethical execution of the interview. In this scenario, they argue, the transmission of empathy is a helpful climate-setting quality in the process. Kong et al (2002:241) note that interviewers working within the postmodern paradigm may present as an 'out' gay or lesbian interviewer and that there is then a sense of mutuality 'between interviewer and subject who is seen as a potential friend'. This notion of proximity also extends to the prior relationship between researcher and participants. Given the close overlap of individuals, roles and community spaces, the potential for the existence of a prior relationship is quite high. In the pilot interview for this research, this was indeed the case. 'Richard' (pseudonym) is a gay man and secondary school headteacher I met when we both participated as members of a professional development group. He accepted my invitation to be the participant in my pilot interview which was conducted in the evening in a private space away from the work of the group.

Some months after the interview I sent him a copy of a paper in which I had started to identify and interpret some of the themes in his narrative. The result was an immediate and very angry response culminating with a statement that he was withdrawing from the project. So what went wrong? In my review of the incident I noted in my research journal that Richard was aggrieved because:

- He had not expected the focus to be on him
- He had not expected to be subjected to that level of detailed analysis
- He was not consulted by me at all post interview
- He had thought that I was just trying out the questions and not collecting data.

Research journal 18.11.97

In the same journal entry I noted my own response to this scenario which was one of disorientation, bewilderment and distress. How did things go so disastrously wrong?

3.3.3 Ethical issues

In retrospect I think that there was an element of naivety in the way that I approached the pilot interview. Kirsch (1999:26), in an uncomfortable resonance with the scenario described above notes that:

> As researchers and participants get acquainted, establish trust and friendship, they become vulnerable to misunderstanding, disappointment and invaded privacy. It can lead amongst other things to false intimacies, fraudulent friendships, a deceptiveness over equal relationships and a masking of power.

Goodson (1991) describes research as a tricky terrain which is inequitably structured and Sparkes (1994) acknowledges the potential power imbalance of the advantaged researcher working with disadvantaged research subjects.

Kong et al (2002:253) note that the establishment of borders and boundaries and levels of clarity surrounding them is another key element in the ethical treatment of participants. What stands out for me when I re-read Richard's grievances is that there was a major difference between myself and Richard in the way that we were seeing the pilot interview. My memory of our initial conversation supports Richard's assertion that I wanted to try out the questions. In my defence, before deleting and destroying all electronic and hard copy evidence of the interview in accordance with Richard's wishes, I note that I changed my opening statement in our interview about our contract. In this, I widened the boundary to include the option of including the interview transcript in the greater corpus of data that was to be collected. In a way, this is a merely a technicality. The key issue is that the seeds of misunderstanding had been sown and the differences in our expectations were established.

Richard is also correct in his assertion that he was not consulted between being interviewed and being shown some interpretations of his narrative. This revealed to me something about the importance of the opportunity for participants to experience a sequential process of knowledge assimilation in the project. I did not give Richard this

opportunity, hence the enhanced 'shock factor' of seeing 'my life, and my words in print'.

Richard's other observation that he had not expected to be the sole focus of any analysis also raises issues relating to who is presented in any piece of research. Kong et al (2002) note that the third element of ethical interviewing is the self-presentation of the researcher. This has implications both for the way in which the researcher presents to the participant in the interview and the way that the researcher is presented in the account of the research. In this case, the focus on Richard with no reference to the positioning or biography of myself inevitably put the spotlight on him, no doubt enhancing his sense of exposure and vulnerability. Interestingly, Richard likened the experience to being exposed by the tabloids, and I had been aware of a parallel process in my researcher role, of the temptation to give in to a 'journalistic tendency' to get a good story.

For his part, the conclusion of his brief involvement in this project was Richard's strong sense of betrayal, a research phenomenon identified by Smith (1996). For my part, this was undoubtedly one of the most challenging moments of this whole project. Emotionally it was also a very low point. I felt that somehow I had managed to facilitate the polar opposite of what my principles and life experience said I would want as ethical research.

In the months that followed this episode, some positive outcomes began to emerge. In supervision meetings, the steepness and richness of the learning curve was acknowledged, the interview being referred to as ' what a pilot!'. I have identified three key pieces of learning:

a.   Never to assume that data might not be sensitive. I now see my data as an open box of fireworks. Therefore, metaphorically speaking, health and safety considerations become very important. This means that:

b.   the relationship with the research subject should not end at the termination of the interview. Responses, checking out, double checking out are crucial. Procedures to enable the above need to be established.

c.   clarity of researcher positioning is really important. This not only makes sense of the account in political terms, but throws light on the influences that lead researchers to formulate the interpretations that they reach.

Actions that were taken in response to points (a) and (b) above are:

i.   all participants were sent two copies of their interview transcript. One copy
        was for them to retain. I asked them to note on the other copy any
        corrections of transcription inaccuracies and/or sections that they did not
        want me to include in the account. Because two participants did not return
        their corrected transcripts, their data was not analysed or included in the
        total corpus.

ii.   in cases where their accounts were drawn on more extensively, participants
        were consulted about the interpretations that I made.

iii.   in the case of the narrative fiction data (see sections 4.1; 7.3), the
        participant who is partly the main focus was consulted and feedback was
        elicited from him (see section 7.3)

iv.   all participants were invited to share their perceptions of me as a
        researcher.

Actions taken in response to point (c) above are:

i.   The researcher biography and positioning is included and explored in
        sections 4.3 that describes the mural method and in section 5.2 that clearly
        locates the mural data as the first chapter in the overall account.

ii.   The learning from the mural technique is brought to the queering of the
        data technique that forms the basis for the discussion in each chapter of the
        account.

It is my hope that the above actions will enable me to walk the tightrope as identified
by Barone (1992), in engaging in honest, responsible and critical story telling.

3.3.4 Technical issues

The pilot interview also raised a number of technical issues relating to the execution of
the interviews. It was clear that a quiet, private location with minimal background
noise away from interruption provided the optimal conditions. In reality, the interview
environments differed greatly in relation to these ideal conditions. Participants were
given a choice of either being interviewed in a venue chosen by them or at my

university base. The majority chose their own home, none chose their work base and two opted to be interviewed at my base.

Consideration was given to the overall shape of the interview and the sequence of questions in facilitating the transition through a process. The initial interview schedule was informed by a mixture of questions distilled from the technique described in section 3.1.2 and by a reading of Burke (1993) which explores the experiences of lesbian and gay police officers. Following the pilot interview, some questions were edited out, being replaced by new ones that were more flexible and responsive to the narrative being told by participants. These questions were designed to be open-ended, responses then being capable of being expanded via the use of supplementary probe and follow-up questions.

As a result of the pilot interview, the interaction with participants was also made more straightforward beginning with the explanation of procedures and ethical considerations. Consideration was given to how much personal information I wanted to divulge in my researcher role beyond the information disclosed during the conference workshop from which the majority of the participants had been recruited. I decided to keep this a minimum until after the interview had been conducted when I would say more about my experiences if direct questions were forthcoming.

Participants were then asked a number of warm-up questions leading to a description of a short biography. This was invaluable in providing an overview that could be returned to via questions that addressed experiences of family, schooling and higher education, their awareness of sexuality and their experiences of initial teacher training. The real 'meat' of the interview was then addressed, a series of questions exploring identity and deployment in both work place contexts and gay community contexts. A number of reflective, warm-down questions then led to the conclusion of the interview.

As the interviews progressed I developed the skill of communicating the impression of intent listening. I literally relaxed my grip on the interview schedule which was reorganised on to a more easily accessible two sides of A4 paper. I realised that I could facilitate via the use of minimal encouragement, participants communicating information without my having to ask the questions. This greater trust in the process also extended to practical concerns over the tape, microphone, battery levels, all of which were a considerable source of initial anxiety.

3.4   Recruiting participants for the research

3.4.1 The participant cohort

The initial cohort of participants for this study consisted of seventeen gay/bisexual men who are educators. The choice of the umbrella term 'educator' is deliberate as the participants work in a variety of phases and contexts within education. Twelve participants were recruited in the first instance at two conferences, one hosted by a teacher union, the other by a national organization providing support for lesbian and gay teachers. At each conference a one hour workshop session (see Appendix 5), offering participants the opportunity to explore the ways in which they manage their gay identity in education environments, was provided. This was followed by an invitation to participate in this research. A further five participants were recruited via word of mouth from the initial group, bringing the total to seventeen. The loss of contact with two participants and the withdrawal of the pilot interviewee reduced this number to a final cohort of fourteen participants.

3.4.2 Introduction of the participants

In this section I will introduce each participant via a short pen portrait. The details of names, locations, roles have been changed in all cases to preserve anonymity. The essence of each biography in terms of self-descriptors and life events has been retained however.

Dominic is an experienced teacher in his forties who has worked for many years in an urban Catholic co-educational secondary school. He is not officially out to his colleagues at work although he has confided in some of them who are close friends. He has been married and now lives alone. He is currently is in a relationship with a partner he has been seeing for some time.

Ed identifies himself as bisexual and works as music specialist in a primary school in an inner city location. He is in his thirties and came late to teaching after having worked as an IT specialist before going to university where he became very involved in student politics. He now has two main passions: the teaching of music and activism in LGBT politics which he has promoted via a number of high profile ways in the media.

Gareth is a gay man in his twenties who works for a charitable project that delivers HIV/AIDS education in a variety of contexts. He has extensive experience of delivering this in various urban secondary schools where he is integrated into the Sex and Relationships Education programme as a visiting worker.

Gary is a gay man in his twenties and is a newly qualified teacher who was interviewed at the end of his PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) year in a UK university. Prior to embarking on the PGCE course, Gary travelled extensively and worked in a variety of jobs. His education-related work has included teaching in English language schools overseas and he has recently completed his long teaching practice in a secondary school in an old mining area of Yorkshire.

Ian is a gay man in his late fifties who has now retired from teaching and is now enjoying the lifestyle he felt unable to live while he was working in education. He worked for many years as a Head of Technology with a major pastoral role in various secondary schools in different areas of the UK. He now enjoys writing and gardening and been in a relationship with his partner for two years.

Jim is a gay man in his forties who works as a secondary school teacher, close to the town in which he was born in South Wales. His entry into the profession was via the independent sector, and following a series of promotions, he made his way to become headteacher of one of the UK's most prestigious preparatory schools. After the breakdown of his marriage and a struggle with alcoholism, Jim made a recovery and has re-entered teaching, this time in the state sector as a teacher of young people with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

Julian is a gay man in his thirties who works as a Humanities teacher in a secondary school in London. He was in his early twenties when he went to university in the northeast and at this time identified himself as gay. Julian began an ongoing interest in green politics, joining Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and a recycling co-operative. Following the demise of the co-op and the departure of some of his close friends, Julian decided to apply for a PGCE course. He has occupied his present post for two years.

Lee is a gay man in his thirties who currently works as an English teacher in a secondary school in the Southwest. His family is Chinese and originated from Hong Kong, although Lee himself was born in the UK. His coming out occurred after his initial teacher training and although he is close to his family, he is not out to any family member.

Michael is a gay man in his early late thirties who works as a reception teacher at a residential school for teenage boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties. His professional journey to his current post has been extremely varied, working in the

professional theatre as a children's theatre coordinator at a large provincial theatre, with an outreach remit going into schools. Following his PGCE primary training, Michael then worked for six years in a primary school and a hospital school, working with terminally ill children and psychiatrically disturbed children before taking up his present post.

Paul is a gay man in his early fifties who teaches in a suburban boys secondary school. He trained to be a teacher in the late 1960s and has extensive experience of working in a variety of posts. He has been out to many friends and colleagues for many years and has been an activist in a teacher union for much of his professional career. At the moment he describes himself as 'between relationships'.

Robin is a gay man in his twenties who is now a newly qualified teacher. He teaches Religious Education and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) in an inner city secondary school in Merseyside. His coming out ran in parallel with initial teacher training and he developed an extensive support network based around a university lesbian and gay society.

Russ is a deputy headteacher in his forties who works in a large suburban comprehensive school in the west of England. He began his career fifteen years ago and has held a variety of posts in schools and as a researcher in Higher Education. He has been in the current relationship with his partner for ten years. He is out to most of his family, friends and colleagues.

Seb is a gay man in his thirties who teaches English in a secondary school. Despite his relative newness to the profession, Seb has already worked in three different schools in a variety of contrasting locations. He sees both his sexuality and his spirituality as being important dimensions in his life and he has been with his current partner for eight years.

Tom is a gay man in his forties who worked in business before coming into teaching. Following his initial teacher training he took up posts in various Further Education colleges and currently co-ordinates one of the vocational departments within his institution. He lives alone and is not keen on going out on the gay scene which he finds ageist and excluding. Socially he mixes with a mix of gay and straight friends.

3.5 Data analysis procedures

3.5.1 Types of data collected

Three different types of data were collected and are used within the thesis. These are:

(a)   Written data

- Interview transcript: this consists of a transcript which was made from the tape of a semi-structured interview. In addition interview notes and diagrams from the transcript were made

- Research journal data: this contains field notes made by the researcher in note books

- Mural data: photocopied text – see section 5.2.2

- Narrative fiction: text and schematizations

- Participant's personal diary

- Researcher's personal diary

- Participant feedback on perceptions of researcher

(b)   Diagrammatic data

- Codes and categories diagrams from NUD.IST

- Mural: schematization

- Narrative fiction: schematizations

(c)   Audio/Visual data

- Tapes of semi-structured interviews

- Mural data: photographs

- Mural in completed collage form

- Mural reflections in form of video conversation with colleague

- Lowry technique: photographs of transparencies.

3.5.2 Interview Transcript Data: Processing via NUD.IST

The main body of interview data is contained in text contained in the interview transcripts. Dey (1993) points out that one of the great virtues of this format is the potential for being very rich in detail. Such data also brings challenges, however, ranging from its organization and management to the abstraction of meaning. Weitzman (2000) and Seale (2002) both document the growing interest in the use of information technology in the process of qualitative research, particularly in responding to the challenges outlined above. To meet these challenges I elected to use the QSR NUD.IST 4 computer software. The scope of the function of this software is apparent in the acronym NUD.IST, which stands for **N**on-numeric **U**nstructured **D**ata. **In**dexing **S**earching **T**heorizing.

In selecting QSR NUD.IST 4, my decision was influenced by what Gahan and Hannibal (1998:1-2) identify as its assets, namely, speed of coding, versatility of retrieval and potency as an aid to creative thinking in the mind of the researcher. Weitzman (2000: 806) cautions the academy by stipulating the limitations of current computer software and Gahan and Hannibal (1998:1) are clear that the programme is primarily a tool kit for the researcher. What such devices do not do is attach meaning to any source of data, this function remaining firmly in the hands of the researcher.

The ascribing of meaning to data using NUD.IST is a sequential process. At this point, I will briefly state an overview of the four phases in which the interview transcript data was processed.

- **Phase one**: reading of hard copies of each interview transcript

- **Phase two**: total data corpus loaded into NUD.IST programme; transcripts then coded and categories established

- **Phase three**: identification and selection of a smaller number of categories to respond to the main research questions identified in the introduction.

- **Phase four**: detailed analysis within the new set of categories.

Given the complex nature of these processes, I will now explain each phase in turn beginning with phase two.

Phase Two: Coding and Categorising

Dey (1993) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) note that the process of coding and categorizing of data are techniques of long standing that qualitative researchers employ to ascribe meaning to units of text. Prior to coding taking place, preparation work has to take place within NUD.IST in the form of the creation of a project within the programme. This is followed by the loading into the project of the transcripts documents in electronic form. Once the project is established, the coding process proceeds in a very similar way to the more conventional use of hard copies and highlighter pens. Central to the notion of coding, is the notion of a 'data bit', (Dey 1993:17). In simple terms, this represents a unit of text of varying length, which the researcher using NUD.IST processes in the following ways:

- **Step 1**: a reading of a section of text identifies it as having a particular meaning, thus constituting a data bit.

- **Step 2**: the boundaries of the data bit are identified.

- **Step 3**: a node is created - in NUD.IST this is a numerical assignation

- **Step 4**: the text of the data bit is pasted into the node

The example below from the data [Robin] illustrates this process:

Data bit

> Hmm, I think the fact that its never mentioned really, is my observation of schools that I've never, conscious of seeing anything, you know, posters or positive discussions about homosexuality, is um testament to the fact that it must be a taboo subject. I mean you hear racist comments don't you, and they get shot down, or you hear equal opportunities people talking about how, particularly at the moment, you know, why are boys under achieving, and all these sort of things. These are obviously problems and issues that need tackling, but homosexuality is not one of them, it's not on anyone's agenda.

Node

5127

Node title

School ethos

In many respects the process of analysis is initiated even at this early stage of node creation. The researcher is confronted with the task of organizing a set of accumulating nodes into some kind of system. This automatically triggers thought processes that address the nature of each node and the relationships that may exist between them. When creating a new node, two options are available to the researcher in the task of assigning its location. The first is to attach it to the root or branches of existing nodes; alternatively, new nodes can be created as free standing units which may form the basis of a new root and branch system.

Figure 3.1 on the next page illustrates the root and branch system that was created in the phase two processing of the transcript data. When this is read in conjunction with table 3.4, it is apparent that the data has not just been organized spatially but that there is also an emerging hierarchy of categories. The use of symbols in the table indicates the various levels within the hierarchy.

Figure 3.1: Turing Project NUD.IST root and branch system

Tree Display at 5:relations   3/15/ 5 17:27:42
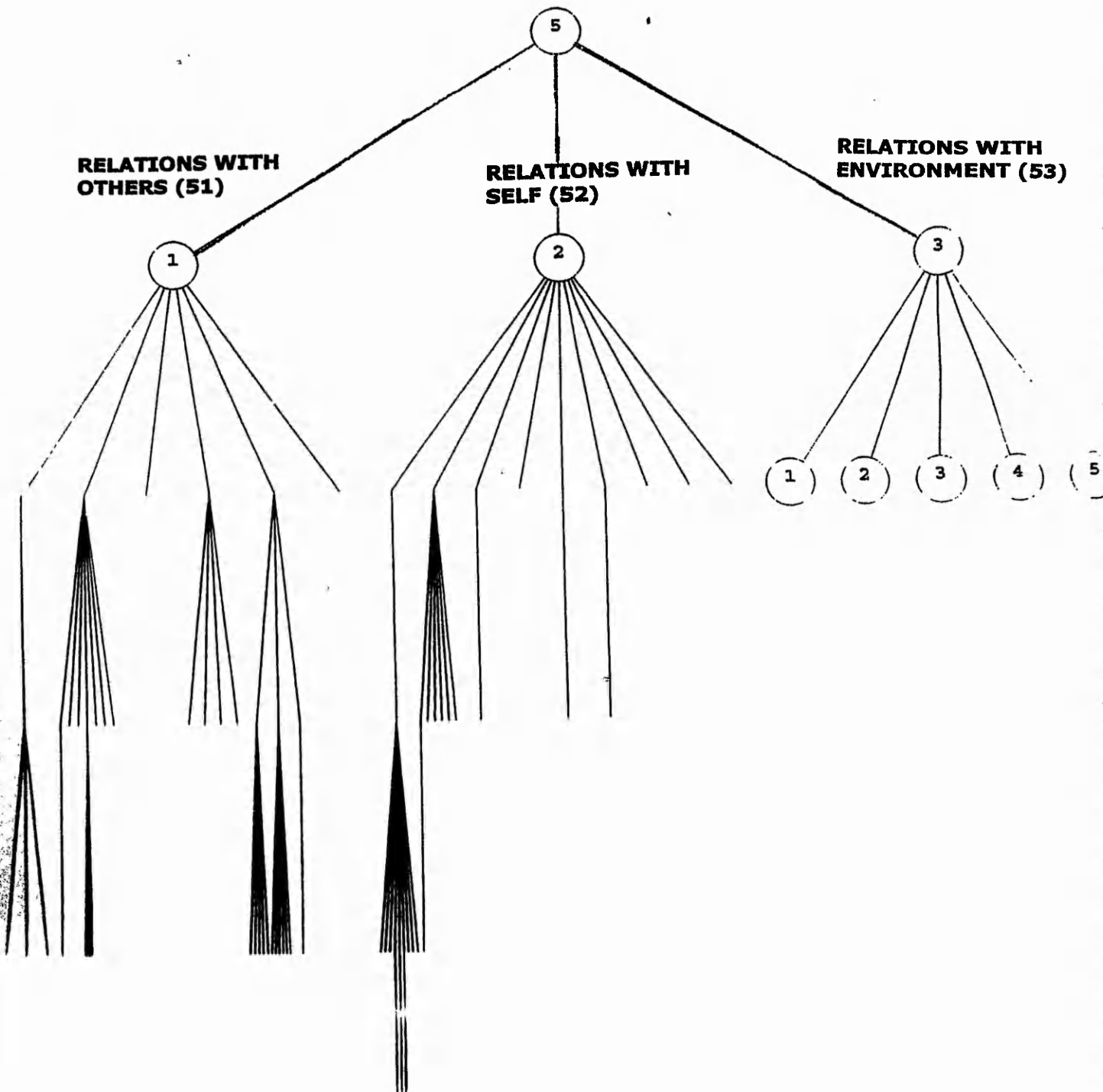
Table 3.4 Turing Project NUD.IST Categories: Main Index

KEY FOR THE USE OF SYMBOLS IN THE INDEX BELOW:
CAPITIAL LETTERS EMBOLDENED = level 1 category
Lower case emboldened = level 2 category
Lower case = level 3 category
{ emboldened bracket followed by lower case = level 1 node
{{ two brackets followed by lower case = level 2 node
{{{ three brackets followed by lower case = level 3 node

FIGURES eg. Gay scene 52111 refer to NUD.IST code

RELATIONS WITH ENVIRONMENT [53]

Home town 531

Ambition 532

School 533

Perceptions 534

Other work 535

RELATIONS WITH SELF [52]
Gay identity 521
{{Gay scene 52111
{{Gay friends 52112
{{Coming out 52113
{{Self esteem 52114
{{{Alcohol 521141
{{Interface between gay identity and education 52115
{{{Support groups 521151
{{Evolving awareness 52116
{{Gay identity and race 52117
{{Violence 52118
{{Gay harbours

Teacher identity 522
{Self esteem as a teacher 5221
{{Negative experiences/self esteem 52211
{{Motivation (positive and negative) in the job 5222
{{Critical incidents
{{Relations with self 5224
{{Persona of teacher created for the job 5225
{{Perceptions of education 5226

Life in a nutshell 523
{Addictions 5231

Class identity 524

Spirituality 525
{Self esteem 5251

Political 526
{Union 5261

Race 527

Reflections on self 528

Masculinity 529

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS [51]
Gay with partners 511
{Public sex environments (PSEs) 5111
{{Rent 51111
{{Cottaging 51112
{{Cruising 51113

Teacher self and others 512
{Teacher self and pupils 5121:
{{Teacher self and critical incidents with pupils 51211

experience of PGCE 5122

{With Colleagues 5124
{{Critical incidents with colleagues 51241
{{With male colleagues 51242
{{With female colleagues 51243
{{With Black colleagues 51244
{{With colleagues living with HIV 51245
{Harassment 5125
{Outside support 5126
{Perceptions of school ethos/school environment 5127

Friends 513

Women 514
{With female partners 5141
{With friends 5142
{With women generally 5143
{With children 5144

With others 516
{With others in the family 5161
{{Homophobia in family 51611
{{Relations with siblings 51612
{{Hobbies whilst at home 51613
{{Relations with parents 51614
{{Talk of sex/sexuality in the family 51615

{With others at school as a pupil 5162
{{Experience of bullying 51621
{{Ethos of school 51622
{{Friends at school 51623
{{Sex and relationships education received 51624
{{Adolescence 51625
{{Relations with teachers 51626

{With others whilst in higher education 5163
{{Friendships with others when in higher education 51631

Bisexual 517

3.5.3 Developing a focused analysis

In Phase 3 of the data processing, the root and branch system of NUD.IST nodes was scrutinized for categories that have the potential to provide the most useful data to the research questions. As a result, the full list of categories (Table 3.4) was reduced to a smaller number of categories (Table 3.5). The thinking behind this strategy is that it provides a targeted focus for the process of detailed analysis. As a point of principle, however, I elected to retain the option of making forays into the wider data corpus. This feels important as the understanding of phenomena could be qualified by perspectives from further afield. Table 3.5 below shows the focused set of data categories used in the analysis.

Table 3.5: Data Analysis: focused data set by NUD.IST category

NUD.IST code	Category
5225	Persona
526	Political
5261	Union
528	Reflections on
529	Masculinity
52115	Interface
52111	Gay Scene
5121	Pupils
51211	Pupils critical incidents
5124	Colleagues
51241	Colleagues
51242	Colleagues/male
51243	Colleagues/female
51244	Colleagues/black
51245	Colleagues/HIV
52113	Coming Out
52114	Self-esteem
52116	Evolving awareness
5125	Harassment
5127	School ethos
511	Partners
5111	Rent
51112	Cottaging
521113	Cruising

In moving into the next stage of the analysis it became clear that a mechanism or strategy was required to surface the full extent of the landscape of meaning. In the spirit of the qualitative tradition I then began to look for creative ways of devising appropriate tools. The account of this process of bricolage follows in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODS AS BRICOLAGE

[In Research a bricoleur is a] 'Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do it yourself person' Levi-Strauss (1966:17)

Introduction

Weinstein and Weinstein (1991) assert that qualitative researchers need to be *bricoleurs* in the process of researching. This term, which has been appropriated from the original French meaning of 'do-it-yourself', implies an element of improvisation in the execution of a task. Denzin and Lincoln (2001:4) formalize this notion by arguing that researchers need to be flexible and responsive to the evolving process by deploying new methods. The metaphor of 'professional artisan' is further extended by describing the qualitative researcher as a maker of quilts, thus implying a constructive, sequential and formative process. The resultant quilt or bricolage is 'a pieced together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation'. My aim in structuring the sections that follow is to explain my attempt to use methods in a sequential and responsive way in this research.

4.1   Bricolage method one: narrative fiction

In this context, the research questions being investigated relate to complex relationships between sexual identity, professional identify and the use of geographical space. These issues, apart from being challenging to communicate, are also highly sensitive. The participants in this research spoke at length about both their professional lives and to a lesser extent about their personal sexual lives. Given the fragmented nature of this data, I have chosen to synthesise and fictionalise this into a short piece of narrative fiction entitled 'Walking After Midnight', which I present in Chapter 7.

4.1.1 Blurred genres: fact and fiction

The precedent for the use of this technique can be traced back to what Denzin and Lincoln, (2003:18) identify as the third moment in qualitative research: 'the blurred genres' during the period 1970-1986. Winter et al (1999) argue that up until this period traditional scientific approaches to working with data had excluded more artistic, creative approaches. The imagination is a good example of this, which has been neglected by educational researchers as an investigative tool.

In establishing a rationale for the use of narrative fiction in educational research, Winter et al (1999:1) note that the word fiction has a double meaning. The more commonly ascribed meaning refers to 'events that didn't actually happen, characters that don't actually exist, ie. a sort of fantasy – as opposed to the "facts" or "theory" of non-fiction'. The second meaning of the creation of fiction is 'to shape or to mould', hence implying a process of exploration and reflection on the meaning of experience. Clough (2002:8) develops this rationale when he states:

> Narrative is useful only to the extent that it opens up to its audiences a deeper view of life in familiar contexts: it can make the familiar strange, and the strange familiar. As a means of educational report, stories can provide a means by which those truths, which cannot otherwise be told, are uncovered. The fictionalization of educational experience offers researchers the opportunity to import fragments of data from various real events in order to speak to the heart of social consciousness – thus providing the protection of anonymity to the research participants without stripping away the rawness of real happenings.

Winter et al (1999) note that a defining characteristic of the narrative form is that stories should have a beginning, a middle and an end, frequently being organised on temporal lines. Thus in most literary texts, even when the ending is left fairly open-ended, there is none the less a temporary closure to the story. Given that the purpose of narrative fiction in educational research is to facilitate reflexivity and exploration in the mind of the reader, a practical challenge of writing such texts is to find a format that does not terminate this process. The solution offered by Winter et al (1999:9) is the patchwork medium in which 'the overall pattern is gradually assembled from smaller pieces, each of which has its own individual pattern'. Thus, the texts which constitute 'Walking After Midnight' in section 7.3 are an amalgam of voices and sources of data.

4.1.2 Composition and schematization

Clough (2002) offers a technique for giving transparency to the process of narrative composition by offering a model for a schematisation (see Table 4.1). In this, units of meaning, data sources and data methods are outlined for characters, environments and events. Please note that all details of names of individuals and locations have been changed or anonymised. Unless otherwise stated, professional and personal experience refers to my experience.

**Table 4.1: Schematization of the data sources for 'Walking After Midnight'
Adapted from Clough, P. (2002:72)**

Unit of Meaning	Data Source	Data Method
Narrative Title:	Hall Carpenter Archives (1989)	citation
Character: **Andy Jeffers**	professional experience	observation/memory/ experience/imagination/ projection
	Tom [participant]	transcribed interview
Character: **Daniel**	professional experience	observation/memory/ experience/imagination/ projection
Character: **Johnthe-gayskinhead**	internet personal experience	citation observation
Character: **Jo**	professional experience	observation/memory/ experience/imagination/
Character: **Sean**	personal experience	observation/memory/ experience/imagination/
	Keogh et al (2004)	Research report

Table 4.1: continued

Unit of Meaning	Data Source	Data Method
Environment: **Classroom:**	professional experience	observation/memory/ experience/imagination/
Environment: **Cruising area**	Johnthegayskinhead tv news item researcher experience Biddulph (2004)	citation memory observation/memory/ experience /imagination/
Environment: **Bus Station**	personal experience	observation/memory/ experience/imagination/
Event: **End of term lesson**	professional experience	
Event: **Cruising**	researcher experience	observation/memory experience/imagination/
	Coxon (1996:127)	research report
Event: **Missed meeting**	personal experience	observation/memory/ experience/imagination/

In this instance, the patchwork text consists of four elements. Three of these are separate aspects of the same story linked by having the same central character, Andy Jeffers. In Table 4.1 I detail the sources for this character, Andy being a composite of myself, Tom (participant) and another colleague encountered in my past professional experience. The other characters are either sourced from my past personal or professional experience or in the case of Johnthegayskinhead [spacing deliberately removed], sourced from the internet. The character of Sean, was also developed by drawing on an additional source, ie. the research of Keogh et al (2004a) into the experiences of working class gay and bisexual men.

In terms of environments, again professional experience features strongly, particularly in text 1. 'End of Term'. The environment described in text 2 'Sleeping Bream' is an amalgam of my observations of the cruising area photographed in the mural (see section 5.2.1 in chapter five) and the work of Coxon (1996) into the nature of public sex environments.

Text 4 is much more of a reflexive response to texts 1-3. In this text, I present two voices, that of myself and Tom, who kindly gave his responses to texts 1-3. Text 4 was conceived separately and at a later point to texts 1-3 and was triggered by a reading of a story (Dent 2002) and reflections made upon it by the researcher and her participant in the form of an afterword (Ellis and Dent 2002). This feels like a good solution to the problem of what to say to the reader about any piece of narrative fiction after it has been read. The danger here, however, is that researchers may interfere with the reader's hermeneutic response by being too prescriptive in their interpretations of characters and events retrospectively. In finding the voice for Max and Tom in text 4, I have deliberately engaged 'the conversational' as distinct from 'the academic', in an attempt to show that this constitutes data, rather than a more distant discussion of its implications

4.1.3 Mechanisms for discussion
 In their discussion of how to make sense of life stories, Goodley et al (2004:111) suggest that 'they need to be located in wider theoretical considerations'. Sparkes (1996) in his reflections on the character of gay PE teacher 'Alexander', discusses a series of 'matters arising from the story' in the form of 'moments'. Clough (2002) and Goodley at al, (2004) both offer a series of 'readings' in relation to their stories. The common denominator in both approaches is that there is a distance made between the content of the stories and the subsequent discussion of the issues that arise from them.

In an attempt to create this distancing, I have modified Clough's (2002) technique of presenting schematizations to include one which identifies a series of themes emerging from each of the texts (see Appendix 7). This informs the subsequent discussion in section 7.4.

4.2   Bricolage method two: Lowry Technique and link to Queer Theory
In chapter three I described the sequential nature of my research strategy, culminating in data generated by NUD.IST focussed on particular categories. I will now go on to explain in two parts, the evolution of a technique that I have devised for analysing the data from the narratives. In the first part (4.2.1), I will explore the theoretical origins of queer theory and in the second (4.2.3) I will use an extract from my research journal as a starting point to explain how it is possible to practically 'queer the data' in this research.

4.2.1 The Evolution of Queer Theories

Hall (2003) and Gamson (2001) trace the evolution of queer theories over the last fifteen years to a number of socio-political movements that subsequently influenced theoretical thinking in the academy. The reference to the plural here, ie. queer *theories,* is deliberate in that currently there are a plethora of paradigms, perspectives and contexts in which theories are being applied that may be labelled as queer. The definition of queer theories and their relevance to the data analysis in this research is a complex task. I have therefore divided the text below into segments each of which addresses an important aspect of what queer means in theoretical terms.

(a) Socio-political Roots: Activism and Same Sex Diversity

To understand what this might mean within the overall context of postmodernism, it is helpful to return to the political movement in which queer theories have their roots. Queer politics emerged in the United States as a powerful voice in the early 1990s. From the outset it was angry and controversial - some of the anger being generated by groups of activists such as ACT-UP who campaigned against apparent government indifference and lack of action to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Queer Nation, the social and political lobbying group established in New York by Michelangelo Signorile in 1990, was characterised by the fact that it was a coalition of previously separate groups who saw themselves as being outside the mainstream of the gay community. The visible presence of this coalition challenged previous assumptions about the existence of a homogeneous gay community and perceptions that sexual orientation is simply constituted as a gay–straight binary relationship.

There are implications for concepts of power and oppression here and Hall (2003) documents the ways in which the notion of 'queer' critiques previous discourses of gay liberation such as that of Altman (1973). Drawing on the work of Lyotard (1984) and Derrida (1976), he questions the existence of binary relationships and meanings and cites this as another example of the collapse of a 'grand or master narrative'. Put in its bluntest terms, queer sees gay as being an over simplified, over commercialised, assimilationist construction of identity.

(b) Theoretical Roots: Poststructuralism, Power and Sexuality

The question of identities is central to the notion of queer theories. Hall (2003:63) notes the contribution that poststructuralist scholars of discourse and linguistics have made in the field to queer theoretical perspectives on identity. He argues from a Foucauldian perspective that 'individual personhood is created through an internalization of the discursive categories and the interests and biases that they reflect'. Foucault (1981) foregrounded the role of discourse as the primary means by which human values are communicated, 'naturalized' and reproduced. What Foucault

brings to the discussion of sexuality and identity is a 'reconceptualization of what discourse, sexuality and power' mean in terms of social relations. Thus, the notion of gay people being victims in the discourse of gay liberation is challenged. By introducing the notion of resistance Foucault proposes an altogether more complex analysis of identities and power which Hall (2003: 65) describes as a 'multidimensional investigation of oppression, reaction, metamorphosis and group empowerment'. Thus poststructuralist perspectives are sceptical of any link between stable, knowable linguistic structures and perceptions of reality and the implications that these may have for self identity. Gamson (2001:348) sees this as a challenge to the concept of 'a unified, autonomous self' – this opens the possibility that an individual may inhabit many 'selves', each moulded by different discourses, counter discourses and perceptions of reality in the environment.

In summary, Duggan (1995:181) locates the focus of queer theories in three domains, namely:

(i)   the critique of humanist narratives that posit the progress of the self and history, and thus tell the story of the heroic progress of gay liberationists against forces of repression

(ii)   the critique of empiricist methods that claim directly to represent the transparent 'reality' of 'experience' and claim to relate simply and objectively what happened, when and why

(iii)   the critique of identity labels presented as unitary, stable or 'authentic'.

4.2.2 The challenge of 'seeing queerly'

In his review of application of queer theory in education contexts, Pinar (1998) argues that it's contribution is to heighten the visibility of the issues, complicate and intensify critique and theory, whilst challenging homophobic and heterosexist nonsense. The significance of 'ways of seeing' is emphasised from the outset, and Honeychurch (1998) provides a metaphor for this in the form of a visual image of a digitally re-worked version of the seventeenth century painting *'Las Meninas'* by the Spanish artist, Diego Velazquez. The original painting – see Plate 4.1 - has itself been the focus of interest amongst post-modern scholars. Foucault (1973) noticed that the presence of mirrors, doorways, portraits and reflections interrupts any attempt to apply stable meaning to the imagery. The setting is an artist's studio and the back of the canvas faces outward with no clue as to the subject that is being painted, or of the relationships between the individuals in the painting.

89

Honeychurch (1998) entitles his twentieth century reinterpretation of the painting *'La Asamblea'* - see Plate 4.2 below. Gone are the historical figures and in their place stand an enigmatic collection of contemporary individuals 'who either gaze elsewhere or confront the viewer with an endless visual dialogue...a mirror near the centre of the image could play a duplicating role but...it hides as much as it reveals...observers must remain uncertain as to who the many figures are and what they are doing'.

Plate 4.1: Detail from 'Las Meninas', Diego Velazquez

Plate 4.2: *'La Asamblea'*, Kenn Honeychurch, 1997

The challenge of making sense of both *Las Meninas* and *La Asamblea* is to engage in meaning-making via the process of 'questioning ways of seeing'. Clough (2002),

drawing on the earlier work of Heidegger (1962) and Murray (1978), locates this activity in the science of hermeneutics and describes this process as a dialogue with self. Murray (1978:107) describes this activity as an involvement with the hermeneutic circle in which the individual undergoes a series of stages in the formulation of meaning. The starting point in the circle is the prior knowledge and understanding of the subject that an interpreter brings in the form of anticipatory knowledge. The central phase in the activity comprises a series of interactions that the interpreter has with the data in which both the subject and the interpreter question and get questioned. The circle is closed when 'the truth of the work qualifies the experience of the interpreter' (Clough 2002:95). The challenge in this research is to find a mechanism that triggers this process of questioning – the evolution of a practical technique to instigate this, is described the next section.

4.2.3 Analysing queerly: Developing a mechanism

Miller (1998:370), in her review of queer narratives, questions technical aspects of autobiography as 'a queer curriculum practice'. It is easy, she asserts, to present queer life stories as simplified modernist tales in which man/woman struggle with their sexuality, come out, meet Mr/Ms Right and ride off into the sunset living happily ever after. Unfortunately, researchers presenting such accounts singularly fail to discern contradictions and 'fractures' in these stories and fail to engage with the 'tangles of implication' as a result. In her view the challenge is to:

> examine disjuncture, ruptures, break ups and fractures in the 'normal school' version of the unified life subject and her own and others educational practices, autobiography can function to 'queer' or to make theory, practice and the self unfamiliar. To 'queer' is to denaturalize conceptions of one singular, whole and acceptable educator or student 'self' as well as versions of autobiography that rely on such conceptions.

An important practical question that this observation raises is how might disjuncture, ruptures, break ups and fractures be distinguished or represented in narratives? My search for such features has led me to develop a technique to mark or separate such features from the text. The stimulus for this was provided by visual imagery once again. The following extract from my research journal traces the development of the technique:

22.2.02

I visit The Lowry at Salford Quays, in Greater Manchester. The building is stunning both in architectural and contextual terms, reflecting the surrounding open areas of water in it's design. This creates a great feeling of space that is apparent on entering the exhibition areas themselves – large amounts of glass giving open vistas to the environment outside.

Plate 4.3 The Lowry, Salford Quays, Manchester

In the one of the galleries is part of a temporary exhibition called 'Intimacy': closeness, familiarity, understanding, relationships, confidence...what does intimacy mean to you?

The exhibits included two pieces of work by artist Victoria Hall who presented Family Tree I and II (Hayward Gallery, London 1995). In the commentary accompanying the work, Hall notes that the deep emotions of family are masked and hidden, or rise disturbingly to the surface.

These representations of family in the two exhibits are visually discrete in their presentation. The exhibit of Family Tree I is approached down a vast expanse of open gallery – a shape can be discerned in the great void ahead – seemingly hovering in mid air. On closer inspection it consists of lines of acetate sheets featuring family members. We can make interpretations about their relatedness – the transparency of the acetate opens up many more possibilities when viewed from above, below or from the side.

Thus, individuals can be juxtaposed in an infinite number of combinations opening up many more partnerships and relationships. What is striking in the exhibit is the complete absence of any frame or boundary to the work – it is simply

surrounded by vast areas of unfilled space from floor to ceiling. This has the effect of focussing attention on the exhibit. I suspect that this way of seeing would be impaired or blurred by the context of the outside world – the image would be too complex – there would be too many connections – in the words of the exhibition information – it would become 'masked or hidden'. Is that why gay people remain hidden in school environments – is that why any teacher can be obscured in 'the system'? I am interested in the fretwork effect of the surround in my mural – this is a new story that I am telling about it – this is the connection to the outside world of vast complexity.

Family Life II bears a striking resemblance to my NUD.IST data. It is presented as a 'traditional family tree' – the concept of roots and branches is echoed in both. Instead of writing the usual biographical details contained in a family name, eg. full name, date of birth etc., the artist has substituted a collection of what she calls 'snippets of information' that she was told about the individual or information that was part of family folklore. For me this is powerfully engaging – it appeals to the inquisitive part of me, I am drawn to find out more.

Source: research journal February 2002.

The experience of seeing these two exhibits led me to explore the potential of visual representation outside the main body of transcript text as a mechanism for illustrating rupture, etc. in the stories as told by participants. The result was that a hybrid of Intimacy I and II was constructed, ie. snippets of text that contradict, disrupt and rupture the narratives were produced on acetate and suspended in space – see Plate 4.4 below.
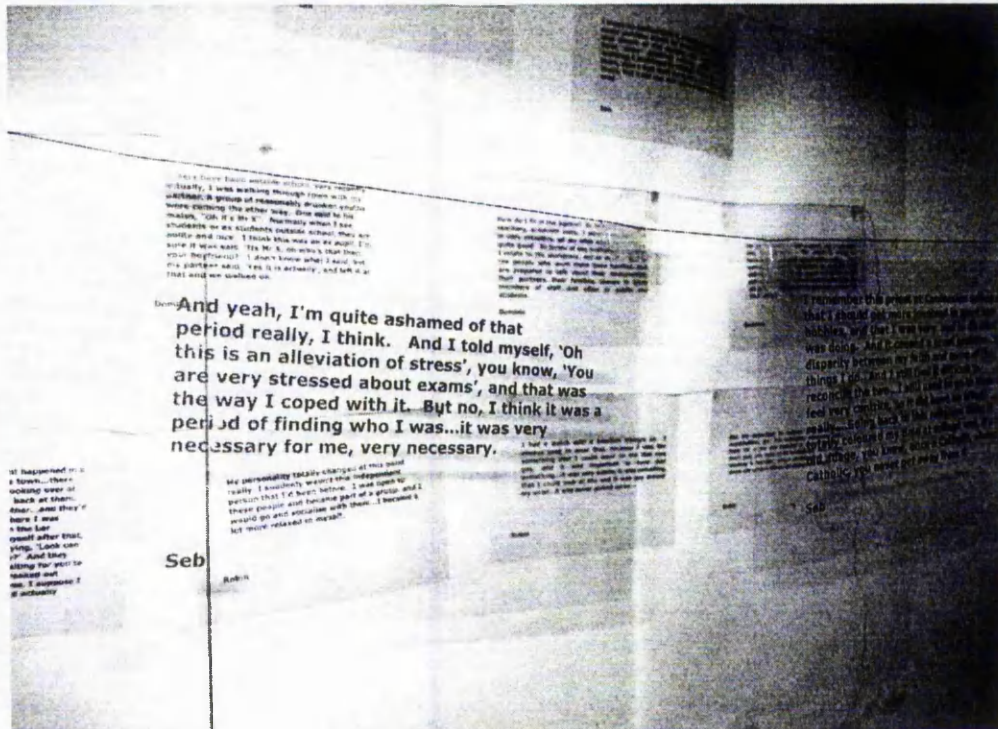
Plate 4.4 Intimacy in space hybrid: disjunctures, ruptures, break ups and fractures

Hamilton (2004) notes the potency of public exhibitions as a trigger for the creative thinking in the exploration of educational practices and the use of this method is a good example of this. As an analytical tool, the technique permits a queering of the text both within and between narratives that make up the data corpus. Thus in the discussion that takes place in the account and in Chapter 9, the analysis is informed by queer perspectives on the data within the post-modern paradigm. In practice, locating the disjunctures, ruptures, break ups and fractures in the transcript data is quite difficult and requires the ability to multi-task. The analysis simultaneously demands an understanding of individual data bits and an ability to identify ways in which they contribute to larger patterns in the data. A tool in the form of a 'queering template' was made by expanding the terms 'disjunctures', 'ruptures', 'break ups', 'fractures' and 'selves' – see Appendix 8.

 This provided the pointers to the main features in the landscape of the narratives organised by NUD.IST, and guided the writing of the account.

4.3 Bricolage method three: researcher biography and political implications

The pervasiveness of narrative albeit in different forms in the data, is very pronounced in this research. The role of narrative in human experience is has been defined from a number of different perspectives. For example, it is defined as:

'the primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful.' (Polkinghorne 1988:11)

'a means by which humans represent and restructure the world.' (Mitchell 1981:8).

'(it is) a specific cultural system by which people organize their experience in, knowledge about, and transactions in the social world.' (Bruner, (1990:35)

The possible common denominator in the quotations above is that narrative is a sense in which humans bring meaning to their experience. Bullough (1998:24) suggests that this process of personal meaning-making has connections with the role of the individual in the larger system of education environments. He argues that 'to understand educational events, one must confront biography'.

Bullough's observation is a reminder that the observations about narrative apply equally to researchers as they do to research participants. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that the notion of the distant, neutral, objective researcher has progressively lost credibility as the qualitative paradigm has evolved. I am deeply implicated in this research, whether I like that or not. In this section I will explore the significance of this via a method that evolved in the process of the research.

4.3.1 The significance of researcher positioning

For the last twenty years an on-going debate has been taking place over the question of how researchers can use their own experience to introduce complexity into the process of qualitative methodology. Ellis and Bochner (2000), Ellis and Berger, (2002) and Acker, Barry and Esseveld (1983) acknowledge the benefits of using the 'thick description' in qualitative research in revealing the detail in phenomena that are being researched. Ely et al (1991:179) agree that 'qualitative research is by nature a reflexive and recursive process' and this extends to the researcher's own positioning in relation to the phenomenon being researched. Pointers for this reflexive activity are identified by Richardson (1990) who provides some useful questions for prospective researchers in considering their own story in relation to the stories of the people that

they are intending to research, eg.: 'What part of my story, biography, process is relevant to the text?' and goes on to call for researchers to engage in self reflexive analysis of social categories to which they belong since these enter into and shape what constitutes knowledge in any project.

In terms of undertaking this research, there came a point when I started to wonder how my conscious and unconscious processes were influencing the texts that I am writing and what the implications might be for questions of rigour and validity. Given that I am a gay man conducting research with other gay/bisexual men, it can be argued that in Hammesley and Atkinson's (1995) terms, I am an 'insider' researcher in the enterprise.

4.3.2 Researcher and insider

My initial attempt to analyse the data and to represent their experience in written text surfaced a significant block to my progress. I was aware of my resistance to putting pen to paper – on reflection I think this has something to do with the enormous weight of responsibility that I feel in representing my participants' stories with any degree of accuracy. At some level I am aware of the risk that I may massage or misrepresent their stories to meet my own political needs in constructing a particular narrative or claim. I was interested that I was not the only person in the research enterprise who could see the possibility for manipulation. When I sent back one of my 'accounts' to a participant who had shared his experience, his response (half jokingly) was to say that I could have made him out to be more of 'a hero in the piece'. This remark pushed me into a deeper reflection of how my own experiences and political agenda could possibly influence, shape or even make me resist writing the account. Rhoads (1997:15) argues that politics and issues of researcher positionality are connected to the representational practices we employ in constructing the images of our research subjects

I would like to explain the phrase 'my political agenda' further. My 'insiderness' brings with it a particular history of experience and set of perspectives. Some of these perspectives are overtly political – in Chapter 1, I described phenomena such as heterosexism and homophobia. In addition, I have a strong sense of loyalty to the participants themselves, which has both benefits and costs. The benefits manifest themselves in a sense of protectiveness that I experience in managing ethical issues and striving for accuracy in the way I represent them. The costs may also be manifest in the process of representation. I am also aware that some of my phenomenological view remains hidden, even to myself. Are people really going to take this research

seriously if they just hear a tale of marginalised gay men held hostage by heterosexist educational institutions? While this may be a distinct possibility I want to be open to other scenarios.

The challenge for researchers who intend to clarify or use their own experience, is to find ways of presenting this in ways that are neither indulgent nor what Foucault (1978: 58-60) describes as the 'confessional'. Booth et al (1995) and Corrigan (2001) both argue that textual data comes in many formats, thus taking the definition of 'text' beyond it's common usage that all texts are written. A whole new dimension is opened up when the possibility that texts may be visual, is explored.

Harper (2000:727) documents the emerging field of visual sociology and notes that written text and visual imagery can take on new significance when they are juxtaposed. An important insight came when I realised that I had never really articulated my own experience beyond my personal journal. I had no idea of the visual appearance of this territory in terms of its imagery. Clearly a piece of the jig saw was missing and I decided to construct a 'visual text' or *mural*.

4.3. 3 Developing a visual method to review 'self'

Two main methods were employed in the construction of the mural. The first method involved the acquisition and use of black and white photographs, a technique for which I am indebted to Mignot (2000). The second method involved the selection of extracts from my research diary which were subsequently used in conjunction with the imagery on the mural.

Harper (2000:725) notes that the process of generating visual texts is inevitably the product of choices and decisions. The first set of decisions I made related to the technical aspects of photography. Film speed, apart from being sensitive to levels of light, is also capable of producing images with varying degrees of definition. Given that the photography was undertaken in relatively low levels of light in an English mid-winter, the use of 400 ASA black and white film also brought incremental advantages in increasing the depth of field and the crispness of the image. Harper (2000:721) argues that this is actually quite significant in that imagery of varying degrees of clarity impacts on the suggestion of the observer: clarity and regularity, for example, suggests order. A photograph taken from a different angle and at a different shutter speed could equally suggest chaos and uncertainty. Interestingly, Becker (1974) notes that 'theory' is always at work in the mind of a composer of a photograph. This

observation is quite revealing when considered in relation to the saying that *'the camera never lies'*. Harper (2000) argues that in some ways photographers have great potential power to create particular images being involved in a set power relations. These are mediated in terms of the composition by the photographer and the act of interpretation on the part of the observer. Becker (1974) adds another dimension to the act of composition when he argues that what the image in any given photograph may reveal are far less conscious processes, ie. our frequently unexamined assumptions about the subject, environment , event, etc.

The second level of decisions I made related to the choice of sites and images that represented ideas I had about the gay teacher experience. Some sites were chosen as the exact locations of my direct experience, others were chosen more for their representational or image potential. The sites representing education experience were fairly easy to locate, being mainly in a secondary school. The sites representing gay identity were more problematic. How is it possible to represent the gay aspect of my experience in terms of photographic imagery? At this time I had become intrigued by the notion of how geographical space is delineated in terms of sexuality. Ingram et al (1997) argue that some geographical spaces function as sites of resistance for the 'queer community'. Such sites would be places where gay men met to be social and or sexual. This is an important influence in the design of the mural and informed my thinking on how I used different areas of the canvas to reflect different discourses relating to sexuality and identity.

Arguably, a range of gay community spaces exist ranging from bars, pubs and clubs of the 'commercial gay scene' to more liminal spaces frequented by men who have sex with men, such as public parks and cruising areas. In such spaces, although there is disagreement in the literature about the identity of men who go cruising and cottaging, MESMEN team (1996), Scott et al (1998), it can be argued that there is a much more complex pattern of social-sexual interaction in terms of identity, than the simple descriptor 'gay' could possibly capture. Much of the HIV related research undertaken in the UK recognises this phenomenon Aggleton et al (1999) , Hickson et al (2004) highlighting the fact in PSEs (public sex environments) a range of men, who may or may not identify as being gay, will have sex with each other. In selecting a representational space for my photograph I chose one of these spaces, photographing a cruising area located on a canal towpath that flanks a public park in an inner city area. The location is rich in imagery – the stark winter landscape produced some striking images that were powerfully captured by the black and white film.

4.3.4 The process of mural construction

On my return to base, I embarked on the next stage of working with text and images. Mignot (2000: 10-13) usefully makes the distinction between montage and mural as primary and secondary stages of working with photographic imagery. In the action of montage, a process of selection occurs in which certain images are discarded in favour of others. In mine, approximately eight out of thirty-six photographs were selected – these were then enlarged on a photocopier to provide raw material for the design on the 'canvas', which consists of a 6' x 4' expanse of paper attached to a wooden frame.

In moving into the secondary phase of working with the photographs, I embarked on two of the defining criteria for 'mural' (Mignot 2000:13), ie. the making of a public work that consists of an assemblage of images with, in this case written text recorded in my research journal. This text was distilled from experiences and interactions with colleagues and young people, and extracts from this were typed up in the form of a word-processed document, using different font sizes. The statements were then printed out and further enhanced visually by photocopying – this opens up the possibility of enlarging/reducing certain statements, thus placing emphasis on certain ideas.

The imagery from the mural and discussion of matters arising from this exercise are presented in the first section of the account found in Chapter 5, Section 5.2

4.4   Introducing the structure of the account

In structuring the account, four important aspects are constituted as follows:

i.   In Chapter 5 I present my mural as a mechanism for exploring my experience and the way that this influences the lens through which I am viewing the narratives of the research participants

ii.   In Chapter 6 I explore the teacher axis at the interface between educator and sexuality

iii.   In Chapter 7 I explore the sexuality axis at the interface between educator and sexuality

iv.   In Chapter 8 I explore the process of negotiating identities and their outcomes, in school environments.

A common structure is used in each of these chapters: following the presentation of data, I discuss the landscape of the narratives both in terms of aspects of solidity and in terms of disjunctures, ruptures, break ups and fractures.

CHAPTER 5: ACCOUNT (1)

CLARIFYING THE LENS: RESEARCHER TEXTS

*'Call it sentimental, call it Victorian and nineteenth century, but
I say that anthropology that doesn't break your heart just isn't worth doing anymore.'*
(Behar 1996:177)

Introduction

The chapter is divided into three parts. Parts one and two offer two researcher narratives in which I will present data gleaned from the reflection on my own experience as a gay man undertaking this research. I will argue that both narratives have important affective as well as cognitive elements that have implications for the evolution of my 'world view'. The narrative in part one is a written text, distilled partly from memory and partly from my research journal. The second text in part two is a visual and a written text in which I present the data in the form of imagery and commentary from my mural, the method for which is described in section 4.3. The texts are deliberately sequenced in this order, the experience described in text one contributing to the germination of text two. In part three I will discuss the significance of the two narratives in terms of a series of 'matters arising'.

5.1 Educational research and affective experience

I have stated that an important aspect that connects both narratives, is affective experience. McLeod (1991:95) notes that the term *affect* is generic and covers a range of human experience such as emotions, attitudes, beliefs, moods, and conation. My use of the term here has quite a specific meaning for me, in that both experiences were highly charged emotionally. In section 3.1.2, I referred to some of the key differences of the positivist versus postmodern research paradigms. I am aware that the 'confession' of my emotion as a researcher may not sit comfortably with either the current climate in education or educational research which McLeod argues is an extension of the dominance of cognitive psychology in scientific method. Dhunpath (2000:548) contextualises this by arguing that, traditionally, research has tended to present an archetypal image of teachers, by using positivistic approaches aimed at quantifying teaching performance. The disadvantage of these positivistic approaches is that they strip research of the rich tapestry of human experience, and attempt to make sense of pieces of teacher's lives without understanding the narrative wholes in which the pieces are embedded. Thomas (1998:142) agrees with this perspective, arguing that much of what passes for research is highly rational, only focussing on the

cognitive aspect of human experience. He argues that the frequently adopted
approach is that 'a faith that good, logical reflection and thinking can result in theories
- of whatever kind - which will explain and predict aspects of the educational world'.
Unfortunately, such an approach has a cost, which is the restriction on less
conventional kinds of knowledge to develop and flower. Thus fertility is sacrificed for
orderliness in contemporary educational inquiry.

Tompkins (1987:178) is far less tolerant about the issue, and sees the 'trashing of
emotion' as a war waged ceaselessly by academic intellectuals 'against feeling, against
women, against what is personal'. Griffiths (1998:95-96) alerts researchers working in
the field of social justice to the fact that emotion may actually be an integral part of
the process in the action of clarifying their own position:

> Argument, anger and risk are all part of the process. Some of the
> feelings of risk come about because such consultation requires
> researchers to be open to reflexivity and about their own position
> and interests.

In my experience, both the narratives related in the following sections did not come
without a cost. What may not be immediately apparent to the reader is the sense of
exposure in terms of self-disclosure that I felt in the early stages of each narrative.

5.1.1 Personal data: A Reflective Text

In this section I want to begin by offering some further reflections on the critical
incident described in section 1.6. A striking thing on re-reading my experience of the
incident is the emphasis that I have placed on its potency in emotional terms. I do not
think that this is a deliberate exaggeration on my part, and I have questioned in
section 1.7 if my distress in the situation was disproportional to the actual incident
itself. This has led me to speculate further on what the incident represents for me,
rather on what the incident was. Behind this statement, I am suggesting that there is
a possibility that underneath the presenting issue is a deeper set of personal issues
which are the main source of my distress. On the face of it, the presenting issue is a
personal, homophobic remark made about me, to me, by a senior member of staff.
This is significant in that the interaction felt hierarchical not only in terms of role but
also in terms of our relative status within the institution. The interaction also felt
hierarchical in other respects, namely my perceptions of the relative positions of the
key players in terms of masculinity and sexuality. At the time I saw myself as a
relatively closeted gay man who has internalised messages about gay men being
lesser in masculine terms than heterosexual men. I perceived the other party as an

older (presumably heterosexual), more 'manly' man who had certain expectations about how 'real men' are supposed to behave.

A question I would now like to explore is how my negative view of self impacted on my ability to take personal agency in my interpersonal interactions. I am using the term personal agency, in this context, as the ability to take action rather than being a passive participant in any social situation. A particular question I have concerns the relationship between self-identity and voice, or the ability to take one's authority in an socio-institutional context. In section 1.12, I described some significant awareness that I gained from being a member of a Rogerian small group, in which I reported a feeling of paralysis where, quite simply, I appeared to have no voice. Interestingly, I would say I had the same experience in my interaction in the critical incident with the senior colleague. In attempting to understand this situation, part of my reflection has focussed on seeking insights into how the disabling process works for me.

In the three years following the critical incident, further opportunities presented themselves in the form of professional development when I participated on four occasions in the 'Learning to be a Leader' conference convened by the Centre for the Study of Human Relations in the School of Education at the University of Nottingham, UK. My participation in these events took different roles. Initially, when I was still a full-time teacher in school, I participated as a conference member. When I subsequently took up my post as lecturer in the Centre, I occupied the role of trainee and then fully fledged consultant in the staff team. The use of the term 'consultant' rather than 'facilitator' here is significant in that it relates to the particular group dynamics training model employed in the conferences ie. the Tavistock Model (Rioch 1970, Bion 1961).

The Tavistock model was developed by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London and is based on the theoretical notions of large group processes developed by Bion (1948, 1952). Working in London's Tavistock Clinic, Wilfrid Bion devised his theory based on observations made in therapeutic group work undertaken with survivors of the hostilities in the immediate post-war period. In that era, his patients were simply diagnosed as suffering from 'shell shock' which more recently has become known as post traumatic stress disorder. Bion concluded that two main types of group process could be discerned; 'work' and 'other activity.' Work is simply defined as when group members successfully engage with the process of communication within the group. In short, the group works and functions well.

In other situations, however, 'other activity' is evident in the unconscious process of a group and Bion observed that this is generally unhelpful and is an avoidance of 'work'. Hence, the behaviours that constitute other activity such as fight, flight, dependency and pairing are all evident when individuals struggle with the social emotional issues of dealing with their own authority and the authority of others in group situations. The use of the term authority is an important concept here in that Bion saw the development of personal agency or the ability to take one's authority as a key to effective communication in group contexts.

5.1.2 Insights from professional development; becoming invisible

The translation of Bion's theoretical notions into an experiential training programme took place in the 1960s (Rice 1965, Rioch 1970, Colman and Bexton 1975), a significant amount of development taking place via what became known as 'the Leicester conference', the principal UK event being hosted by the University of Leicester for many years, Shaffer and Galinsky 1989). The use of the word 'conference' could be misleading however, as the training programme does not employ the conventional structure of a conference such as keynote addresses, workshops, symposia, etc. Instead, it provides participants with the experience of working in a range of sequenced, unstructured groups with a team of staff consultants. The conference literature (Centre for the Study of Human Relations, 1999), describes the objective of the exercise, which is as follows:

> The primary task of the training programme is to provide
> members with opportunities to learn about the nature of authority
> and about the interpersonal, inter-group, and institutional
> problems encountered in exercising it.

In terms of authority, from the outset the significance of role is clear for all to see, participants being divided into members and the staff team. The staff team is itself hierarchical, being composed of a conference director, deputy director and team of consultants. The structure of each day varies but always begins with a meeting of the large group consisting of the conference membership, director, consultant and consultant in the role of observer. The incident, I am about to describe took place during one of these large group meetings when I was working in the role of consultant-observer to the large group.

The seating arrangements for the meeting, consist of a spiral, with the director sitting close to the centre. Main (1985) notes that the seeming lack of structure in the large group soon leads to two key responses from participants: defensiveness and projection. Shapiro (1985:353) asserts that in this situation:

> Complex fantasies are particularly powerful in relation to people in
> authority, since authority and task boundaries interfere with
> personal intimacy and call forth intense responses. It is of such
> fantasies and unconscious assumptions that an 'institution of the
> mind' is created.

The creation of this 'institution of the mind' has a very disorientating effect in my
experience. Finding the ability to speak up and make a contribution in such a situation
is like a wrestling match with an increasingly slippery object. The 'slipperiness' in this
case centres around fantasies that participants have about issues such as
approval/disapproval incurred when speaking out, and who has power and status. The
issue of taking personal authority in this context is made more problematic because
the group is so large and not everyone can see each other. Main (1985:60) provides
some insight into the experience:

> Sometimes everyone may sit silent, withdrawn and motionless for
> long periods. The longer the silence, the more cycles arise of
> frustration, projected hostility, personality depletion, stupidity and
> fears of something awful...one member ostensibly opening the
> newspaper, another sighing histrionically, another impulsively
> walking out swearing, the surreptitious glances at the clock...All in
> dread of 'the group' and fearing that the next thing will only be
> worse...Anyone who identifies himself as a singular person is likely
> to be attacked and pushed back into silent mindlessness.

Even in the seemingly detached role of consultant-observer, it is difficult not to be
impacted by the situation, and it was there that I gained awareness that gave me a
key to understanding what taking authority might mean for me as a gay man. The
insightful moment came when I found myself staring, metaphorically speaking, over a
precipice into some kind of abyss. In my mind 'the abyss' was the invisibility that I
felt in the group – it was as though I had been edited out, or more extremely, that I
had been annihilated. The implications for group members, as I see it, is that they
are caught in a bind. By not participating and remaining silent, they increase the risk
of experiencing these extreme feelings. As Turquet (1985:86) observes: 'and so the
single individual struggles...he experiences loss...exclusion from the group...inevitably
dealing with "death".'

By speaking up however, they also run the risk of attack and being excluded by the
group. Thus the issue of speaking up is a kind of 'no-win' situation in which 'you're
damned if you do and you're damned if you don't'.

The experience of those powerful feelings, which caught me unawares, inevitably had
a profound impact. I had to ask the question about what the exercise of power and
authority means for me as an individual, in terms of both my communications with

others and communications received from them. The rawness of emotional pain and then intense anger also led me to speculate on my experience of invisibility beyond the conference. I had to confront a series of questions: what does this mean for me in terms of being a gay man in the various institutions that I inhabit, the work place, the family, the greater society?

This cocktail of feelings and thoughts has inevitably in the past permeated the way that I view the world and the narratives that I tell about myself. Some years later still, when I embarked on the process in this research of making my mural, it was with me still. The process of making a visual text provided another opportunity to explore this terrain and consider the implications, this time for me as a researcher.

5.2 Personal data: A visual text

Visual data can provide an powerful medium through which to narrate perceptions and experience. In this section I will initially present a series of visual data in the form of a sample of raw material gathered from the photographic reconnaissance and other sources described in section 3. 2. In subsequent sections of this section, I then describe and analyse the transformation of this data into a mural. This then leads to a review of the process of mural making in terms of what it reveals about my positioning as a researcher. I begin by presenting a series of photographic images that are accompanied by a commentary which acts to guide the reader through this aspect of the account.

5.2.1 From the Field: Photographic data

The bulk of the photographic raw materials are images taken in two locations: one representing gay experience and the other teacher experience. As I embarked on my work in the field, I had only a loose conception of what this might mean in terms of the images that were to be photographed. The choice of subjects at each location tended to be spontaneous and more by a process of intuition than pre-planned selection. That said, I had made a preliminary visit to both locations so may have been carrying an agenda of objects to be selected. Plates 5.1-5.8 that follow are photographs taken on a still December day at the cruising area chosen to represent gay experience (see section 4.3). Plate 5.1 shows a general view of the canal and the tow path as viewed from a footbridge that provides access from the city centre. The canal is flanked on the right by old wharf side factories and industrial buildings; on the left the wooded slopes of the park can be discerned.

Plate 5.1: Towpath general view

The sequence of these photographs narrates the progression of my walk that day. On reaching the tow path I was struck by the density of vegetation that forms the boundary with the park. Despite the fact that the trees were devoid of foliage, the effect of so many bare branches overhanging the tow path was a feeling of being enclosed by an overhead fret-work. This was photographed and formed the basis of the image that surrounds the mural.

Plates 5.2 - 5.4 show the fence that delineates the boundary between the park and the tow path. This is a substantial structure consisting of steel railings. The fence also forms the boundary between what Davies et al (1993:154) identify as the two distinct spatial zones of cruising areas, ie. areas of sexual negotiation and areas of sexual activity, each area having norms of behaviour and intrusion particular to each. As daylight fades the boundaries between these zones may change and merge, hence the physical movement from the towpath into the park. On the photographs, this is evidenced by the vandalism to the railings prompted by the need to gain access to the darker, more private area of the park. In terms of imagery, the vandalism and repairs undertaken by the park authorities break up the otherwise regular pattern of the railings into a more interesting and less predictable image.

Plate 5.2 Park/towpath security fencing breached by nocturnal activities of cruisers

Plate 5.3 (next page) photograph showing the repair-vandalism cycle

Plate 5.4 (next page) photograph showing strong silhouette potential of railings against the winter sky

Above Plate 5.3; below Plate 5.4

The canal tow path also produced two other images that are a local authority response to the nocturnal activity of cruising men. Apart from the maintenance of the railings, considerable remedial work was being undertaken on the towpath itself including the cutting back of trees and the installation of CCTV on the approach to the canal from a street nearby – see Plate 5.5. The industrial premises that back on to the canal are also well defended by high walls and topped with barbed wire – see Plate 5.6.

Plate 5.5: CCTV cameras
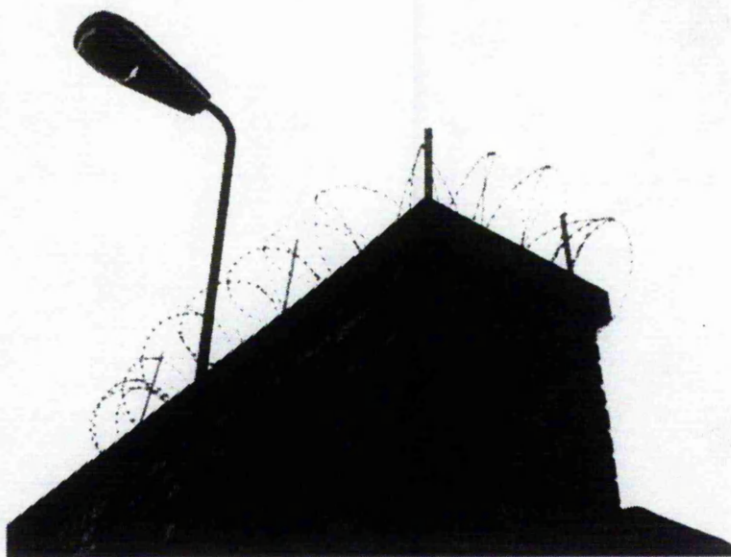
Plate 5.6 Barbed wire on wall surrounding factory yard

Someone had sprayed the phrase 'crude cure' on a concrete wall adjacent to the towpath – this may or may not have connection with the clean up campaign and it

struck me as an interesting statement in that context. Equally ambiguous was another piece of graffiti: 'desire rox' . If I am honest, this quite appeals to my sense of the transgressive or subversive.

The final two photograph documents my entry into the park and across the open space to the lake. The significance of the swan imagery – see Plates 5.7 and 5.8 - is explained in section 5.2.3.
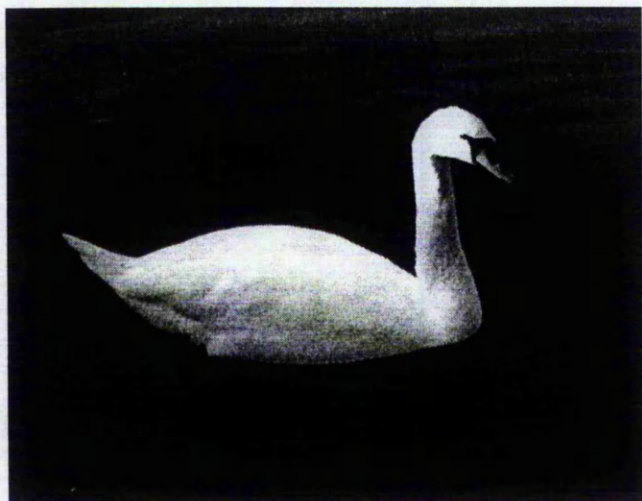
Plates 5.7 and 5.8: Swans on park lake
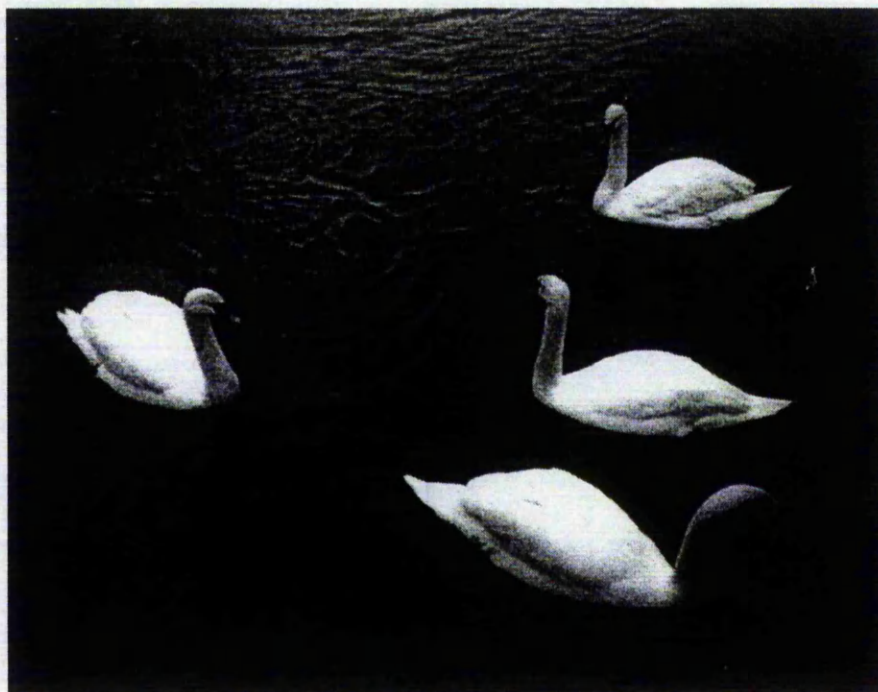
Plates 5.9 (school building])and 5.10 (classroom) illustrate photographs taken at the second location, ie. the secondary school in which I was working.

Plate 5.9: School building exterior view

The classroom photograph illustrated in Plate 5.10 is a location in which I taught PSHE. The tv and video equipment was chosen as the subject for this photograph as drama and documentary featured strongly in my teaching of Sex and Relationships Education.
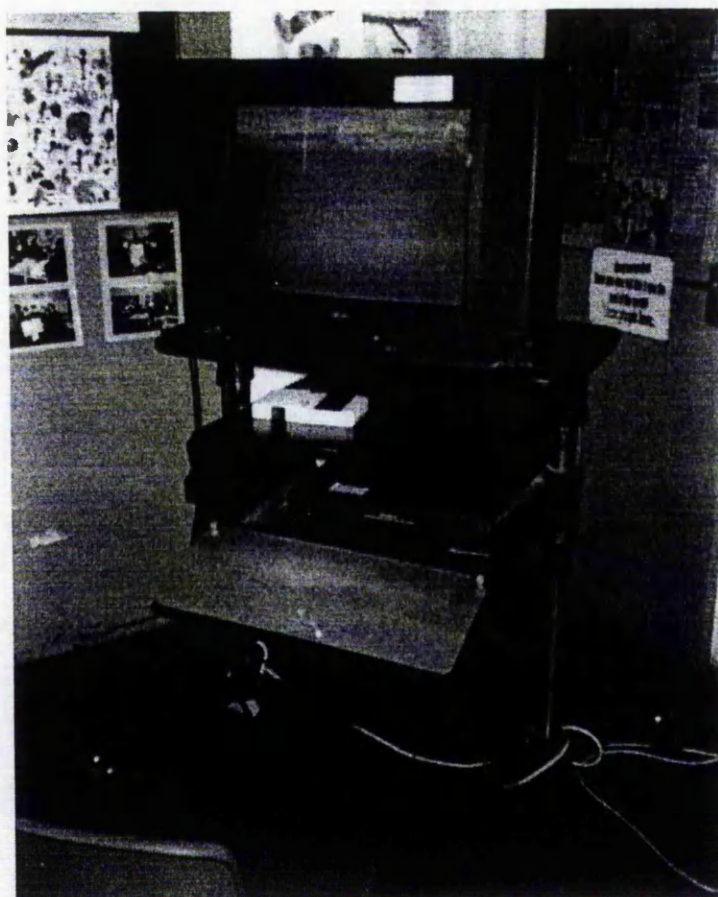
Plate 5.10: Classroom interior – tv and video machine

In the next section I now turn my attention to the acquisition of written texts that constitute data on the mural.

5.2.2 From the Field: Text and other data

In addition to the photographs, the mural also contains text and images from other locations. In the case of the latter, I photocopied the cover from two artefacts, namely the cover of the video *Two of Us* and the front cover of the programme for Lesbian and Gay Pride, an event held in London in July 1991. Two further images are taken from photographs of Alan Turing and Alfred Kinsey. I explain the significance of these in section 5.2.3.

In terms of text, I generated a series of statements which are sourced from my memory of events and from reflections in my research journal. These statements are presented in the pages that follow. My decision to include this data in its original format is influenced by my desire to reveal some transparency in the process of its development. The selection of material, the sequencing of statements, the choice of font and the choice of font size are significant in that this information provides evidence that will be scrutinised in subsequent sections in which I try and identify the motivations for my choices.

A secondary reason for using large font sizes was to generate material in an already large print so that it could be enlarged further on the photocopier - a process that influenced by the size of the canvas to be filled. This is explained in greater detail in section 5.2.3 of this chapter.

For each of the statements that follow, two sources of data are provided:
(a) the font and font size
(b) the context of the statement.

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Are you gay, sir? (x20)

Times New Roman 41 point
Question repeatedly put to Max by students in lessons

Are you married, sir? (x20)

Are you married, sir? (x20)

Are you married, sir? (x20)

Are you married, sir? (x20)

Are you married, sir? (x20)

Are you married, sir? (x20)

Are you married, sir? (x20)

Times New Roman 41 point
Question repeatedly put to Max by students in lessons

Have you got any kids, sir?

Have you got any kids, sir?

Have you got any kids, sir?

Have you got any kids, sir?

Have you got any kids, sir?

Have you got any kids, sir?

Have you got any kids, sir?

Times New Roman 41 point
Question repeatedly put to Max by students in lessons

Backs to the wall, lads!

Backs to the wall, lads!

Backs to the wall, lads!

Backs to the wall, lads!

Backs to the wall, lads!

Times New Roman 48
Comment made by male senior member of staff about visiting dignitary to the school
rumoured to be gay

"We once had this bloke who came in here and announced that he was gay, said that he was actually proud to be gay - can you believe that?"

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made by male colleague in staff room during free period

"Your unfortunate mannerism - being too camp..."

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made to Max by senior male colleague

"The only people who I am prejudiced against are homosexuals..."

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made by male colleague and reported back to Max

"And to top it all his father is queer..."

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made by female colleague about 'problem student' in staff room conversation

"Stop mincing down the corridor, lad"

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made by female colleague to male student running down the corridor

"TOUGH LOVE DARLINGS, TOUGH LOVE..."

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made to Max by female colleague about the approach needed to be taken students manifesting challenging behaviour

Exposure to positive images should not be extended to homosexuals

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made by male governor in school equal opportunities policy meeting

If we say we are going to include sexual orientation in our equal opportunities policy, isn't that condoning paedophilia?

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made by male governor

ENDLESS

Times New Roman 60 point
Comment from Max about on-going nature of homophobia encountered

I really respect gay people, they are prepared to stand up for what they believe in.

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made by female student in Year 9 SRE lesson

CREDIT CARD FIX

Times New Roman 42 point
Interpretation made by Max about young gay man [Year 10 student] who ran up £400 on mother's credit card bill during Christmas break

S I L E NC E

Times New Roman 72 point
Comment from Max about institutional response to homosexuality

INVISIBILITY

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment from Max about his own collusive response to school's response to homosexuality

AVOIDANCE

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment from Max about his own collusive response to school's response to homosexuality

ANGER, RAGE, HURT

Times New Roman 42 point
Max's emotional response to some comments/interactions received in school

HAVE YOU GOT A MOMENT, SIR...

Times New Roman 42 point
Question put to Max by male year 11 student as an entrée to a coming out conversation

YOU ARE SUCH A DARLING, MAX

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made to Max from supportive female colleague in whom he confided information about his sexuality

HEAR A PIN DROP

Times New Roman 42 point
Observation made by Max about Year 11 students' response to *Two of Us*

TENSION

Times New Roman 42 point
Observation made by Max about Year 11 student's response to *Two of Us*

I LIKE GAY POP STARS

Times New Roman 42 point
Comment made by Max Year 9 student in SRE lesson

AND IT REALLY HAPPENED, IT REALLY HAPPENED....

Times New Roman 42 point
Quotation from Walker, M. (1998) 'Mrs Palmer gave me a scholarship to Sterkfontein' paper presented in the symposium Narrative and the Art of Educational Research, British Educational Research Conference, Queens University, Belfast

AND IT REALLY HAPPENED,

IT

REALLY

HAPPENED

Times New Roman 42 point and 72 point
Quotation from Walker, M. (1998) 'Mrs Palmer gave me a scholarship to Sterkfontein'
paper presented in the symposium Narrative and the Art of Educational Research,
British Educational Research Conference, Queens University, Belfast

FUCKING QUEER, FUCKING QUEER

Times New Roman 72
Comment made by male student for Max's benefit just out of view outside classroom;
shouted up stair well from three floors below 50 minutes later

Oi, QUEER, BENDER

Times New Roman 72 point
Shouted from crowded bus bay by male students to Max on end of day gate duty

NOTICE ME, DON'T NOTICE ME

Times New Roman 72 point
Dilemma experienced by Max

WE DON'T WANT ANY HOMOPHOBIA HERE SIR, NO INSULTS - ONLY PROPER WORDS LIKE LESBIAN AND GAY

Times New Roman 42 point
Student offering ground rules in Year 9 SRE lesson

5.2.3 The transition to imagery

In constructing the mural, I began by constructing a visual framework that surrounds the whole piece – see Plate 5.11 below that shows a full view of the finished mural.
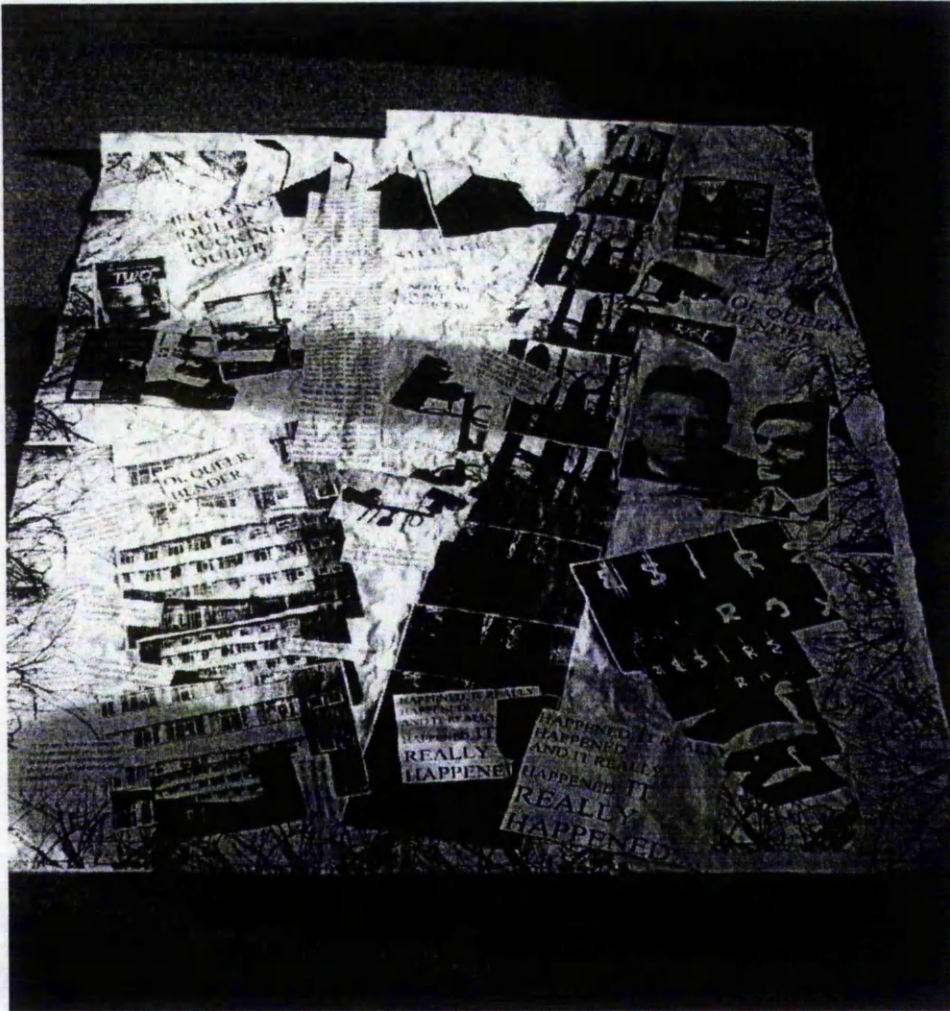
Plate 5.11: Mural full view

At first glance the imagery of the surrounding frame is one of a fretwork – I created this image by photocopying and enlarging the photograph that I took of the winter sky as seen through the bare branches of trees that line the tow path along side the canal (the inner city cruising area). The effect of the fretwork gives the mural an enclosed, contained feel – this has metaphorical as well as visual significance, an issue I will return to later. The main canvas of the mural consists of two main parts representing teacher experience and gay experience; I used the image of the park railings crossing diagonally from one corner to another to separate the two – see Plate 5.12.

Plate 5.12 : Mural detail - park railings and gay domain

The gay domain in the mural also contains images of mainly affirming experiences in my personal/professional development. The swan photographed on the park lake nearby represents a gay men's assertiveness training association that I helped to co-found. I have very fond memories of the group of men with whom I did the training. One evening during our time together we went en masse to the theatre to see Matthew Bourne's production of Swan Lake. The poignancy of the relationship between the Prince and the Swan cannot have gone unnoticed by even the most cynical of observers and since that time Tchaikovsky's music and the image of the swan have signified male intimacy in my imagination. The cover of the programme of the 1991 Pride March in London shown on the right of Plate 5.12 is a fond memory of a day spent with a colleague from school. At the event held after the march in Kennington Park, we bumped into another colleague from the same school who we did not know was gay. It seemed to me that it was ironic that we had to travel to the capital of England to discover what was not obvious on our doorstep in our working environment.

In the centre of Plate 5.13 below a youthful Alfred Kinsey shows stares out from the gay domain.

Plate 5.13 Mural detail: Gay domain – Kinsey and Turing

To me his presence signifies an energetic and paternalistic presence. At the time of his death on 25 August 1956 I was only two years old. Whilst there is a sadness about this, in my mind he symbolises someone who had may have trod this path before me, In their biographies of Kinsey, Jones (1997) and Gathorne-Hardy (!999) provide evidence that Kinsey had sexual relations with men and with women. Whilst no personal-sexual journey can ever be identical, I feel an affinity with him just the same. To Kinsey's right is another photograph this time of Alan Turing. I fell more of a cultural, political and professional connection with Turing – both he and Kinsey have a paternalistic presence on the mural in my mind. On examining the mural again, I am struck that I seem to have reserved most of the space for the teacher experience domain. The use of different font sizes and bold enabled me to produce a variety of styles of text. The repeated questions generated communicates the wearying effect of continually being asked questions by young people such as 'are you married?' or 'do you have any children?' or (from the more assertive students) 'are you gay?' This happened so frequently that I wanted to include it as a significant aspect of my

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experience. I was also keen to include comments that I interpreted as positive as well – these came from both colleagues and students.

The image of the television and video case is also significant here. The video is of *Two of Us*, the BBC schools production of the novel by Leslie Stewart described in section 2.3.2 and discussed in section 1.3.1 in terms of its significance of this as a personal antecedent. I am interested how, on reflection, it seems incongruous in this part of the mural, one of the few signs of gayness in what I have portrayed as a rather bleak institutional environment. In Plate 5.14, this is reflected in my adaptation of the original photograph of the school building. Through a process of enlargement on the photocopier, the building appears much more monolithic or wall-like on the mural.

I note that I have also enlarged two statements that are pushed well to the fore, ie. 'fucking queer' and 'it happened, it really happened.' The first relates to verbal abuse that was delivered to me again not directly, but definitely for my consumption, by a student who shouted it to me three times while he was hidden out of sight. This had a profound effect on me, my sense of anger and outrage was total, and the incident consumed a great deal of time and energy in following it up. In foregrounding it I wanted to counter any attempt to 'hush the incident up'. The second phrase: 'it happened, it really happened.' (see Plate 5.15) has haunted me ever since I heard it used in a paper given by Melanie Walker at the British Educational Research Association conference in Belfast 1998. The inclusion of it here immediately brought into my awareness that not only do I not feel heard as a gay man in a school environment, but I worry that I may not even be believed.
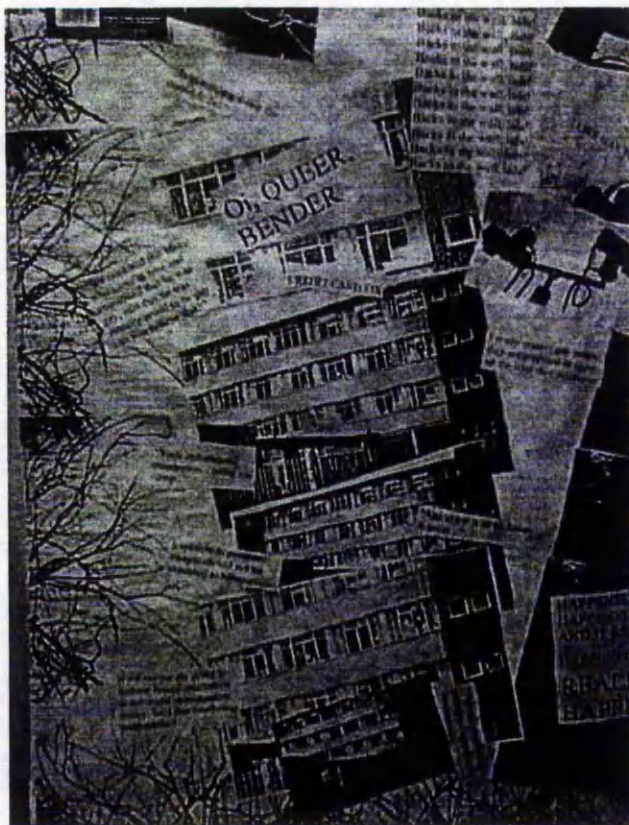
Plate 5.14: Mural detail – teacher domain
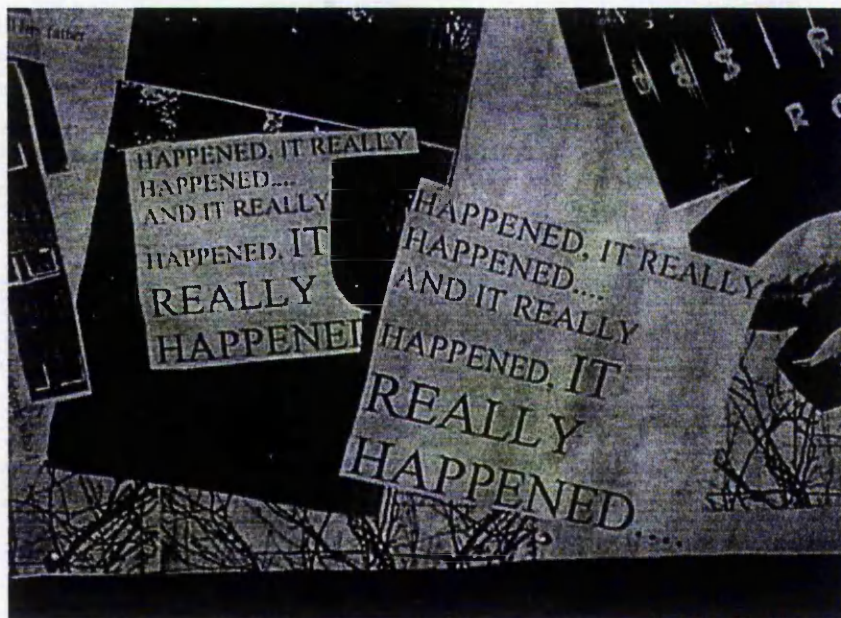
Plate 5.15: Mural detail - 'and it happened...'

5.3 Discussion

On examining the two texts from a more distant position, a theme emerges of an absence of a unified self. The process begins in the account of the group dynamics large group, which introduces the idea fragmentation and of loss of identity for participants in that training situation over a period of time. It is interesting to speculate on whether this is a process that is replicated in the professional world of institutions, over the longer term.

In visual terms, the splitting and separation of gay and teacher identity is very striking. This is a major disjuncture in the account, forming two discrete domains, ie. teacher experience and gay experience. The establishment of a boundary that separates the two is a key part of this process. On the mural, it is represented by the enlarged image of the park railings. The railings themselves in physical terms, are a permeable barrier – it is easy to see through them to the environment on the other side. The implications of this, in metaphorical terms, is that the notion of permeability opens up the potential for movement from one side to the other. I think there are important conceptual notions emerging here in relation to identity, context and movement, which I will explore in Chapter 9 of the thesis.

The more dramatic ruptures in the account relate to episodes such as the delivery of homophobic abuse. The phrase 'fucking queer' is deliberately foregrounded on the mural. There is a hint of on-going processes undertaken in the institutional environments in the form of monitoring and surveillance. An idea to be explored is whether this is multifaceted in relationships, eg. teacher-pupil, teacher-colleagues, institution-teacher. The use of the CCTV image on the mural suggests that monitoring and surveillance is also a process in the gay domain of experience, again raising the possibility that this may be a two way process.

Plate 5.16: Mural detail - Gay domain CCTV

The use of tokens in the gay domain of the mural suggests that sources of support, whether they are interpersonal or representational, are important elements in gay identity. An example of this is the image of the swans. Drummond (2003:235) concurs with my earlier observation noting that by re-gendering the ballet *Swan Lake*, Matthew Bourne has also queered it:

> He thrusts center stage an unstable relationship between two male characters, and in so doing, de-centers the conventionally fixed categories of sex, gender, and sexual desire.

The account also reveals contradictions. Tokens of support are not only present in the gay domain. They are present in the form of supportive comments made by colleagues and young people juxtaposed with more hostile statements in the teacher domain. This raises the interesting possibility that the way in which support and hostility occurs in school environments is a dynamic rather than a static process, an idea that is further explored in Chapter 9.

Perhaps one of the most revealing aspects of the mural construction process is the emotion that accompanied it, apparent in the following extract from my journal:

> I can vividly recall the energy and strong feelings that the process generated. The power of the exercise gripped me like a drug and I became aware of a rising tide of anger triggered I suspect, by the material that I was handling. I started at about 3.00pm with the intention of going home at 5pm. I was still there at 8.30pm and the process seemed to take on a momentum of its own.

This together with the selection of material, choice of font size and enlarging on the photocopier are the clearest pieces of evidence that illuminate my researcher positioning. I could have produced any number of murals and narratives using the materials at my disposal described in section 4.3.3. In the event, I was driven by a sense of injustice and the need to expose it, anger and a need be believed.

So where does this put me?

I recognise that my researcher identity is also fractured. I have a researcher persona that claims to be rational and strives to be as open as possible to interpretations, meanings and perspectives. I am also caught in one of Britzman's (1997) 'tangles of implication'. The mural revealed an activist persona which makes me partial, passionate and on a mission.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ACCOUNT (2)

GAY-TEACHER INTERFACE:
TEACHER AXIS

'We are what we are, and what we are is an illusion...'

La Cage aux Folles

In this chapter of the account, I will focus on the teacher identity axis of the gay-teacher interface. The chapter is organised into three sections which explore different elements of participant experience. In section 6.1 I review some of their life experiences prior to becoming a teacher. In section 6.2 I present their experiences of acculturation into the profession via initial teacher training, and in section 6.3 I analyse some of their experiences 'in the job'.

6.1 The road to teaching

Ian is one of the older participants in the cohort who grew up in the leafy suburbs of south London in the 1950s and 60s. His education had revealed his proficiency in modern foreign languages and he recalls the far less regulated way in that era in which it was possible to gain experience in the classroom:

> I'd already sensed that I might be good at working with children, and that that might be the way to use my skill in languages. And therefore I pretty firmly decided that I would teach if I could. And in those days, you could earn money in your holidays by being a student teacher, once you'd left secondary school, even at the age of nineteen. I think I actually first stepped into a classroom as a paid employee at the age of nineteen, although nowadays I'm sure that would be frowned upon, and did odd bits of supply teaching, between university terms.

His comfortable and protected childhood had given him little exposure to life beyond suburbia and family, although he was becoming aware of his evolving sexuality in terms of whom he found attractive. He identifies this period in his life of as being one of extraordinary naivety which continued into his time at university:

> it struck me as amazing that my three years or so of university were an almost complete sexual blank...it's a kind of social innocence that now seems amazing, but that's how it was. I don't recall meeting anyone whom I would have thought of as being homosexual. I think by then I was quite clear, or beginning to be clear about my own gayness. Although I did deceive myself about it for a number of years beyond university...

Ironically, despite living and working in the geographical environment that arguably, in the 1960s, had the most dense collection of venues where gay men met in the UK, Ian remained socially and sexually isolated in central London. The generally negative attitude towards homosexuality in this pre-Wolfenden era did not seem to adversely affect the way that Ian viewed his sexuality, however:

> I never attached a sort of, any kind of moral judgement to it, as some people might. You know, I wasn't ashamed of it, or angry about it, or regretful... it seemed to me though that it was socially totally unacceptable. I wasn't aware that it was illegal...it's only later, that I've understood that kind of thing...it would have been totally unacceptable in my family, and therefore that it was something that you had to live as a secret in some way or other.

For most gay teachers in the era that Ian describes, this seems to be the chosen strategy of dealing with the scenario, although he does recall one individual who in echoes of Quentin Crisp, stood out in opposition to this:

> And I'm sure that certainly in the mid-sixties when I began to teach, it would have been very rare...the colleague who got away with it seemed to me to be almost beyond belief. It was so outrageous that I just couldn't believe in anyone who could behave that way and get away with it. And I think most of us would not have got away with it actually. So clearly we wouldn't have thought of doing such a thing.

The birth of Gay Liberation and subsequent activism in the 1970s provided a focus for gay people to meet and Tom recalls, as a sixteen year old, writing to a problem page of a women's magazine. Claire Rayner replied and referred him to the local branch of CHE: Campaign for Homosexual Equality.

In contrast to the 1960's, students in Higher Education in the 1980s and 1990s engaged with sexual politics very differently. For some participants in the cohort, the experience of coming out ran in tandem with their student experience, for others this process did not take place until they were teaching or even retired. For Seb and Robin the initial steps were made via the university Gay Society. Robin recalls his academic success and social failure during his first year of undergraduate education studies:

> When I look at my first year marks and everything, they were quite unbelievable because I've got these assignments, and I had nothing else to do, I spent time doing them. I got very screwed up in my first year about what it was I wanted, and I think that showed in myself. The friends I'd made found me quite difficult to deal with. I suffered a lot of depression at that time. I remember things that I did. Like on a night, when I just want to go to a disco at college or something, I'd walk around town, just go for a walk, and I would look for something. I don't know what I was looking for, it wasn't like I was looking for a man, or something like that, I was just looking for a sign that this is what I was looking for. And I never found it, so that was quite hard.

> I was incredibly screwed up...feelings of resentment that people
> were happy and having a good time, and I couldn't do that....it just
> wasn't what I wanted...the fact that they were planning partners
> and, sex is a stupid thing to say, but they were doing very physical
> things within college, which I couldn't do...it was probably isolation
> as well, because I didn't know other people, there was no one to
> talk to about these feelings that I had.

His solution at the start of the summer holidays was to further immerse himself in work via a vacation job, as a strategy to keep the difficult feelings at bay. Later in the vacation, things changed, however, when his sister invited him one day to accompany her to the local swimming pool:

> At this point a very strange event happened in a swimming pool
> in my back home town...there were these two guys who kept
> looking over at me, and obviously I was looking back at them. We
> ended up speaking to each other...and they'd obviously twigged,
> they knew where I was coming from. We were talking in the bar
> afterwards and I couldn't stop myself after that, I just ended up
> turning round saying, 'Look can I ask you something, are you
> gay?' And they said, 'Yeah', you know, 'We're waiting for you to
> ask. Are you?' at which point I freaked out then. So you know I
> said, 'Well yes, I suppose I am'. But that was the first time I'd
> actually acknowledged that to anyone. And these two people were
> brilliant...the most important thing that one of them said, 'Well
> isn't there a Lesbian and Gay Society at your college?'
>
> And it was probably then, with this incident in the pool, that I
> allowed myself to be opened up to that possibility...a turning point
> there, I would say.

On his return to college Robin acted on the advice. He waited for two hours after a late afternoon lecture and made his move. The Gay Soc. members had assembled in a meeting room with Robin hanging about outside in the corridor, trying to pluck up the courage to go in:

> Yeah, this was an unbelievable day. You can imagine the
> adrenalin and everything, it was just unbelievable by this time.
> This particular guy came out of the meeting room, and I
> recognised him, and he was actually going to the toilet, and I sort
> of hid myself in the corridor, and I just leapt out on him and went,
> 'Are you from the LGB group?' And he just freaked, you know, he
> must have thought I was going to beat him up or something like
> this. And he said, 'Yeah'. And I said, 'Well I'd like to come and
> join you'. He basically just grabbed me by the hand and said, "Ohh
> wonderful, come on, come with me", and dragged me in to these
> people. He's um probably one of my best mates now.
>
> My personality totally changed at this point really, I suddenly
> wasn't this independent person that I'd been before. I was open
> to these people and became part of a group, and I would go and
> socialise with them...I became a lot more relaxed in myself.

The forging of a personal and a political identity was also an important element of experience in higher education for Gareth, Julian and Ed. Gareth ran a long campaign

to challenge homophobia in the curriculum, Julian's interest in Green politics and Queer politics led to him standing as an out gay man and Green party candidate in the local elections. The late 1980s brought a flurry of activity instigated by the campaign against the then proposed Clause 28 of the Local Government Act, 1988. Seb recalls the excitement of the national demonstration whilst Ed explains that this period was an important benchmark in that it introduced him to social circles that were influential in the evolution of his various identities:

> I started getting involved in politics, in student politics, which was around the time of Section 28. And through that kind of politicisation, I met a group of people who were much more interested in pushing boundaries generally, and it was an exciting time to be a student.

> At college, I went to Russia in 1984 it was just at the beginning of Perestroika. Most of the people who went on this trip, were either ex revolutionaries, I mean it was organised by two ex members of the SWP...so there was that group, but there was also a group of young left wing, earnest people, who were into Socialism, and were interested in seeing Russia. I found these people very interesting, and was constantly called a fucking liberal by them. Because at that time, although I had ditched this kind of horrible Thatcherite identity that I'd had for a year or so, I was only vaguely thinking left wing.

The various interest groups within the sphere of sexual politics at that time did not necessarily make easy bedfellows. Ed recalls how his bisexual identity was not always welcomed in lesbian and gay circles:

> At that time I would define myself as bisexual, even though I was for those four years, pretty much exclusively heterosexual, I think, in my relationships, with one or two brief exceptions. In the late 1980's, bisexuality in student lesbian and gay politics was an unmentionable word. These were the years when the NUS would put on the application forms to the Lesbian/Gay National Conference, 'paedophiles and bisexuals are not welcome', which is an extraordinary comment.   .

> I was discovering myself as a politician, and finding out that I was very good at it. I mean one of the things that was exciting was finding that some of the skills I'd learned at public school, I mean I was always in the debating society and stuff at public school, and always reasonably good at public speaking, but it was always very anaemic, it was, you know, debating at public school is all about kind of the way you put your argument across, rather than the content. But I found when I got involved in student politics what I was good at was emotionally charging that what I was saying, and getting across a strong feeling to a group of people.

An important turning point for Ed happened at one of the political gatherings he attended in the company of his new-found friends. It is significant in that it illustrates how he brings meaning to the various labels he attaches to his identity, and how politics, relationships, sexuality and identity are connected:

> And one of the people who was in that group of people was X, my
> current [same sex] partner, we had a very peculiar evening where
> during the demonstrations outside the Chinese Embassy over
> Tiananmen Square, X and I went off for a walk to find a pub, and
> I offloaded all this angst about my sexuality to him...I got very
> upset about it all, and we walked round Regents Park with me sort
> of half in tears, and of course that was where our relationship
> began, a bit of fumbling in Regents Park.
>
> We have a theoretically open relationship, and all of the
> encounters that I've had since then have been with men, although
> I think you know, (sigh) it's difficult, I mean natural sexuality
> means nothing to me, my social identity is clearly gay. It's a
> political identification, I think that there is probably a kind of
> bisexual inner identity somewhere, in terms of just attraction, and
> just because of my history.

6.2 Acculturation via initial teacher training

Paul, one of the older participants did his initial teacher training in the late 1960s

following a time at Art College. His observations about the transition from the culture

of Art College to the world of Education are typical of comments made by several

participants when embarking on the process of initial teacher training. Paul explains:

> There was never a thing that you couldn't be gay, and be a
> teacher. I wasn't particularly out, I mean I didn't promote my
> homosexuality as much as I had done when I was at art college.
> It was a very different animal to the art college. And of course we
> had two periods of teaching practice. One, in one year was two
> terms basically. I was living with my first partner, who came and
> lived with me, who was a year younger than me. He came to live
> with me when I was at college, openly, everyone knew we were
> living together. I must admit I think there was a little of me
> thought that if I promoted it too much, it might work against me.

Michael came to teaching from a career in the professional theatre and,

like some of the other participants, his evolving sexual identity had been

interwoven with trades union activity:

> I became very active within the trades unions [Equity] within the
> theatre, and was openly out in campaigning. It wasn't until I went
> into teaching that I had to sort of half climb back into the closet
> again and actually re-evaluate where gay men fitted into a large
> society. Because theatrical society is not a reflection of the big
> wide world out there, as we know it.

For Gary, the culture of a PGCE course came as an even greater shock. Gary was used

to the personal and professional freedom of travelling in the Far East and working in

private language schools where a significant proportion of the men within the staff

groups were gay. His memory of arriving at an English university and encountering his

student peers was:

> I thought it was full of straight couples actually, and I thought, for the first week 'Am I going to make any friends here?', because my tutor group was very small. Most of my peers were older and a lot of them were commuting from other places. They were married and had children. I thought 'Jesus, what's happened here?'

Ed, having acquired his hard-won sexual identity, was very clear that there would be no going back, that there would be no hiding:

> So when I went to my PGCE, I turned up on the first day with a huge great pink triangle, absolutely determined that I was going to be out on the course. Now there wasn't anything on the course about sexuality...I hadn't really had a chance to think about what it was like to be gay and an educator, or even talk about gay issues in schools. Most of the students I was with, had no openly gay friends, didn't really have any understanding of, or insight into, lesbian and gay sexuality. And I felt, you know, on this crusade. Having been out for a whole two years (chuckle) I felt absolutely qualified to explain it all to them, and then proceeded to do so...and to the lecturers as well of course.

Interestingly, by the time Ed came to do his first teaching practice, there had been a shift in his position when he realised that the social and political environment of a provincial primary school might be quite different from the culture of his previous places of employment:

> The first teaching practice job was in a small, fairly rural primary school in the north of England, good rugby club, but a fairly small town, sort of semi-rural, in this old mining community, very conservative with a small c. And certainly there was no question in my mind that it was possible to be out here. I mean it just wasn't something I would consider. And in fact there were jokes in the staffroom about sexuality...one in particular about some guy who'd turned up at the school to do some show or something, and was dressed in some peculiar...but some jokes in the staffroom about that. And I remember the first time I heard a child say the word gay, was like red lights and alarm bells ringing, and just unable to deal with that at all, and just being scared that I couldn't confront this because that child might, 'Are you gay?', and then what would I do? So I certainly, I hadn't kind of prepared myself, well you can't, I don't think. I'd come out to just about everybody else I'd met...when I temped in the holidays when I was at university, and I would always come out at work...I guess it must have been a conscious decision, though, not to come out at the first school.

Julian also began by being determined not to compromise his sexual identity. Initially all went well. Julian was used to being out and experienced no problems with his student peers. The experience of going into schools came as something of a shock after the liberal ethos of his work in a worker's co-operative and Julian acknowledges that it provided him with his first real experience of homophobia. Adopting his usual practice, he came out to the headteacher of the school in which he was doing his first

teaching practice. Julian quotes the head as responding with something along the lines of 'That's ok, but if you tell the kids I will have to ask you to leave'.

This remark and his experience of day to day interactions in the classroom put Julian on his guard. His sexual orientation now became an issue. He did wonder if this information had made its way into the school community following the previous year's local elections. He had stood as a Green Party candidate and had been open about being a gay man. The school was supportive when he received homophobic abuse from one of the pupils and this individual was suspended.

His teaching practice was drawing to a close and overall, Julian had a sense that things had gone reasonably well. One morning, just before the start of a lesson, a conversation took place with one of his pupils that initiated a sequence of events that put quite a different gloss on the situation. Julian had been teaching Humanities to a Year 9 group and over a period of time had become increasingly uncomfortable with 'flirtatious' comments that were directed at him by one of the young men in the group. On this particular day, Julian was wearing a new tie and jacket. Jason, the pupil in question, was one of the first pupils in the room and bantered 'oh you're looking very sexy this morning, sir'. Julian's feeling was that a boundary had been crossed – his dilemma was how to respond.

The situation was further complicated by the fact that Jason was the son of the senior member of staff (Trevor), who was the School Co-ordinator, responsible for students on teaching practice. Julian explains:

> He was a teacher's son so I didn't really want to mention it in the staff room...I wondered if he was taking the piss... I discounted that; he was a nice lad, he wouldn't have taken the piss out of me I don't think...I presumed he had a crush on me, which was something I just was not used to and I didn't really know how to deal with it. So I had a word with him the next morning before school, in private but in full view of people, I made sure of that. I said 'I'm not happy about some of the comments you've been making...I think they are inappropriate. However, if there's anything you want to talk about, that's fine...you know where to find me' and left it at that. I didn't want to go in and say 'Right we'll have no more of that nonsense lad, pull yourself together'...I couldn't have lived with myself saying something like that.

The next day, without warning, the head teacher (Tony) came to observe Julian's lesson. In his office afterwards Tony did not wait for Julian to give his account of the Jason incident. Instead he reprimanded Julian for making inappropriate remarks to pupils.

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A week after this, Julian was contacted by his college tutor and again without warning was summoned to attend a meeting. Julian explains:

> They [the Professor and Director of the Course] were sitting behind some big tables, like a court room setting. I had a tiny table to sit behind...the professor assumed I'd seen my end of teaching practice report (which I hadn't) and had to show a copy to me there and then. I just could not believe what I was reading. Trevor had written something like 'Julian is a good classroom teacher but there are some areas of his personal life he finds difficult to disassociate from his professional duties...Until he can sort this out in his head he might consider an alternative career'.
>
> They did not give me any chance to explain what had happened and they made me sign an agreement. This said I could not discuss any personal issues with any student without the explicit permission of the head either at any point on my course or at any point in my professional career.
>
> The professor added that he would have to go over to Julian's second teaching practice school and explain this unfortunate situation and 'We will just have to hope that they are still prepared to have you'. He kept referring to 'this unfortunate incident'...he couldn't say the word 'homosexual'...he sort of stammered a few times and then gave up...he couldn't actually say the word. So he went over there the next day and trashed my second placement.

Julian spent the next few weeks worried that he might not be able to complete his course. In the event, a female member of staff who was the institution's equal opportunities officer heard about his predicament by chance and sorted him out an alternative placement. In his interview with the male head teacher of this school, he was asked if he had just been naive or arrogant in the incident with Jason. The school agreed to take him on and Julian passed the next six weeks being completely closeted:

> I went out and bought myself a complete new wardrobe...black blazer with brass buttons and the works...really dark and sober and sharp...it was a costume, and I was just a different person for six weeks...a traditional teacher.

As far as Gary is concerned, the responsibility for the kind of episode that Julian describes, lies squarely with the ITT institution. Gary is critical of his institution in the way that lesbian and gay issues were addressed on the PGCE course:

> I couldn't see them, and I don't see them, not nearly enough. We have student-led seminars on such things as gender and race, multi-culturalism, and all these topical subjects, and yet I don't see anything saying what about the experiences of gay/bisexual or lesbian teenagers in the classroom. Or what about the issue surrounding a teacher who's gay, walking into a classroom. And what to do in a particular situation concerning sexuality and homosexuality. We didn't have any of that training and support given. And the more I think about it, the more the travesty I think it is that we aren't, even though we're respected as individuals and no tutor, at least in the university, would dare say anything other than total acceptance and committal towards gay issues and, you know, fine, whatever your sexuality is, that's fine. I don't deny that, but I they could be a lot more proactive in their approach towards us.

On reflection Ed, speaking now from a teacher union perspective, has the following advice for gay people undertaking ITT through to a successful outcome:

> My advice is always, your priority as a student is to get through the course and qualify. Now if you feel uncomfortable not being out, and you want to, then obviously you know that you can, that the union will support you, we all support you. But be aware that coming out at school generally is a slow process, and usually takes much longer than a teaching practice. Unless you feel very safe, be very wary.

And in terms of the strategies that he adopted for surviving the process, Ed adds:

> I got involved in the university Lesbian and Gay Society. I got involved in stage musicals, and was out in that, very out...I think I found other outlets, other ways of being, of allowing this new person that I'd discovered, to carry on living, whilst I was in this kind of closeted course.

6.3 In the job

The experience of the transition from initial teacher training to professional career drew a number of reflections on workplace environments and responses in the form of ways in which participants deployed various aspects of their identity. A recurring theme in several of the transcripts is one the splitting and separating of gay identity from teacher identity. Seb articulates this as follows:

> Oh I made a total distinction between my private life and my professional life. I'd be very much an enigma in the staffroom. I was quite lucky because people didn't delve too deeply into what I did back at college. A whole group of us would travel back on the train, and very often X [partner] would meet me at the railway station, and walk me back to college or something.

For Gary, the journey home from his teaching practice school became symbolic of not only a geographical transition, but also a social and an emotional one. He describes his professional and personal life as being:

> poles apart actually, didn't really see how they would come together at all....the school was tough, it was a hard school, it was a challenging school...I remember as I used to leave the school, and I used to drive out of Xshire, back into Yshire, it was almost a cathartic relief that I left it behind in the previous county. It was very *Thelma and Louise*, you know, leaving it behind me.

For Jim and Ian, an important strategy was to engage in some internal dialogue that identified and articulated professional boundaries. For Jim this means strictly 'keeping the I over the e' [intellect over emotion], as far as young people are concerned. Ian, working in a boy's school felt this acutely, as he makes clear:

> I was also quite clear that it was a minefield as far as working in a boy's school was concerned, and I made up my mind, I think almost within a year of being a qualified teacher, that however there may be temptations, and there were many, that I would act professionally. I would never allow my personal feelings, or attractions, or whatever, to interfere with the work that I had to do. Any more than I would have expected a straight man teacher to harass his girl pupils, as it were...You know, I could see straight away that that was just morally indefensible, apart from being a very good way to ruin one's career, and that I would not go down that road.

The demarcation of professional boundaries also had a physical manifestation in the form of the work clothing that individuals chose to wear in the classroom. The theme of distancing is evident in the following comment from Seb, who talks about the image he tried to cultivate via the wearing of formal clothing in the form of a suit, at the outset of his career:

> It was quite a professional image really, you know, quite cold probably...

Lee is clear that he tries to operate from a very professional position. When asked if he gives out any clues out about his gayness he replied:

> I don't. [Laughter] It's simple as that. Only a handful of people know I'm gay, and that's on the staff. It is not an issue with the kids. I do not wish to discuss it with them at all, me being gay does not enter the equation at all. It's seen as a non issue. I remember talking to the head about it. He was glad that I was able to confide in him, but he felt that, you know, 'You still do the same job. You still do it well. I don't see what the problem is'.

Robin concurs with the strategy of suit wearing, but notes that the eye of the trained observer would have noticed that there were clues or tokens that represented his gayness in his physical appearance:

> I had a watch with a freedom triangle on. I always used to wear that, because it was like something that I could wear on me that was gay, and it was important to have just something...it was very subtle, it was something that I could look at the and it was gay around my wrist...it was never picked up on...
>
> One school experience I was at, I went for my preliminary day just before Christmas...I was getting all my stuff ready to put in my bag. And in the morning I remember saying to my house mate, 'Do you think I ought to take this red ribbon, because this is the first time they're going to see me, do you think this says something about me?' I decided to leave it on, and then got to school and all the kids were wearing them as well....it was the beginning of December, just after World AIDS Day, and the school was obviously quite tolerant to having red ribbons sold and so on. So I needn't have worried about that.

Ian recalls his physical appearance being subject to scrutiny when working in close proximity to his pupils in a one to one situation:

> When you place your hands on the desk in order to look over at the work they're doing, and in the middle of talking about the work, a child will say to you, 'Sir why are you not wearing a ring?' And you know that that question doesn't mean, 'Why are you not wearing a ring?' It actually means, 'You're gay, aren't you?' I wish I'd given that child a prize for ingenuity. I forget how I side-stepped the question now, but I did.

Several of the participants either implied or articulated that there are certain codes of behaviour or expectations that are implicit in the role of being a professional male teacher, particularly in the way that masculinity is communicated. Robin gives the following example:

> I've met someone, a friend of a friend, who's a male nurse, and is basically as camp as anything. He's very relaxed and it's almost like it's expected in that situation, he can get away with being a very stereotypical gay person presenting that image...which is something you wouldn't do as a teacher...I think it does bind you in a way to a certain number of expectations. And it's a case of ultimately whether you challenge those expectations or not. But it's important to believe what teachers' expectations are. For example, whenever you train for a job you become a sort of person, don't you, you train to be something. And if you become a teacher, and a professional, I think there are certain things go along with that...

Later in our interview, Robin reflects on what he sees as the cost of constant back-watching and the cultivation of super professional identities. This manifests itself for young people in the absence of education about gayness and few role models of gay men:

> I know of a teacher in Manchester who's very out, and has
> supported students who have actually come to him and done that.
> And I think it's very positive. And I would like to do that, but I
> think you've got to know you've got the background, and have the
> support of the whole college or school to do that. But in the
> present climate it could undermine you so much, you know, that
> you are seen as this, just a gay person, who's there to be made
> fun of and all this sort of thing, then I don't necessarily think its
> something we should expect all gay teachers to do. Really we need
> gay role models. At the moment this is not the ideal, but we
> ought to have gay role models, whether they are the teachers, or
> someone within the education framework, or somebody visiting it.

For Lee, the jury is still out on whether or not he may eventually come out to the

whole school community:

> I haven't yet worked out the trade-off yet of, what would I gain
> more by being openly gay in the school? Or would I lose more? I
> mean one of the things that terrifies me is that I would not be able
> to function. I would not be able to teach. I would not be able to do
> my job effectively any more. I would not be allowed to by the kids.
>
> Yes there is a price. You are being held up as a role model and
> unfortunately society might not like what that role model has to
> offer.
>
> Max: So the price is you have to keep certain aspects of the role
> model under wraps, as it were?
>
> Hmm, yep, you have to be all things to all people. In some ways I
> suppose, you are really just an actor on a stage, doing a role. And I
> don't know, I think maybe I'm going to get increasingly more
> disgruntled with that, as time goes on. But at the moment, I think
> I'm just happy, I'm just still full of the joie de vivre of my current
> situation I suppose. The novelty value hasn't worn off.

Paul also makes reference to the analogy of acting, explaining that in his role as an art

teacher, there is almost an expectation from young people that goes with the

stereotype, that he will deliver some sort of performance:

> I find being in the classroom, in some ways, like being on stage
> anyway, and I'm never aware of myself when I'm in the
> classroom. I'm the person who's the teacher...certain mannerisms
> and things one has, if one tries to hide those mannerisms, then
> you're not going to be a very good teacher, if you're too concerned
> with how you appear. And there is the thing of being that much
> more flamboyant, and it's expected of you. I mean some art
> teachers who I've worked with, who have been straight, have been
> quite outrageous in the way they present things. You do get away
> with a lot more being an art teacher, than you would probably in
> some other lessons.

Gary describes how an incident on his teaching practice painfully raised issues of role

and authenticity in the classroom:

> I remember being in a Year 11 class on my own, on the last day of
> my three-week induction period, and one of the students started
> speaking to me in an effeminate voice, and lisping, and I felt that
> he was directly attacking me, and I'm sure he was. And I attacked
> him back, and the teacher walked back in the class, and he [the
> student] got into saying, 'He's calling me a stupid idiot, and he's
> being horrible to me, I haven't done anything'. I walked out at the
> end, and for about three days after all I wanted to do was cry.
> Because I felt like I'd been bullied when I went to school. Here I
> was, having not been bullied about my sexuality in years, and
> being in touch with my sexuality for a long time. I suddenly felt as
> if I was being bullied again, and being attacked personally for
> being myself.

Gary goes on to explain that apart from the distressing resonance with previous
homophobic bullying he experienced at school as a pupil, the hurtful aspect is that the
prejudice in the form of labelling is being directed very much at him as a person:

> Yeah, I think I would like to think I have a straighter persona in
> the class than I do. And what made me realise that at school X,
> within three weeks, I'd got badgered and labelled. And I wasn't
> mincing around, I wasn't being particularly camp, or anything else.
> But that's what makes me realise that you are the character you
> are, no matter what situation you are in. And that's just a part of
> your make up. And you can't, even though sometimes I do resent
> that and wish it was different, I do believe that its a significant
> element of my sexuality and my character overtly, through
> stereotypes, and through people's perceptions of sexuality,
> through behaviour, which puts me in the homosexual category.
> And as much as I'd like to disbelieve that, I think it's going to be
> an issue for me wherever I go.

Ian takes these observations a stage further when he suggests that perceptions of his
sexuality made by young people were often formed on an intuitive basis:

> I can honestly say to you, I have never done anything that would be
> considered professionally incorrect. Nor have I ever openly
> discussed my sexuality with any pupil. And I don't think I have
> obvious behaviour patterns that label me as being homosexual
> necessarily. But I have always felt, instinctively, that many boys
> knew that I was gay. And I think that adolescent boys are so
> acutely aware of their own sexuality, and it's such an important part
> of their growing up, that they are also almost obsessed by the
> sexuality of their teachers, be they straight or otherwise. And they
> sense, you know, in just tiny, tiny little ways, they sense that
> someone is gay without anything ever being said. And I think I was
> always aware of that.

Several of the participants referred to intuiting as a phenomenon and suggested that
this can lead to problems and difficulties in the form of harassment. This is usually
with young people whom they do not teach, but encounter in the school environment.
Dominic, a teacher in a Catholic school with considerable experience, describes how in
it becomes difficult to know how to respond to situations in which comments with a
homophobic subtext are delivered:

> An older boy, fifteen or sixteen who I'd never taught, making comments when I'm in the corridor. Such as 'Back to the walls he's coming', or 'Are you going to X tonight [name of city centre gay bar], or such like. Not to me, but for me, to hear.
>
> Others have been outside school, very recently actually, I was walking through town with my partner. A group of reasonably drunken youths were coming the other way. One said to his mates, "Oh it's Mr X". Normally when I see students or ex students outside school, they are polite and nice. I think this was an ex pupil, I'm sure it was said, 'Its Mr X, oh who's that then, your boyfriend?' I don't know what I said, but my partner said, 'Yes it is actually', and left it at that and we walked on.

Dominic goes on to explain that the sense of control being removed when it comes to knowledge about his sexuality makes these situations very stressful. The result is that the confidence an experienced practitioner might expect to have when dealing with these situations becomes eroded:

> There is a sense when I go in, what will the day throw at me, and will I be able to cope with it? And I think most teachers I know experience that. I experience it at an enhanced level, because for me there are other things which could go wrong, which wouldn't go wrong for other people. But other members of staff if they were told they were a poof, would say that they were not, would imply that they were not. If I'm called a poof, I've got to think of all kinds of strategies for dealing with it. I'm going to have to deal with it immediately, because it's not just a personal thing, it's an abusive thing as well...
>
> Has it got to me? I suppose it has, yes, it makes me feel anxious, and insecure sometimes, nervous, perhaps more so than it would for the heterosexual teacher, I don't know. I'm not a heterosexual teacher, I can't say. The experience of many teachers is one of sometimes feelings of nausea, and sickness. Monday mornings, I don't experience nausea but I do feel, increasingly actually, nervous about work and that kind of pressure.

Ian supports the sentiment of Dominic's view. Taking a retrospective view of his career of over thirty years, he makes an observation about the position of gay and bisexual men who are educators working in schools today:

> Personally I think I've moved on considerably but in terms of my professional work I think one is still vulnerable, almost as vulnerable as one ever was. Because, although society fools itself that it has moved on, and in some ways it has of course, nevertheless for many people in education, that word minefield is just as valid as it was thirty years ago.

6.4 Discussion

A striking feature of this part of the account is the diversity of experience presented by the participants. This is particularly apparent in the timing of the coming out process in relation to becoming an educator. It is interesting that for some participants this is closely intertwined with being in higher education, the role of various kinds of activism seeming to be a precursor to, or part of the exploration of their sexual identity. This results in a great range of identities being formed, often as in the case of Ed, spanning the political spectrum. Are they a vehicle for him to explore his sexual orientation or is his sexual orientation a smaller part of a much greater political identity?

It is evident that the experience of gay young personhood is also sensitive to the climate that prevails at any given point in time. On entering the profession in the 1960s, Ian was very quick to split and separate his gay and teacher identities. On encountering school environments, this is a process described by all of the participants, even the most politically active and aware. Perhaps what changes over the decades is the role of the initial teacher training year as a buffer, providing an opportunity still to be out in college to staff and peers.

The transition from either work or study to PGCE is a pronounced rupture in the narratives and would seem to be a powerful catalyst for the process of splitting and separating. The culture shock noted by Gary, on entering the very hetero-normative environment of PGCE is supported in the literature by the research of Robinson and Ferfolja (2001), who report considerable resistance to the discussion of lesbian and gay issues in teacher education. Mills (2004), attributes this to the influence of homophobia and misogyny that prevails in these environments.

For Julian in this situation, a rapid process of fragmentation begins to occur: the 'out' gay man, 'the progressively closeted teacher', the Green Party activist, the grudgingly conforming PGCE student, the caring teacher. The critical incident with Jason, the pupil, sets in motion a train of events whereby Julian ironically becomes progressively disempowered. The irony being that one of initial attractions of working in education for Julian is that it provides an opportunity to empower others.

The mechanism for this disempowerment is the withholding of information and the removal of his voice. This is done firstly by Trevor and Tony in the school who tell him that he must separate his personal beliefs from the job and then by the college hierarchy in the form of the gagging order that he forced to sign. This raises the question about whether there is some sort of panic over Julian's homosexuality: 'Is

Julian a very dangerous individual who needs to be contained?' It is interesting that Julian describes the meeting between himself and the college hierarchy as being like a court room scene.

At this point I am struck by the role that gender plays in this story. So far, all the players in the account, with the exception of the Course Director and the Equal Opportunities officer, have been men. Is the 'homosexual panic' response a deeper issue relating to sexual orientation and masculinity? Is this behaviour, consciously or unconsciously, a defence of what Thompson and Pleck (1987) identify as the three norms of masculinity i.e. toughness, status and anti-femininity?

Even in his replacement teaching practice, the Headteacher of this school asks Julian if he has been 'naive or arrogant' - I am hearing this question as judgmental - it says to me that Julian is still on trial. What is missing is a supportive response, e.g. 'you did the best you could in the circumstances at the time'.

Julian himself acknowledges that adopting 'the costume' of the sharp traditional teacher was a deliberate act to enable him to negotiate the remaining weeks of his teaching practice uneventfully. Waller (1987:162) wryly observes that:

> That stiff and formal manner into which the young teacher compresses himself every morning when he puts on his collar becomes, they say, a plaster cast which at length he cannot loosen.

The theme of performance, either via forms of dress or codes of behaviour, emerges as a strong theme for participants when established in their first post. These are the very mechanisms by which a particular persona is cultivated, although confusingly, this process seems to be interrupted by either the participants themselves wearing gay tokens or by young people making observations about their appearance.

At this point a significant contradiction emerges. There is an emphasis, particularly in the narrative told by Robin, of the importance of being in teacher role and being mindful of the responsibilities that this brings in terms of behaviour. Robin and Ian are both very explicit that camp, stereotypical behaviour is not appropriate. There is a theme of being an actor, of needing to be 'all things to all people'. Paul, Gary, Dominic and Ian subvert this discourse, suggesting that ultimately congruency between appearance and persona is important to ensure teacher effectiveness. At the end of the day, it would seem that no amount of acting will disguise their sexual orientation that young people are able to intuit for themselves. This poses an entirely new set of dilemmas, in the form of having to deal with the sometimes negative and hostile

responses from pupils. Given this danger, an interesting question to examine are the ways in which participants mange the sexual identity dimensions of their persona in school environments. This axis forms the focus of Chapter 7.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ACCOUNT THREE (3)

GAY-TEACHER INTERFACE: SEXUALITY AXIS

'The mythologies of freedom and adventure in the city depend on the privileges of relatively free movement. If anything, it is this free movement across highly varied terrain that embodies the celebratory version of city living – it is this collected free movement that creates the possibility of Sodom.'

(Bhattacharyya 2002:151)

Introduction

This part of the account explores the sexuality axis of the gay-teacher interface. The chapter is divided into four sections. In Section 7.1 the participant's experience of gay scene and gay relationships is explored. Section 7.2 explores the more liminal sexual spaces in the gay community and this is developed in section 7.3 by the use of narrative fiction as data Finally in section 7.4, I analyze and identify the issues relating to the deployment of identities in gay community contexts.

7.1 The Gay Scene and Relationships

Most of the participants in the research talked at some point in their interview about the gay scene. This seemed to draw a mixed response, especially in terms of their enthusiasm when it comes to venturing out into clubs, pubs and bars. Tom reflects on his reluctance as follows:

> I think I should have actually gone to the pubs more often, it was very rare that I actually did that...I just don't like going to places by myself...I think I'm just sort of reserved in that way......I think the scene is more for younger people anyway. You have different priorities. But certainly at that time I suppose I certainly didn't have the emotional confidence to do that. I certainly didn't see myself as a confident person who could talk, who could socialise. I think I just didn't have the social skills.

Ian explains that in the 1960s and 1970s his non-participation in the gay scene was the result of a number of factors, one of which was no access to any kind of network that provided information about the scene:

> I wouldn't even have known that they existed. I don't know what
> kind of gay press there was then. There probably was a sort of
> embryonic gay press, but I wasn't aware of it, and never read it, so I
> didn't know where to look for things. I don't know that I consciously
> missed that. I wasn't aware that there were things to look for...I
> never went to clubs, I wasn't that kind of person, and I wouldn't
> have known where they were. I wouldn't have had a clue. Going
> into the seventies I think there were a number of quite explicit gay
> cinemas in central London, which it was very easy to get into. And
> there amid everything else going on, there was quite a lot of overt
> sexual activity, I think.

As more social venues for gay men began to emerge in provincial locations in the 1970s and 1980s, the possibility of developing a social network of friends was enhanced. Ian still chose to hang back, however. The challenge of overcoming shyness and lack of confidence was one reason, but the prospect of being 'outed' when out on the scene was a much more powerful inhibitor. He gives the following example:

> There was a group for gay men in the nearest small town, which
> was about five miles away. I could have gone there, but I didn't
> do so until I gave up teaching, because I was aware of the, I think
> virulence is the word I would use, of the local press. And it seems
> to me that they would love a story like that, you know. And that
> would finish my career, embarrass the people I worked with, and
> members of my family who by then had moved to the south as
> well. So you know, clearly that was to be avoided.

The contrast between his rather constrained life as a gay man and a teacher, and in his more open lifestyle in retirement, is a strong feature in Ian's narrative. This is revealed in his description of how he came to be offered early retirement and the opportunity this then presented:

> And it seemed to me that that was an almost heaven sent
> opportunity, not to get out of teaching, because I'd enjoyed
> teaching, but to look at myself in a different light, and to develop
> other interests, and to go and live somewhere else. And I'd by
> then more or less decided that that was going to be the big city,
> because I knew the place by then, and knew that it had a gay life,
> I wanted to develop that side of myself, in a free way, away from,
> you know, the shackles of my professional commitments. I retired
> and within a year I'd come to live here...I would certainly have
> looked at the gay scene, and I wasn't sure what that would offer
> me, because I was so unfamiliar with it. But I knew about pubs
> and other venues.

The use of the phrase 'shackles of professional commitments' is quite striking in the above extract. Tom argues that his work load is another reason for not going out more often – he describes this as 'all consuming', citing the example of a recent weekend spent marking student's work. Robin hints at another meaning in Ian's phrase, however. Interestingly, although Robin is at the start of his career as an educator and Ian has reached the end, they seem to share the same view when it comes to

expectations of the role in terms of his management of geographical, sexual and social space. He gives the following example of this when describing his experience on teaching practice:

> It was a very hard school, was that one, it was the worst school I've had teaching practice in...The only thing about it was that we used to occasionally go down to a pub in Swindon, which turned out to be just up the road from where the school was... So I had a total embargo on this pub, there was no way I'd go near Swindon for this four weeks. In fact, for quite a while after that actually, just in case any of them came [pupils] and saw me go in to this place.

In contrast, he describes his nights out 'camping it up' when out on the scene on a Saturday night in nearby Bristol. The process of separation described above is also referred to by several of the other participants. Later, as a newly qualified teacher, Seb was working in a small town in rural Somerset where he was also resident. In this location, his nervousness about John's [his partner's] visits is apparent. Seb explains:

> So we'd see each other in the week, and at weekends he'd either come to Somerset, or I'd go to Exeter to stay with him. It was very, very fortunate for him because he was in a flat share with some exceedingly liberal people, who he told that he was gay, and they didn't mind at all. So we'd stay there quite openly on weekends, and sleep in the same room. I felt quite uncomfortable at times when he'd come to Somerset to stay, because it was quite a small town, and you know, invariably you'd see the kids if you were in the supermarket, and I felt I wanted to leave and get into Exeter to be far more anonymous.

The theme of seeking anonymity and invisibility in the greater community is heightened when it comes to visiting venues on the gay scene. Lee describes his early forays on to the scene and the accompanying sense of risk when he was a newly qualified teacher:

> So I thought, oh well let's try visiting a few gay pubs in London. Right, let's do some research. So I went to The King William IV, that's a gay pub off Hampstead High Street down there, and basically I met a rather charming Scotsman called Jamie, who I saw on a very on-off sort of basis, because he was very busy. He was, I think he was something in the BBC, something to do with the press, so he was on call a lot of the time, you know. I wasn't entirely comfortable being open about my relationship, so it was all done very covertly.

> I remember being incredibly paranoid about things, like what
> happens if some of my students see me in this pub? Or what
> happens if some of my students see me with this bloke? In fact I
> remember quite vividly, being in bed with him, and him saying to
> me, 'Lee'. 'Yes', I said. 'What do you reckon your sixth form
> would say if they could see you right now?' That made me laugh
> for about, oohh five minutes. But then, I don't know, I suppose all
> children don't really see their authority figures, like parents and
> teachers, as sexual creatures anyway.

In instances where participants had met students and colleagues out on the scene,
there is some evidence to suggest that these encounters could sometimes be
problematic in terms of creating a dilemma, ie. do I acknowledge them or not? Robin
recalls an incident with a student from his teaching practice school whom he
encountered some time later in a gay pub:

> I was back in the pub talking to a friend when a group of people
> came in with a student from the school I had done my teaching
> practice. I turned to him and said 'Oh, you are from such a school,
> aren't you?' He just swung round and was very affronted and
> fortunately I'd finished there.

The extract is interesting because there is a suggestion that there may also be issues
of self-disclosure for other members of the education community who are out on the
gay scene. For a young person, age may be a closet issue for them when out in pubs –
or possibly references to school may dent their 'street credibility.' Gareth introduces
another factor, which may influence the acknowledgement of other colleagues
encountered out on the scene. The complexity and potential difficulty of remembering
who is who, in which role and in which situation, is evident in the example he gives of
an encounter with a gay colleague he had met whilst delivering some homophobia
training in a secondary school. Despite the fact Gareth had spent some time planning
the session with this individual, encountering him in a different context made him
difficult to place:

> It was during the age of consent campaign that I took a group of
> gay young people up to London to lobby Jack Straw in the Houses
> of Parliament. We had been waiting on these benches for ages and
> he came up ...I just could not place his bloody face. Then he said
> such and such a school and I was like 'Oooooh!' And he went on
> 'And I saw you in Sub Station South [South London bar] and you
> ignored me then'.

Gary argues that the process of compartmentalising people and locations is not just an
intellectual one, but an emotional one also. In the following extract he hints at how
this may be a survival mechanism for teachers in creating time and emotional space in
which to relax:

> I could develop this really uncanny knack of being able to switch off, and I was quite surprised that I can actually now switch off from my working situation most of the time pretty well. I can almost put it to the back of my mind, and forget its even happened almost, and leave it for another day, which I never used to be able to do. So I find that quite exciting within myself, and maybe that was to do with the distancing as well. The physical distancing was a mental and emotional distance too.

Although the work situation that Gary refers to is his experience in his school placement, the distancing from the educator role when out on the gay scene was not total. A fellow-student of his PGCE course put him in touch with the local gay and bisexual men's sexual health project:

> I met a gay bloke who was on the PGCE course doing Maths. And he took me to the gay night-club, and I tried to score a guy who worked the Gay Project 'Shout'. I said, 'How do you get into this sort of work?', and all that stuff, and he gave me a flier. I ended up applying for a job, and got a job as an outreach worker for 'Shout', which was good for me, because it taught me more about the scene. I got more education on HIV, AIDS, Drug Education... I got quite a lot of training myself on these issues. And I felt that having gone through so much myself, that I was in quite a good position to know what other gay men might be going through, so to that point I felt like I'd come full circle, and I was quite excited to get that job. So I was working in night clubs, occasionally, handing out condoms, giving information, talking about safer sex, and providing any support gay men might want.

It was through this work as a volunteer in the project he brought together his role as an educator and peer in the gay community in marked contrast with his day time employment in school.

7.2 Liminal spaces

In section 4.3.3 I cited Ingram et al (1997) who argue the existence of a wider definition of gay community spaces that go beyond the commercial venues that constitute the gay scene. Coxon (1996:118) and Keogh and Holland (1999:121) note that, historically, gay men have always met in public places to have social and sexual encounters. The participants in this study also made references to frequenting PSEs (public sex environments) in the form of cottaging (sex in public toilets) and cruising (sex in other public spaces, eg parks, woodland, cemeteries, etc). Arguably, removed from the more socially accepted meeting places on the gay scene, PSEs constitute more liminal or peripheral spaces which may require different codes of behaviour, contact and the deployment of identities.

Ian recalls how he came across the cottaging scene quite by accident in the 1960s:

> I think it was at first by chance. And perhaps again with something
> of a surprise, to realise that there had to be reasons why people
> were actually there more than they might normally have been, and
> didn't seem to show any desire to leave, and were doing things that
> were obviously furtive... I went to such cottages though I never took
> that to an extreme. I mean I wouldn't have gone home with
> anybody, or anything of that kind. But I was aware of what went on
> and found it exciting, and I was sort of on the edge of it.

Given the restriction that he had placed on meeting places in gay bars for fear of
being outed, Ian had to resort to other strategies in making sexual contact with other
gay men:

> In the small town in which I lived, very rarely I did begin to
> usepersonal ads and met one or two men in that way...I mean it's
> curious isn't it, I suppose we've all got some paradox inside us
> somewhere, although I was aware of the danger, and I would never
> have done anything wrong while actually working, I continued to
> cottage. Which in a small town, now I look back on it, was absolutely
> plum crazy, but I did and met quite a few men in that way too.

Seb narrates his experience of cruising while an under graduate at university:

> I'd hung around parks and things for anonymous fumbles...I
> continued going to this park, which was a notorious cruising
> ground, and met this prostitute actually, which I kind didn't know
> at all until reading through *Gay Times*, the contact ads, the
> escorts, I recognised this phone number, and it was his number.
> We'd slept together a couple of times, you know, and had very,
> very good sex and when I was in this park, I was really surprised
> one evening to see X, this guy I got involved with in the second
> year, also doing the same thing as I was. And he didn't see me,
> but I was really quite shocked, and so I went through a period
> during my second and third year, of really doing quite a lot of
> anonymous sex with people.
>
> I remember this priest at Confession telling me that I should get
> more involved in sport and hobbies, and that I was very bad to do
> what I was doing. And it caused a great problem...the disparity
> between my faith and some of the things I do. And I still find it
> difficult to reconcile the two...I still used to go to Mass and feel
> very contrite, so it did have an effect really....Going back to this
> religious thing it totally coloured my time at college and, it's the
> old adage, you know, once a Catholic, always a Catholic, you
> never get away from it, and it still hangs over my head, even
> now...I just felt I needed to feel liberated. And yeah, I'm quite
> ashamed of that period really, I think. And I told myself, 'Oh this
> is an alleviation of stress', you know, 'You are very stressed about
> exams', and that was the way I coped with it. But no, I think it
> was a period of finding who I was...it was very necessary for me,
> very necessary.

Tom also narrates his experiences of cottaging and cruising. This data is presented
as part of the next section that uses narrative fiction format. The method and
schematization for this is described in section 4.1. The patchwork text that follows is
entitled 'Walking After Midnight' and is presented as four elements:

7.3   Narrative Fiction: Walking After Midnight

Text 1: End of Term

The final ascent of the year, up the wearying stairs. Andy braced himself...On the timetable, it was his weekly venture indoors into the classroom to teach Year 9 PSHE. The usual scenario, 'less conventional' teachers and those with a gap on their timetable were put down to teach PSHE. Andy wondered which category he fitted into – perhaps it was the PE track suit that gave him an entrée. Funny that, the messages a track suit can give; a cover for 'a multitude of sins'.

Today, it could hardly be called a lesson. More of a holding operation, a whole Friday afternoon reduced to forty-five minutes before the kids could go home. By now he knew the stairs so well – he glanced down at their worn brownness – how many times had he made this ascent this year? He knew intimately the textures, the irregularities that thirty years of generation after generation of users had imbued upon their surface. It had all seemed so intense initially, but now after three years in teaching he had joined the ranks of survivors with experience in the game. He felt like the stairs, impacted but not quite worn down – the architect of this building had won an award. God knows why.

He could hear the kids long before he got to the classroom door. Shouting, chasing around desks and knocking over chairs. On entering the room, the surprise was that those who turned up constituted a rather decimated group of six – all lads. Most of the kids had not come back after lunch or had not bothered coming at all that day. Those that remained were either too conscientious or disorganized or just plain barmy. Individuals who, for whatever reason, had nothing else to do but to stay until the bitter end. They draped themselves over every corner of the room, disparate and dissolute.

So how to fill forty five minutes with something meaningful?
'We not doin no work you know'
They were obviously not in the mood for working – and yet Andy knew intuitively that they would not be able to handle forty five minutes with no structure. He swept them up and sat them down. They quietened and fell into a kind of relaxed and easy conversation with each other. One of the individuals in the group was Daniel. Andy realised, somewhat guiltily, that this was the first time that he had had an opportunity to really sit down and spend some time in his company - the previous ten weeks having been dominated by more vocal and outgoing individuals who were now very conspicuous by their absence.

Daniel sat there quiet, neat, looking older than his years, his cheeks already showing the downy presence of a future beard. He held himself well – his clothes had that 'I've got a good frame underneath' look. To look at him you would say he was not a trouble-maker - he would be the kind of kid who could easily go by

unnoticed. The kind of kid that teachers would have to trot out a standard phrase for when writing his report… 'satisfactory progress' because he kept his head down.

The kids in the group also noticed Daniel's neat appearance. 'That's not school uniform', one of them remarked, referring to his black polo shirt.
 Daniel grinned and said 'So?'.
 'It's the logo', one of them explained, 'you're not supposed to come to school wearing polo shirts that have a logo'.
'What is the logo?'
'It's a City top', Daniel replied.
This was PSHE and Andy saw his way into a conversation with Daniel.
'So you like football then, Daniel?'
Daniel also saw his cue and replied at length. He told about the season ticket he always gets for his birthday (it costs hundreds, you know), about the new stadium, the most recent signings and his hopes for the forthcoming season.
'So what do you get out of it?'
'It's a buzz', he replied.
'Say some more…'
'It's being close to the crew, you know, the firm…the lads who are the hard nuts, the real men amongst the supporters. They are the guys who sort out the opposition fans; we beat the shit out of them queer bastards. We're not disorganized yobos, you know… These guys in the crew are in a different league, they are in their twenties' and thirties'. They have proper jobs, wear designer labels. I've got my place you know…'
He meant literally 'his place'.
'There's this bridge on the way up to the ground. I stand at the edge to get a really good view of the action - the other fans don't stand a chance – they get ambushed - and the coppers don't have a clue - they just pick up the pieces afterwards. That's the crew for you.'

Something inside Andy stirred, a kind of sinking feeling that, left to its own devices, could easily turn into panic. Every time this happened it felt harder and harder. Andy retreated from the conversation into an inner world made fuzzy by the need to sleep. In some ways this was the best but also the hardest day of the year. Just get through, get to the end, see it out…and then sleep.

A bell rang and Andy knew he had been spared. No more of this for six weeks. Everyone was released, including him.

He gathered his stuff in his bag and took one last look around the room. The dust was drifting on top of the cupboards and the faded sugar paper hung off the wall. He gazed down three storeys to see that, on the field, preparations were well in hand for the staff barbecue. Leaving speeches, a glass of wine; the camaraderie of 'the best afternoon of the year'. Soon, a fleet of four-wheel drives would be under starter's orders to make a dash home where caravans would be hooked, wife and kids collected before making for the channel ports by midnight.
'We'll be in Cherbourg by 5am – it's the only way…'

And Andy knew he couldn't face it. He slipped away. He was owed it, having played tennis with the kids till six most nights of late.

Text 2: Sleeping Bream
It was 5.30pm when Andy awoke from a Stella-induced coma. He had broken two of his rules – never drink and never go to sleep in the afternoon. He tried to focus on the pc screen whilst rubbing his eyes. Slowly the personal pages of Johnthegayskinhead came into focus...Why did he run his name into one word like that? He sat sluggishly in the chair, his baseball cap at an angle on his head. He couldn't remember how he had come across the site, perhaps through the links on gayskins.com...anyway, it was well and truly cached in his favourites now. These web pages retained a certain fascination for him; Johnthegayskinhead had a tendency to be very direct about everything, from sex to spirituality.

Andy scrolled down to 'places to go'. After the usual listings of gay pubs and bars, he came across John's guide to the 'less official' gay places in the city:

A quick walk from the Kiwi Bar and hey presto, your *(sic)* in cock land. It can get busy on a Saturday night and there is a lot of choice of rent, old farts, chicken or a dunk in the canal. It's ok for skinheads to go here alone as you'll frighten the queens shitless, but there has been the odd mugging and two murders. All the fun takes place along the towpath and just inside the park. Can get muddy in the winter and there is dog shit everywhere. The plod do visit but don't they always...

Andy smirked. The teacher in him wanted to tut-tut about the spelling...another part of him was envious about the freedom and lack of responsibility that John seemed to enjoy. This teaching malarkey brought a different mindset – it seemed to permeate everywhere – behave yourself, set an example, be responsible. And dealings with 'The Plod' were out of the question ever since the last time he was caught with his trousers down. He should have known. Blokes that cute in their twenties with cropped hair don't stand wanking at the urinal in a cottage for no reason. Sure enough, as he reached out to have a fondle, the trade whipped out his i.d. with his other hand. An agent provocateur, with his 'colleagues' hiding in the lock up - next stop, three hours down the nick.

He still didn't fully comprehend how he had got away with it. Let off with a warning and he even made the PGCE lecture in the afternoon – perhaps the copper really did fancy him? He felt sick at the thought of the consequences and yet he still got 'up to tricks'. On some days it was like a drug, he had to get a fix, he needed sex. But now he was more careful, no more cottages, only cruising areas...and always with the knowledge of how to make a swift exit if necessary. He prided himself on his preparation. Have your wits about you, avoid the CCTV, use your intuition. Why did he do it? He had sleepless nights thinking about it; sometimes he drank to excess just to blot out the thoughts of it. He had tried, really tried, to give it up – another one of his rules: STAY AWAY FROM THERE.
And he did...until the next time.

Maybe it really did boil down to horniness...sometimes though it was loneliness...sometimes depression and always for strictly 'no strings' meetings. At least, that had been the theory until the night he had met Leon. That, too, was going to be a 'no strings meet', and look what happened. From somewhere, somehow the bloody feelings, the sentiment, had penetrated his outer casing. It had been more than sex and he had been either too passive or too proud to ask for his phone number when they parted. He privately dreamed, ached for that guy. Four weeks later and no sign, his return trips to the towpath to search, just reinforced the ache.

Tonight, darkness had been slow in coming and the twilight cast long shadows over the vast green expanse of the park, the last of the footballers, dads and kids slowly drifting away to the nearby streets of terraced houses for baths and then bed. Now night came - by the time Andy got there a warm, still Mediterranean-like balminess hung over the tree-lined walk alongside the canal.

He scanned the length of the walkway, which extended into the distant gloom as far as he could see. Great shafts of neon light emanated from the factory windows on the other side of the water. A huge moon rose over the skyline, bathing the bushes and shrubbery in a silvery sheen - the stillness was only punctuated by the background hum of the city and the occasional plop from the canal, as some creature moved around. The activity was underway, the tow path busy with men cruising up and down, some disappearing into the bushes, others focussed in a kind of silent, determined searching.

Andy leaned back against a tree trunk. Hours could pass at this game, it was a complete lottery. Some nights there was just too much attitude and nobody wanted to know him. On others, he was fighting them off. He glanced down at his mobile, and noticed the 'message received' icon flashing. He listened against the ear piece: 'Message received today, at 11.14pm....
Andy?
Its Jo.
Where were you at the barbecue today?
Are you ok? Just thought I'd give you a call.
Actually babes, I'm worried about you...where are you?
Will you give me a call...oh just had a thought...perhaps you've met Mr. Right or Mr. Right-Now [giggle].
Anyway, give me a call, come round...love you loads.'

Jo. She was a star. Some days she was his guardian angel, a sister...always his confidante. What was it about that woman that he ended telling her stuff? She was the only person at school he had told...on a staff night out and after way too many beers. It kind of just happened. She had been honest in her reply. 'I had wondered...people are talking about you Andy. They're putting two and two together. Good looking bloke, not married and no girlfriend. And the kids reckon you must be too, though God knows, nobody I know has said anything to them.'

Andy sighed. Just thinking about it instigated a downer.

Tonight, in another universe, he would be with the four wheel drive brigade heading for Portsmouth...instead, life had dealt him this card.

'All right, mate?'
Andy was snapped back to the present.
Got the time mate? Fancy a beer?'
A young bloke stared out of the darkness, his face tinted by the cigarette lodged in the corner of his mouth. Under his arm he carried a clutch of lager cans, swinging and tenuously held together by a plastic top. His smile revealed teeth that shone out like some kind of beacon. Andy realized that this was an entrée, an invitation and yes, tonight he had all the time in the world.
'Been waitin for my mate...been stood up'. He laughed.
Andy checked out the newcomer. Nineteen? Twenty at a push? Outwardly cocky, confident...and such a townie, such a scally. The apparent informality of dress was actually carefully sculpted: Adidas trackies, Fred Perry top. ..and a lithe, muscled physique. Despite the outward appearance, there was something about this kid (and that's the word that sprung to mind), there was something about him that was unsure, unconfident, not definite. Andy knew intuitively, that there was more to him than met the eye.
The cans were cracked open.
'Sean'.
A hand reached out to shake hands. He squinted through a spiral of cigarette smoke.
'Steve', Andy replied.
'What do you do for a living, Steve?'
'I work in an office'. Andy's second lie.
'Couldn't stand it, mate. I work in a factory yard driving a fork lift truck...fucking office, no thanks.'
They sat down on the bank.
'I used to come down here with my Dad and brother, fishing all day. See that pool over there?' Andy stared at the inky blackness of the canal.
'Bream mate, that's where they lie on the bottom – sleeping'. He laughed again at his own joke.
There was a pause.
'So, how do you know if you are, then? How do you know if you've turned?'
Andy realised that this conversation was about deduction, a kind of exercise in 'filling in the gaps'.
'Go down the Kiwi Bar and you'll soon know right enough'
'Been fucking banned, mate.'
An alarm bell rang, and Andy wanted to know more but stepped back from asking.
Forty minutes passed. His story unfolds: his relationship with his girlfriend ended six months ago...he has slept rough...had to deal with multiple losses...friend was killed, problems at work...all this hit him a week after they split...he was being used...
The detail is interspersed with the same question.
'So do you think you can turn?'
Another pause. The alcohol began to assert itself. Andy felt its warm ambience and his eyes averted to the lad's crotch.
The scally caught his gaze and acted on his cue. 'Fancy some cock, mate?'

'Not here...it's too open. Through the railings, in the park'.
Andy knew the drill. The rhododendron bushes in the park
provided the cover for sexual intimacy, away from dog walkers
and the other cruisers. He began to lighten up so that by the time
they reached the grassy space in the park, he could hold back no
longer. He pressed his lips against the kid, forcing his mouth in
response. The lad seemed to be in some sort of trance. He slowly
undressed until he stood before Andy totally naked.
'You can do anything you like to me...'
Andy was so caught up by the beauty, and make no mistake – he
was classically beautiful, tattooed, firm and sculpted - that it took
a couple of seconds for the headlights to register. Two hundred
yards away a police car swept around the corner from behind a
band stand, the beam from a powerful hand-held light probing the
undergrowth.
Andy ordered 'Get in the fucking bushes now!' The lad obeyed in
an instant. The car was upon them in seconds and the beam
changed sides to probe the opposite side. It followed the path and
then was gone, almost as quickly as it had appeared. Andy parted
the branches, sighed and realised that he was shaking.
The lad began 'Do you want to...'
'Get dressed, just get dressed'.
The tone of Andy's order had shocked both of them. They fell
silent as they walked back to the towpath. It was as though the
incident had momentarily revealed, an aspect of their relatedness.
They fell into silence; it was embarrassing.
'Here's my number. Will you phone me?'
'Sure' Andy replied.
The lad looked him in the eye and decided to make his final bid of
the night:
'There's something else I need to tell you. I'm into cross dressing
and I want you to fuck me.'

Just for once, Andy was at a loss for words.

Text 3: Missed Meeting
October - rain all day - fine, unrelenting, drenching. Andy
wondered about it's significance. Is it some kind of purging,
sweeping away old things? At dusk the sky cleared. Stars and an
autumn moon rose over the skyline, bright and new.

Against his better judgement, Andy had made a phone call,
perhaps in a moment of weakness, a moment of curiosity. What
would happen next? But it was the lad's suggestion, this meeting.
Andy waited, he (of course) doesn't show.
'Just another ten minutes and then I'll call it a day.' Andy mused.
It's amazing how many times it's possible to say that in this
situation. Inside his jacket pocket, he had the pair of women's
stockings, still in their packaging.

No fool like an old fool'.
He wasn't going to come. Andy slipped into some self talk. 'We
couldn't have met because he was the wrong class, the wrong age,
the wrong level of education, the wrong job...we were just ships in
the night...'

Andy stood up from the bus station steps. Now he was tired, it was nearly 10pm and he had a full day tomorrow. Year 10 PSHE with Daniel.
Daniel...withdrawn, sheepish, brooding...no longer one of the lads, Daniel.
Daniel, who blushed when he caught Andy's eye.

Andy sighed and walked in the direction of the canal.

The tow path was busy again and the damp air was rising off the water. The factories hummed...men loomed out of the darkness...more ships in the night.

Text 4: Responses
Max's voice

I'm struck by a duality in my response. I am pleased. I am excited. I am motivated. I am energised. I am happy. A life has been made visible. A life that I have sculpted. It's someone I can recognise. It's not Clough's (2002) *weak character*, Mark Headly [italicised print is my interpretation]. I wanted to make Andy ordinary.

I am also nervous. I am self conscious. I am on the defensive. I am cautious. The text feels dangerous, I am aware that I enter into prolonged rationalisations for its existence in conversations with colleagues. I feel unease because it may not sit very comfortably with the 'educational establishment'. A part of me wants to hide it.

I turn to my supporters:
Bronski (1996:11-12) illuminates what he sees as a difference between mainstream culture and gay culture when he describes gay men as:

> Obsessed with sex. And that is a good thing. Sexuality and eroticism are extraordinarily powerful forces in all our lives and gay culture acknowledges and supports that...Mainstream culture is predicated upon repressing or denying sexuality...gay culture by its insistence on the importance of sexuality, challenges this.

Thank you, Michael.

Rofes (2000:4447) argues that the process of secreting sexual acts away to some private place needs to be questioned in terms of the conscious and unconscious dynamics at work here:

> When we insist that questions about sex acts remain privatised and support relegating away from sites of public discourse, we may be buttressing an entire apparatus of social control that keeps in place patriarchy and heterosexism and makes common disgust for male-to-male sex.

Thank you, Eric.

So why the discomfort, Max?

Tom's voice
I guess my reaction to reading the story is that it is quite
plausible. Of course in my case, back in the 1980s, the penalty for
cottaging was much more severe, so the reference to this episode
in the story may or may not be strictly accurate or representative.
I'd like to think that policing and penalties are more lenient and
understanding these days, but I'm not so sure. I've sometimes
wondered why I still go cruising. I start off with the best of
intentions saying 'Right that's it, I'm not going' but then after a
few months I do end up going. Perhaps it's something to do with
being an older gay man who lives on his own. I come home from
work, and there is nobody to talk to. Sometimes I feel stressed or
distressed due to the isolation I sometimes feel at work. So I
suppose it's a kind of management strategy. It gives me some
thinking time and it operates at different levels of engagement. I
can walk around a park at dusk and not interact with anyone, just
process the events of the day in my head. On other occasions, I
guess cruising also fulfils a need to connect, to be part of
something. Sometimes I go for the stress busting, but at other
times if I am honest, I go out of boredom. There are lots of
aspects of gay culture and this is one of them, it's what some of us
do. There are not many outlets for older gay men.

Cruising is not class-based, it's kind of exposure to a rawer side of
life. It hones the life skills of awareness and intuition – I have
learned to assess character, to be sensitive to verbal and non-
verbal cues – these are transferable skills to other situations. It
gives you a framework or yard stick with which to suss people out.
When I am at work, I and other staff sometimes speculate about
the sexuality of colleagues, students, etc. I guess I use my
experience to make judgments and reach conclusions about my
perceptions of individuals. Having said that, identities amongst
young people now seem to be more fluid.

And Andy, he deals with being stood up ok, doesn't he? Be ready
to be disappointed, be ready to be rejected. That feels real.

7.4 Discussion

This section of the account has presented data relating to the ways in which gay and
bisexual men who are educators, deploy identities in gay community environments in
the form of gay scene. On the face of it, it can be argued that a gay scene where gay
men can meet could provide a more relaxed setting in which participants feel enabled
to share aspects of themselves. The overriding theme emerging from this data,
however, is one of disjuncture. In fact this disconnection is so pronounced that there
is less sharing of their identities per se, than in some education contexts previously
described. This raises the question of precisely what kind of environment is most
conducive for gay teachers to share aspects of their identity.

In defining 'gay scene' it would seem that the participants share a common understanding of this, although Tom does use the term 'scene' when referring to the 'cottaging scene'. The intellectual and emotional responses to the gay scene are quite mixed. In Tom and Ian's narrative there is an implication that the scene should be a welcoming place. Tom tempers this with a number of personal reservations such as the perception that the scene is for younger people, the difficulty of penetrating social cliques, the challenge of going out alone and the feeling of inadequacy when it comes to conducting social interactions. This reluctance and reticence is attributed to lack of confidence and social skills plus a lack of opportunity due to the demands of work.

However, other individuals such as Robin enjoy going out on the scene, provided there is a splitting and separating of professional from personal identity.

Rhoads (1997:18) argues that 'camping it up', the phrase used by Robin to describe his nights out on the scene, is a kind of coda for deliberately engaging in stereotypical gay men's behaviour, that has identity-affirming or a celebratory meaning. In some of the narratives, the splitting and separating dynamic has taken on quite an extreme form, the distancing taking the form of significant geographical separation in terms of space and the identities that are deployed. Large cities are cited by Seb and Robin as providing the necessary anonymity to permit forays onto the scene.

This is a very significant disjuncture, participants arguing that this may be a necessary survival mechanism for gay teachers. The fear of being 'outed' as a result of visiting commercial gay venues such as pubs, bars and clubs is overtly stated by some individuals. Interestingly, this is a phenomenon common to participants of all ages, Ian, Robin and Seb providing evidence of this. The participant who subverts this theory, of course, is Gary who reverts to educator role out on the scene – but with a very particular brief in the role of peer educator in a gay men's sexual health project, a role which presumably does not involve the disclosure of his day job.

The issue of risk surfaces here – what are the consequences for me if I am seen with these individuals in these pubs/bars? This seems to pose two dilemmas, which may be more fundamental than issues of self-disclosure of professional status. These are firstly, 'Shall I go to that particular venue or not?' Secondly, 'If I see someone I know or have known professionally out on the scene, eg. colleague or student, do I acknowledge them or not?' The effects of 'world travelling' really assert themselves here, the task of retaining and processing data on locations, individuals and role, being a complex one that requires mental agility.

In situations where teachers have disclosed their professional status, as in the case of Lee and Seb, it is significant that this is to partners in a relationship of long standing, where presumably mutual trust has developed.

The issue of trust is a very powerful inhibitor to disclosing any aspect of identity in the narratives that relate to cottaging and cruising environments. In a major paradox that Ian acknowledges himself, using public sex environments contradicts and breaks all the rules relating to secreting gay identity. The subversive nature of this act is made all the more significant by the fact that this was actually done in the same community that he worked in as a teacher. Flowers et al (2000) and Jeyasingham (2002) both acknowledge the motivations for cruising and cottaging are highly complex, these environments being characterised by particular codes of behaviour in which communication is kept to a minimum. An interesting paradox is introduced by Seb who on the one hand associates shame with this activity whilst on the other hand acknowledging that cruising was an important part in the evolution of his gay identity.

Arguably, in cruising and cottaging contexts, the splitting and separating of identity is taken to its ultimate conclusion, in that few disclosures are made, these contexts being characterised by anonymity. In the schematization of themes emerging from the narrative fiction (see Appendix 9), it is interesting that an overarching theme of outward appearances and inward realities is apparent. This manifests itself in a number of binary relationships that appear to be in opposition. In the case of Sean, for example, his outward machismo gives no clue to his cross dressing activity or preferred role in sexual interactions. Similarly, Andy totally hides the nature of his profession although this surfaces in the form of a subtext in the tense moments between Sean and himself following the incident with the police car. Here, there is a suggestion that this is an encounter between an older (middle class?) teacher and a working class young man. Such an interpretation would seem to advantage Andy in terms of power relations. Ultimately though, it is Sean who seems to be in control, by not turning up to their pre-arranged meeting.

The issue of shame re-surfaces in my text in which I reflect on the experience of writing the narrative. The statement 'I want to hide it' is very revealing and forms a major schism. This comes from the intense feeling I had of dealing with two opposing discourses, namely the respectable, responsible discourse of the educational establishment and the discourse of men who cruise for sex. It raises the question as to whether the respective cultures of these two different social milieux can ever be reconciled.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

ACCOUNT (4)

GAY-TEACHER INTERFACE:

NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

> *'I take schools, in common with virtually all other social organisations, to be arenas of struggle; to be riven with actual or potential conflict between members; to be poorly co-ordinated; to be ideologically diverse.'*
>
> (Ball 1987:19)

Introduction

In this chapter of the account I will present data that relates to processes involved in the management of gay-teacher identity in education environments. In section 8.1, I describe the process of negotiating with self via two in-depth narratives. I then move to the process of negotiating with others in section 8.2 and in section 8.3 I relate some of the outcomes of both types of negotiations. Finally, in section 8.4 I analyse the data in terms of themes and matters arising.

8.1 Relations with self: internal negotiations

Many of the narratives contained in the interview transcripts contain a theme of reflection or 'conversation with self' that is part of the process of personal development. In sections 6.1 and 6.2 I presented data that described the experience of coming out as part of a political process intertwined with involvement in higher education. For Ian, Lee and Jim the coming out process was different in that in Ian's case it took place over almost thirty years. For Lee and Jim the process was juxtaposed with their experience of being well established in their careers. Ian offers an insight into the internal negotiations that he conducted with himself, tracing the origins of his self-imposed restrictions to personal issues that go beyond the need to protect his professional identity. The insight was triggered by his recollection of two gay friends who lived together as a couple in the 1960s:

> I also knew one gay couple, who lived together as a couple, and that
> amazed me. It had never occurred to me, and we're talking about a
> time when I was getting on for thirty probably, it had just never
> occurred to me that men could live together as any other couple
> might, if that's what they chose to do, not simply sharing a house,
> but as part of a loving, lasting, physical and emotional relationship.
> If I had had the gumption to realise that if they could do it, I could
> do it, I could have lived life differently, of course.   I think the over-
> riding reason why I didn't do that was that I had told myself that I
> was by nature a solitary person. You know that apart from my
> gayness, I was what is known as a confirmed bachelor, who liked to
> have his own way of doing things, and so on, and so forth...I had
> been so solitary as a child that as an adult I very much valued my
> independence in my own home, and I don't think I took at all
> realistically then the idea that I'd ever share my home with anyone.

For Lee the struggle to give himself permission to acknowledge his gayness really began during his PGCE when he was convinced that his female PGCE tutor sensed that there was a 'hidden agenda' going on with him. A tension in Lee's narrative appears to be the social milieu of the family in which he has been brought up with his two brothers and one sister in a small market town in Hampshire. Most of the time, life was centred on the family restaurant business and Lee recalls the closeness of his family from quite an early age. This 'closeness' was not so much of an emotional kind, more to do with loyalty and expectations. Lee recalls that from an early age it was drilled into him and his siblings that it is important to be successful in life, one of the criteria being the kind of job one has: *'your best jobs are doctoring, lawyering, accountancy or teaching'.*

Equally clear messages were forthcoming about identity and morality. Lee describes his parents as being of the 'evangelical Christian persuasion' and their children were expected to follow suit. Secondary school provided some challenging experiences relating to both his racial and sexual identity, which he identifies as being significant in his more recent exploration of how he sees himself today. He cites his experience of racism, which manifested itself in fights outside the school gate, as a difficult aspect of those years.

In his later years at school, Lee entered into a number of fairly unsuccessful relationships with young women before leaving home to study English at university. It was at this point that Lee began a relationship with another man. All went well to begin with and they shared a flat together. However the relationship broke up when Lee walked out, having been on the receiving end of physical abuse. Lee was quite distraught about this but felt unable to share the true extent of the situation with his friends, who just saw it as flatmates 'falling out'. For the rest of the time at university,

Lee kept a relatively low profile and following his graduation he returned to live with his parents and work in the family business.

Lee applied to university again, this time to train to be a teacher and following the successful completion of his PGCE, he was appointed as a teacher of English in an urban secondary school. The following two years were far more problematic in that, despite the fact that he immersed himself in what he identifies as 'displacement activity', e.g. unrelenting working, moving house and drinking alcohol, the feelings that he experienced for other men did not go away and the isolation that he was experiencing was intense. Lee describes how, to his regret, they leaked out one day when he made a pass at a friend who he had fallen in love with. After this episode, the stress in the scenario really began to make itself felt and things seemed to move from bad to worse:

> I was getting progressively more moody and withdrawn and you know. I did things to keep my mind off like, you know, move houses, get drunk. A good standby that, getting drunk. I remember talking to my landlord, a good mate of mine, about it. He finally prised it out of me one evening, after a very heavy session involving a couple bottles of whisky and he said, 'Well you know, there's not problem with that, what's the problem there? Maybe we should be more open about things'. So I dunno, being stupid I just ignored him, and got increasingly more depressed and withdrawn.
>
> Max: So I'm wondering about support for you then...
>
> No, there wasn't any support, there was no one I could really discuss it with. I mean okay, this landlord friend, X, I could try to discuss it with him, but I didn't feel he could understand it really from my point of view, because you know, he was a fully paid up member of the hetero society.
>
> I was still finding it very difficult to accept who I was, and what I was, you know, it was very difficult to ...... Hell I used to have trouble even saying the word, 'gay', never mind the word, 'homosexual'.

Getting support was difficult and Lee continued to experience a downward spiral of depression, punctuated by drinking. This began to affect his life in school in that he became increasingly withdrawn, which started to affect how he was operating in the classroom and how he was dealing with people:

> I was not teaching as well as I could. My classroom management was shit. I was not preparing my lessons as well as I could. Social interaction was down to a minimum, you know, just sort of sit in, good morning, take the register, shut up, copy this off the board, do this work sheet.

> It was starting to affect how I was dealing with people. I remember I was at one staff Christmas dinner I think, it was December and Y just hauled me, basically Y and I are very good friends, she just sort of hauled me to one side and said, you know, 'Look what the fuck is the matter with you? We've not been talking to each other for the last seven weeks. We've sat next to each other at the dinner table and we've not said a word to each other. Everyone thinks we're cross with each other. Now let's get this sorted out.' And I said, 'Well' you know, 'Well I think the problem is, it isn't you, it's, um, that I'm gay'. And she laughed at me. Which made me feel very silly, standing in the middle of the disco floor, holding an empty pint glass. And she said, 'That's all right, because I'm a lesbian',
>
> And then I started to laugh. [laugh] And we just spent the evening sitting in the corner just talking it through. And suddenly I thought, 'Bloody hell, there's is a lifeline, there is someone I can talk to.

For Lee, this was clearly a turning point from which he was able move forward:

> I spent basically the entire spring term rearranging my head. And I was able to start talking more about it to certain friends. Outing myself was very difficult...but generally the reaction was from non-committal to favourable. They still talked, the non-committal ones, not particularly flustered about it, and they've been very supportive. Admittedly they're all hetero, but I don't think that makes a difference really. It's really the support and encouragement that you really want. I've come out the other side much more comfortable, much happier about things. Certainly at the start of this term a lot of people have said 'Lee's a lot happier, a lot more comfortable, more relaxed'...I've put my own mental house in order, shall we say.

The price of retrieving a sense of authenticity, whilst simultaneously trying to hold down a teaching career, was even more costly for Jim. Jim is a gay man who now works as a secondary school teacher close to the town in which he was born in South Wales. He recalls growing up in a working class family with his parents and sister. Family life had an ethos of hard work and ambition and Jim was successful at school and went to university to study a Science degree. From adolescence onwards, Jim recalls feeling sexually attracted to both men and women, a fact he acknowledged to himself but not to other people.

Following his time at university, Jim trained to be a teacher and was appointed initially to a 'good independent boys' boarding school'. Jim relished the job and was soon established as a popular, able and well respected member of staff. Part of his success he attributed to being able to relate well to the pupils - he describes himself as a 'people's person'. He also combined subject expertise with a capacity to be in the role of a teacher. Jim was soon rewarded with success and via a series of promotions, he made his way to become headteacher of one of the UK's most prestigious independent preparatory schools.

With success came pressures, one of which was playing the various and sometimes contradictory roles in his life. A difficult and perplexing question with which he was wrestling was 'Who is Jim?' Headteacher? Family man? Man who secretly fancies other men? He explains:

> Oh yeah, I mean I'm the biggest actor under the sun. But it got the better of me. I mean, you know, it's a case of which head? I didn't realise I was wearing different heads; I do today. I mean I could be as camp as Christmas one minute, and the professional schoolmaster in gown and hood the next, at speech day reading the bloody lesson or at Christmas services, as butch as butch, as straight as straight. And of course, then I got married and I mean, my wife, ex wife was beautifully dressed, and I was beautifully dressed, and everything was with it... I mean, the image was there, 'the straight couple'.

Jim goes on to explain that sexuality was not the only aspect of self he denied. The cultivation of the successful headteacher persona also involved what he describes as the editing out of his working class 'roots':

> A further complication was the fact that I was in denial, to some extent, about my background. So not only did I lose the Welsh accent, and sort of spoke standard English. I mean I remember one housemaster's wife, after this particular Carol Service, she said, 'Jim, my dear', she said, 'There wasn't a trace of your Welshness in there'... I had no idea of what it was like to be me.

As time passed, Jim realised that the increasing lack of clarity about 'self' began to exact an emotional price. In his early twenties', following his own acknowledgement of his sexual identity as being 'bisexual', Jim began a relationship with alcohol 'that went beyond ordinary social drinking'. Ultimately this was to have disastrous consequences as alcoholism led to the breakdown of his marriage and much of the fabric of his life:

> I had a house built with a paddock and all this sort of thing, two motor cars, so there were lots of financial pressures, dinner parties, plus the booze, plus the work. I mean it was quite horrendous, and it all just collapsed around me. The strange thing is, I'd foreseen this, the whole scenario...and when it all fell apart I was just left in a heap. I had a couple of short stays in psychiatric wards in hospital. I never really tried to top myself or anything like that, but certainly that was part of the scenario that I'd foreseen. I'd foreseen losing my job, losing my family, and finally losing me. And I didn't, fortunately, get to that stage, but I was at the rock bottom.

His sister came to his rescue at this point and brought him back to Wales. Following the period of hospitalisation, Jim began the long road to recovery via the twelve step plan of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Fortunately he was able to draw on some financial assets and set himself up with a new life. After some years and some

debate, he decided to return to teaching. His initial reticence centred on 'would he still be able to do the job?' However he soon realised that he has never lost his talent for working with young people. So today, Jim's current role is in the state sector, where he works as a part time teacher of young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Whilst acknowledging that he struggles with what he describes as an 'addictive personality', Jim sees his new life as involving, amongst other things, a greater acceptance of what he is and what he is not. What he is, by his own definition, is a gay man who is enjoying hard won independence:

> I have accepted myself as a gift, as the gift I am today. And I can hold my head up with pride and say, 'Fuck you lot, if you've got a problem with me that's your problem, I am not taking it on board because I am okay with me today. I am my best mate today' And I really mean that, and I make sure that this guy you're seeing in front of you is well today. Because if I'm not right with me, there's no way that I can be right with anybody else. And I feel very strongly about that and that is part of my recovery, and my growth, because I really do believe that there's no stopping, you're either growing or you're dying, and I want to grow, and I'm loving it, and I grow on a daily basis. And it's not linear because sometimes I can suffer awful depressions, but I know how to deal with it. So you know, I do in fact realise there's a power greater than me in life, that is typical AA speech, or speak. Of course, I mean there was fifteen, twenty years I thought I was God. I mean, you know, there are only two things to know about God. One there is one, and two it's not me. And I know that today...for me its the paradox of the Cross...There is no healing without brokenness, and I was well and truly broken. So that's that one.

8.2 Negotiations with others

A second emerging theme in the data is also connected with the process of negotiations. In this case, the negotiations in question are the overt, covert, conscious and unconscious negotiations that participants conduct with others in the institutions in which they work. A basic premise of negotiations is that the parties concerned are prepared to communicate or acknowledge the issues up for discussion. Ian and Dominic both reported instances where the issue of gay sexuality is simply not up for discussion. In the first instance, Ian felt that non-negotiable position was transmitted via the school ethos:

> I could name a school, where the ethos is so overwhelmingly, crushingly, stereotyped heterosexual married bliss and nothing else is normal, that anybody who deviated from that would, I think, have a very difficult life, be he or she pupil or teacher.

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Dominic gives the example of a current situation in which he feels that the values of his Catholic institution are becoming transparent through the formulation of a whole school policy on equal opportunities:

> It's problematic at the moment, and I can give you an instance. The school is trying to formulate an equal opportunities policy. The working party is dominated by someone who didn't want to include sexual orientation in the policy document. He was persuaded to do so. It's since come back from the governors, saying that that can't be. So that's an immediate problem for me to do with my place of work, which something is going to have to be done about quite soon.
>
> I'd like to say, 'It doesn't make sense', but it would be clearer if I could say, 'It makes me feel unwelcome and not part of it'. I feel reasonably comfortable there, in the sense that I can say to almost anybody, 'I think this is homophobic, or I think this is wrong'. There are some quite clear messages being communicated that its not okay to have this particular aspect of equal opportunities incorporated into an overall policy.
>
> I know it's wrong, it has to change. It's right that it's challenged, and I will challenge it. And that's the right response as far as I'm concerned. But I don't feel it as strongly perhaps as I would like to, in terms of feeling. Because I have low expectations of them when it comes to actual policies.

Dominic explains that for him as a gay man who is a teacher, there is a knock-on effect in terms of an increasing sense of alienation from the ethos of the institution:

> How do I fit in the jigsaw? In terms of the work, teaching, academic work, I would say that I fit in very smoothly, all my little edges and things, quite good. In terms of the workplace, and how I relate to the workplace, not so much. Most of the people who work there have families, and are prepared to talk about their relationships, their partners, their families, always to other members of staff...and often to pupils and students.
>
> I feel that's something I'm excluded from. Therefore I don't feel equal in that regard, or treated equally. That makes me more angry than the business about the policy, I'm afraid. And that's where I see that unless one can talk about one's life, I don't think there is equality.
>
> Max: So is that anger about insensitivity on their part, or the fact that it's quite okay for them to talk about their, presumably heterosexual lifestyles, whereas you don't feel that you have that same level of approval?
>
> I don't see it as insensitivity, I just see it as ignorance and ...... [sigh] Perhaps I'm being unfair, perhaps I'm making assumptions, maybe if I was to talk, I'm quite a private person anyway and I don't think that's necessarily entirely to do with my sexuality, I'm quite a

quiet person. But I believe if I talked openly in the staffroom to all and sundry, and loudly as some do about what their 'partner and what I did at the weekend', uh some people would find that difficult.

In another interaction recently Dominic received an insight into how the institution sees the position of the sexuality of individual members of staff in relation to the job of teaching. Forced to take some action because of the incidents of homophobic harassment described in section 6.3, Dominic approached one of the deputy headteachers:

> Because of the first incident of harassment I thought there was no point in challenging the boy until I know what support I've got. I spoke to a deputy head, who I thought was quite 'right on' and aware of things, a man who has taught in London, and has been around quite a lot, and quite an interesting person anyway. So I asked him first of all if he knew what homophobia was. And he thought it might mean a fear of men. So [chuckle] I did a little bit of educational work with him, and then told him I was the subject of abuse. And he felt sure that I should speak to the head about it, but he would pave the way first, but he was sure the head would be supportive. So he went to the head and, 'The head will be pleased to see you. I haven't told him who you are.'

> He doesn't want to know whether or not I'm gay, and has told me that.   I think for a Catholic, in a Catholic school, with governors who are, some of them, monstrously right wing, some of them are out of the ark...I suppose it's as much as one might expect...He says that he would have complete respect for one's personal sexuality, entirely a private matter, with the emphasis on the word private. It's certainly no concern of his, and he would come down very hard on anyone who used sexuality as a form of abuse.

In this instance then, the tacit or unspoken agreement is that members of staff will keep information relating to their sexual orientation in the private domain, unless that sexuality is heterosexuality. Thus support, is traded for discretion. Jim recalls the same phenomena with the macho members of 'Rambo corner', a group of male colleagues who inhabit one part of the staff room. Dealing with these individuals requires him to be vigilant in conversation; it is important to 'think on your feet', as the following incident illustrates:

> In fact I went to a staff leaving do at a pub last Thursday evening, and the guy who was leaving, he is a member of what they call the Rambo corner in the staffroom. I mean the real sort of homophobic, butch hetero, 'all right lad' approach; sort of take the piss out of anything really, apart from themselves of course, but there's safety in numbers.

> We were in this pub last Thursday evening, and a senior teacher was there, and by that I mean senior management team, and somebody said, 'Watch it Pete, Jim fancies you', or something. It was in joke, it was in jest. And I said, 'No Pete is too old'. And there were a couple of sixth formers there, and this guy said, "You lads had better watch it". I said, "No chance, too young".

Another aspect of trading where the issue is possibly more covert or unconscious relates to the issue of professional competence. Both Ian and Jim were at pains to emphasise that they operated 'totally professionally'. In the episode of homophobic harassment that Gary experienced in his teaching practice school described in section 6.3, there is a suggestion in the narrative that what is being traded is support in exchange for professional competence. Gary takes up the account at the point that he was asked to put down in writing the nature of the verbal abuse that he had been receiving:

> It was suggested that I write a letter detailing what was happening. And so I sat down and wrote...honest to God, I didn't mince my words, I just cut to the quick. And I think I basically put the senior management into a state of shock, because they had no idea that was happening.
>
> I had a meeting with some of the senior management. The School Coordinator, bless him, even suggested that I should be a sort of role model, standing up in front of all the Years coming out saying, you know, what it means to be gay, and how it shouldn't affect people. I was looking at my mentor, my face had dropped. My mentor was like going, 'Don't worry'. I had visions of me being on the six o'clock news, and being stoned out of X [town where he was teaching].
>
> And after working myself up into a right state, I realised that you've got to be joking. And I just turned around and said, 'Look this is not an issue of my sexual identity, it's an issue of equal rights. And it's more a case of you looking at your Equal Opportunities Policy, and seeing how it relates to me'. So I think I really scared the school, because I think the difficulty with the school was they saw me as a very competent, very confident, good teacher, and there'd been nothing but positive feedback about my work in the class, and how well I was doing. And then for me to just throw this at them, it was like a jolt out of the blue, because they had no idea.

For Michael the tendency to overcompensate was a much more conscious process that led him to think about his behaviour and that of other minorities in institutions:

> I relied on, I suppose, the fact that I did my job well, and to the best of my ability. And I think gay men do, like very many minorities when you work, you actually do have to over compensate...I think that is tremendously demanding upon any gay or lesbian person, but it's the same demands that I can see that are made on any Asian teacher, or any black student. I don't think it's right, I don't think it's fair, but we are slowly getting to a point of more acceptance, and tolerance, and I think it's through that recognition of the fact that what goes on in our bedrooms really doesn't make one jot of difference to what we do in our professional lives.

Unfortunately for some gay men, as Ian describes, his dedication to professionalism, although bringing a pay off, also came at a price:

> I think certainly it cushions you against the awareness that your own
> emotional life is so limited because it is... if you're keen to do the job
> well, it is such a totally demanding job, you are literally exhausted at
> the end of the week...In term time, virtually one complete day every
> weekend, or the equivalent, will be taken up with some kind of work,
> and many of the evenings...In a sense, that was a bit of a snare
> because, although it was rewarding to do that and try and do it well,
> it meant that you were constantly holding at arms' length, a
> realisation of the fact that emotionally your life wasn't particularly
> well developed at all.

In contrast to the ethos of institutions described by Ian and Dominic, Russ describes
how shared experience has brought the members of his school community together
over lesbian and gay issues. Following his appointment to a secondary school in
London, Russ spent a day in school organising his timetable, meeting with colleagues
etc. One of his team members who was also a gay man came in on that day specially
to meet with him:

> The Head of Humanities had been off school nearly a year, ill. But
> I met him the first day I went down there. He'd come into school
> just to speak to me, and he had a fit while I was with him. He was
> clearly a very ill bloke, and he was dying of AIDS. I became very
> friendly with him, and quite a key supporter for him in the last
> few months of him being at school. And then he died the following
> Christmas, a year later. Of course, through that experience of
> how the school dealt with him, I developed a great deal of respect
> for the head, through the way that she dealt with all of that. The
> level of compassion, and the way they dealt with him coming in,
> and talking to his tutor group about it, and all of that was excellent
> and you know, made it a very good and easy place to be, as a gay
> man really...Since then another man has died of AIDS on the staff.

It is interesting to speculate on how this episode impacted on the staff and students in
the school. Subsequent to this episode, Russ relates that he was shocked by the level
of support and allegiance shown to him by colleagues and pupils on a residential
experience, a situation in which he felt some vulnerability:

> We went on a residential last year with a group of sixth formers,
> and I was the only male teacher. And therefore I was going into
> the boys dormitories, and having to, you know make sure they'd
> turned off the light, or when they had the pillow fight in the middle
> of the night, going in there and settling them down and so on.
> And I was always very conscious that they, you know, I knew that
> they knew about me. I was therefore very conscious about where
> my eyes went, I was super sensitive I think to what my behaviour
> was when I went into those rooms to make sure that nobody could
> get any idea, or misinterpret anything.
>
> Interestingly, one of the lads made some quip in front of one of
> the other teachers, who then challenged him about it. Not
> acknowledging that I am gay, but challenging him about his
> remark...and then other kids had challenged him. And she said,
> 'You know that was quite interesting'. And I think that's where

we're at really, that it's self disciplining and, you know, that's a very healthy situation.

8.3 Outcomes and actions

Negotiations, whether tacit or direct, can produce outcomes and actions in terms of changed awareness and behaviour, some of the participants described being more confident and assertive in their interactions with others as a result of their experiences. Michael partly attributes this to his personality, recalling the times at college when he used to wade in to take on the PE students who were great rivals with students like himself studying performing arts. He believes firmly in not letting comments and remarks pass, and recalls an incident that took place earlier on the day of our interview:

> Even down the market today, you know, a couple of the market lads were shouting to one another, 'Is your mate back again?', you know, I was buying some fruit and veg. And I knew they were bantering about me, and I just turned around to one and said, 'How much then?' He said, 'What?' I said, 'How much for your nuts?' He said, 'But I haven't got any nuts. I said, 'Thank you, you said it', and I just walked off...and that's the way I've always treated it...give as good as you get, and pick a fight if you need to, you know. I've never resorted to physical violence, thank God, but I think you just have to be bold and brave, and then face these people out.

Similarly, a strategy favoured by Jim is the quick-thinking response:

> I must have some sort of charisma, and you know, I don't, I mean as you can see, I'm only a small guy, I'm not butch, macho, threatening, or anything, but I can, I mean, I've got no problems with sixteen year old yobs, I can cope with it nicely. And I was doing supply in a very tough school and actually one guy came into this classroom, and he says, 'You're queer, aren't you?'. 'Ahah', I said, 'well they tell me it takes one to know one.' And they all jeered at him, and I had the whole lot then, you know, just in the palm of my hand......

Seb attributes his growing confidence and comfort with his gay teacher identity to a number of factors. The experience of working in a school with a significant number of other gay men on the staff affected the image that he presented in the role of teacher:

> It changed, I became far more interested in clothes, and I became less frumpy, and more fashionable...brighter ties, I'd go to Next and buy kind blue blazers, white Chinos, far more casual... It was quite significant actually, the change, and I was influenced by these guys.

In the retrospective review of the journey to his present position, he also identifies two other factors that have boosted his confidence, one of which is becoming a member of School's Out, an organisation supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in education:

> I'm entering my tenth year of teaching, in a new post at a girls' school in the state sector. I've been there for three days, and let me give you an example. Someone asked if I was married, and I said, 'No'. And she said, 'Oh why are you wearing a ring?' And I said, 'Well I have a partner'. And she said, 'Oh', you know, 'What's she called?' I said, 'No', I said, 'Its he'. So I got to a stage where I told her quite openly, which I would certainly not have done five years ago. So I feel quite comfortable really with the fact of being gay, and in a relationship, obviously a very solid relationship, long term relationship. And I feel comfortable with dealing with gay issues…I would be less reticent now to put up with homophobic crap than I would have been five years ago.

> Max: Has, say, something like Schools Out had any influence?

> Oh absolutely, and it's getting more involved in gay causes as well, you know, like Switchboard and I'm a member of Stonewall, so I'm quite involved in the gay community, and School's Out as well. Yeah, it's certainly had a huge effect, and I feel there's a support network there. But there again, I still feel as if, you know, I'm very much in a minority, and it's depending on the type of school, and ethos of the school, you have to balance things up before you are out. And there are people from School's Out who I really, really admire, who are totally out in school, absolutely amazing, and I hope that maybe I could get to a stage where I'll be like that, but again its balancing up. You know, I've got to a stage now where I would never, with colleagues, deny my sexuality or my partner, life's too short…I feel very, very strongly about it, you know. What's the point in living if you can't be yourself?

Gary also sees himself as being more assertive in his behaviour. His experiences of homophobic harassment on teaching practice (see section 8.2) gave him an insight into the extent to which he had become passive as the scenario unfolded:

> I think it's come from being so passive at School X, pretending it wasn't happening to a point where it was just destroying my self-confidence in the classroom, and at the school. I didn't want to walk out of the staffroom, was just scared to drive into the school. I think it's come from that. I think it's come from a sense of bloody mindedness that I have as much of a right to be doing this as anyone else. I'm very good at what I do. And it's not fair that I should be persecuted for something that I can't help.

The sense of injustice has also politicized him in his view of some other teachers:

> It frightens me the thought of these bigoted, selfish, narrow vision people can go into a class and perpetuate stereotypes which are

> going to be so damaging for all pupils, not just pupils who are
> homosexual or bisexual, but for straight pupils as well. Because
> they're going to have these stereotypes reiterated to them as well.
> So homosexual students are going to feel fear for themselves, and
> non-homosexual students are going to be taught in their
> ridicule...these children are impressionable.

Michael recalls how, in his most recent post, he was determined to be out about his
sexuality from the very beginning. When asked about how this was engineered with
the headteacher, Michael replied:

> Michael: Because I told him at my interview. I was quite out and
> open at that point.
>
> Max: So what was his response to that, then?
>
> Michael: That shouldn't be a problem here for us, for the staff.
>
> Max: Is this guy different to the previous generation of incoming
> theatre directors, incoming heads of primary schools?
>
> Michael: Yes he is, yes he is. I think he's very prepared to learn,
> and listen, and grow with his staff. The staff is very much closer
> at this new institution than I've ever worked with before. We
> laugh, we play, we cry together, and I've never felt so much part
> of a school as I do. We discuss everything quite openly.
>
> Max: So you are out to your colleagues then, Michael?
>
> Michael: All my colleagues, yes. In fact, since I've been there, one
> of my colleagues has come out as a lesbian, to the boys as well as
> to the staff. And she felt she was able to do that, because she had
> the support of two more gay male members of staff, who were out
> to our colleagues. I've chosen not to come out to my pupils, in
> terms of the fact that there is no need to at the present time.
> Although I might have to quite quickly. I'm doing some work with
> one pupil at the moment, who's trying to deal with his own
> sexuality, and his own experimentation. And I think, well I know,
> the moment he says to me, 'Are you gay?' You know, I will say,
> 'Yes' to him, because I refuse to lie to the pupils. But I will not be
> overtly open with them, because they found dealing with a lesbian
> member of staff quite difficult for some of them...so I wouldn't
> want it to affect them adversely, but at the same time I wouldn't
> lie to them.

Given the multiple options that now seem to exist for Michael in terms of disclosures,
responses, and deployments of his gay-teacher identity I was then curious about how
these elements worked in relation to each other when he was in school:

> Max: Hmm, thinking in terms of the whole you, which has clearly
> several if not many components, gayness being one of them, how
> do you feel when you walk into school now? Do you feel like I'm
> putting my gayness to one side, and I'm just going to be, Michael

the teacher, or do you think that it is a more holistic person that arrives there every day?

Michael: [Sigh] I would like to think it's a more holistic person that arrives there every day, but I know it isn't. I do go in very much as Michael the teacher, I play different roles. I play Michael the teacher, Michael the mediator/counsellor. I also play the game of Michael the showbiz person as well. I go backwards and forwards, and sometimes those worlds collide. And sometimes it's an unhappy collision of worlds, but most of the time it's all right, it works, it's me, and I just work through it.

I don't feel there's a great deal of conflict, because I won't let there be conflict in it, and that's why. I try to find a great sense of purpose in myself, and a great happiness in myself. So I think that can almost become, without being big-headed, infectious, in a word. It carries on and, oh yeah well that's just Michael, you know, and people let that go.

The question of whether gay teachers should be out to their pupils also posed something of a dilemma for Ed, who by the time he was appointed in his most recent school, had become heavily involved in School's Out. Initially, Ed relates the negotiation that he had with the headteacher as follows:

I went to the head and said, 'Look I'm involved in this organisation, I wanted you to know. I'd quite like to tell the governors please, just in case anything ever popped up in a newspaper or whatever'. And he was fine and said "Yeah that's fine, although of course it wouldn't be appropriate to tell the children about it".   At that point, his position was you know, what I did outside was fine, but in school it was a personal thing

Ed goes on to say that as his activism in lesbian and gay issues in education developed he wrote several letters to the *Times Educational Supplement* and latterly made one tv appearance. His more public persona now seemed to challenge the boundaries of the initial agreement:

As time went on, that became an unsatisfactory position for me, and I wanted to be out to the kids as well. I was kind of writing articles for the *Times Ed* or whatever, and wanted to feel safe. I didn't feel safe having my name in print when parents or whoever could read it, I didn't want to be vulnerable. So the first time I wrote for the *Times Ed,* I informed the head again and said that I'd written this. The governing body was very good about it. and then I wrote an article to the *Times Ed* where I basically talked about coming out, saying that I wanted to come out, and explained why.

I was kind of very out, I felt that here were these kids growing up in the same environment, you know, the same situation of ignorance that we all grew up in really at school, nearly all of us, not knowing anything about sexuality other than these vague

> ideas they might get from wherever. And here they were with a
> gay teacher and didn't know it, and had no way of using that
> knowledge to try and, you know, get a better idea of the world.
> As time went by, I felt more and more strongly about this, sort of
> hearing homophobic language used in school, and thinking, what
> difference would it make if they knew... how would these kids react
> if they knew I way gay? Would it change the way that they use
> language?

An opportunity for re-negotiating the initial agreement seemed to present itself via the
task of reviewing the school's equal opportunities policy and Ed took the initiative by
drafting a section for the governing body to consider:

> I wrote a paragraph that the school recognises that the children
> live in a diverse community, and considers it a good thing if the
> children see that community reflected in the staff of the
> school...The school therefore strongly supports teachers who are
> living in unmarried relationships, or have children without being
> married, or who are lesbian or gay, and who choose to be open
> about those relationships, with the children.

> People who, you know, four years earlier, had been caught making
> homophobic jokes, were all now saying, 'Yeah absolutely in favour
> of this'. J, the head, who as I said earlier, previously had said,
> you know, obviously it wouldn't be appropriate to talk to the
> children about this, now two or three years later was saying, 'Yeah
> fine'. What absolutely amazed me, and still it's still a wonderful
> thing, was that the parent governors started kind of banging the
> table and saying, you know, 'This is something that our children
> have a right to, I think this is absolutely essential'.

Some time passed before Ed was able to put his new strategy to the test, given the
fact that he had elected not to make any big announcement but rather to offer a
response when young people raised the issue. He describes what happened as follows:

> At the end of that year there was a child in the class who called
> someone else gay, or something, and I just kind of asked about it,
> and said you know, 'Do you think that's a bad thing? Are you
> insulting them?' And they kind of said, 'No'. I said, 'Well, because
> I'm gay'. And some of the boys, this kind of high status clique,
> kind of looked at each other...but generally speaking, their reaction
> was just pretty nonplussed, and not much of a reaction. One boy
> came up to me after the lesson and said, 'One of my uncles's gay'
> or something. That was kind of that, really. I waited for the news
> to spread, and got back in to school the next day. Nothing,
> nothing, they hadn't told anyone. And even by a year later, when
> I came out to my next class, none of them knew, not one of them
> knew.

> I think we just drew a closet around the classroom, treated it as
> confidential.
> The reason I decided I wanted to come out was, walking through
> the lunch hall one day when the kids were eating, and someone
> saying to me, 'F says you're gay, sir'. And just wanting

desperately to say, 'Yes, is there something wrong with that?' I
just wanted to be able to do that.

8.4 Discussion

Negotiations manifest themselves in a number of forms in these narratives. For some
participants, negotiations conducted internally with oneself is a significant theme,
particularly in the context of coming to terms with their sexuality. Understanding the
multidimensional nature of identity is a key part of the struggle for both Lee and Jim.

It is evident from Lee's narrative that there are many facets to his identity, eg. being
a Chinese man, a UK national, a good humoured brother, a dutiful son, a man with a
struggling personal journey, a 'together' professional persona as an educator, a gay
man. The juxtaposition of these identities produces some interesting fractures and
contradictions. For example, I can only speculate on how difficult or easy it might be
to be gay and Chinese in rural Hampshire. There is a close affiliation with his family
and a strong 'moral' lead from his parents on subjects ranging from religion to the
importance of ambition and gaining 'a good job'.

In terms of self-identity, Jim's story is full of fractures and disjunctures. The question
that runs throughout is 'Who is Jim?' There are so many facets to his identity and
roles which he plays with great aplomb, that even Jim does not know the answer to
this question.

In Lee's case it is apparent that there is a process in train in his efforts to explore his
gay identity. Initially, he has an unsuccessful relationship with a man at university,
then keeps a low profile, then returns to his family. He moves on again, this time to
embark upon his teacher-training course, using his presence in the 'big city' to
research the local gay scene. This is not very positive - it must seem very 'white' - I
am curious about how Chinese gay men experience this. What is this interface like?
This coming out process provides another example of a disjuncture. Far from being a
linear progression, coming out is fractured itself, in this case being more akin to Cass's
(1979) model of spiralling, in which individuals advance and retreat.

I return to the position of Lee in relation to his family. Does he experience a crisis of
loyalty - 'the dutiful son' versus 'the rebellious son'? I sense that this tension sets off
ambivalent feelings in Lee. The ties and bonds of family loyalty are intertwined with
the norms and values of that unit with which he seems to be in conflict. Is he also
experiencing a violent break with religion? Does this make it even harder? Does it
enhance the guilt? Lee says that such a break is an 'act of disobedience'- is this Lee

entering a kind of belated adolescence? I am wondering if society infantilises gay men, somehow keeps them child-like, demotes them to the same status as children and old men in the hierarchy of masculinities as suggested by Carrigan et al (1985).

The role of alcohol in the narratives is disturbing and contradictory. It seems to be used as an anaesthetic in relieving emotional pain in the case of Jim, and a facilitator of an important coming out conversation for Lee. What is implied in the short extract relating to Lee presented in the account, is the depth of his emotional pain. Insights into this are more evident in his personal diary, in which he recounts in a very moving way the experience of coming out to another very close friend. Even here, this is somewhat masked by his stoical style of writing, punctuated by humour.

As Lee experiences greater depression, what began as a major fracture in his identity, i.e. the boundary between his personal self and his professional self, also becomes blurred as he starts to become dysfunctional at work also. I am curious about the role of school in Lee's story. Is it an extension of his family - being a respectable, approved of job - one from the 'approved of list'? Is the shame internalised from family also internalised from school? This takes on particular significance in that I wonder if Lee is negotiating a role here.

Whereas Lee seems to come through the process, the consequences for Jim are more severe in that a chain of events moves through a sequence of rupture, break up, collapse and eventual recovery. A strong theme of authenticity versus inauthenticity begins to emerge, with an acceptance towards the end of the account that Jim is gay. It is interesting that in his new persona, Jim not only comes out as a different person but in a different role in and in a different sector of education.

The negotiations conducted with others in education environments are complex in that they are multifaceted. Some are conscious and overt as in the case of Michael, Gary and Ed, whilst others are covert and possibly unconscious as in the case of Dominic and Jim. A strong theme of splitting and separating emerges again here, particularly when it comes to the expression of institutional values. The tacit agreement apparent in Dominic's school of tolerance being traded for discretion is also evident in Jim's dealings with the alpha males in Rambo corner. Whilst such agreements may survive in an unproblematic way for some time, events may ultimately render them ineffective. A good example of this is the way in which Dominic's and Gary's narratives are ruptured by the homophobic harassment they are subjected to. In these situations action has to be taken and the institution is pushed into making a response. It is interesting to note the kinds of currency that are traded in these situations. For Dominic, Michael, Jim and Gary their trump cards appear to professionalism,

competence and conscientiousness as teachers. Michael suggests that this comes at a price in terms of expectations that are placed on them as members of a minority. Russ provides the only example of a fairer trade off, in his account of how physical suffering experienced by the colleague living with HIV is traded for compassion and transparency with the school community.

Assertiveness and strategising appear to be key components of the overt negotiations conducted by some of the men in the narratives. It is interesting that the experience of his teaching practice puts Gary back in touch with his rights and jolts him out of his passive behaviour. Michael's openness about his sexuality at interview gives him greater freedom to be himself. Again, although it is qualified by the notion of still being in role, there is a suggestion that Michael is able to trade on his individuality in accessing a number of different personae, which just collide and he works his way through.

Interestingly, both Ed's and Dominic's narratives refer to the process of making institutional equal opportunities policies as one that reveals values in relation to homosexuality. Of all the participants it is Ed who employs political strategies to the maximum effect. A theme in his narrative is on going dialogue and asking for more. Ed is prepared to renegotiate his position, in marked contrast to Dominic's position in which overt negations are out of the question because of the tacit way in which homosexuality is dealt with by his school.

In summary, negotiations involving gay and bisexual men who are educators appear to be complex processes. These transactions are multi-layered taking place within the individual in the form of a dialogue with self, and with the social world on the outside. Some negotiations are conscious and some are unconscious processes. The skill of consciously negotiating appears to be a dynamic process in which time and experience shift both the level of competency of the individual and their negotiating position. Unconscious negotiations are much more subtle and appear to be related the unspoken value positions that individuals (including the participants of this research) and individuals hold in relation to homosexuality.

Chapter Nine

A QUEER SYNTHESIS

'The only thing to be afraid of is the messiness and complexity of life itself. Though granted, that can be very scary indeed.'

(Hall, 2003:14)

Introduction

In this chapter I want to adopt a more distant position by combining the agenda of matters arising from the four chapters of the account to form a more complex, product. Lugones (1989:275), offers a useful metaphor in the form of 'world travelling' to describe her experience as a woman of colour of moving between many different social 'worlds' that constitute mainstream American society. In some she is an 'insider' sharing the physical and cultural characteristics of its inhabitants. In others she feels very much in a minority and on the outside. I want to argue that the experiences of gay and bisexual men who are educators has parallels with the experiences of Lugones.

Consider the following scenario. A gay man works as a secondary school teacher and lives in an open relationship with another man. He wakes up next to his partner, dresses and travels to school. His first group membership of the day is at the pre-school meeting of staff the purpose of which is to exchange messages and be briefed on the day. From there he proceeds to tutor period followed by year assembly. The morning timetable then begins and he teaches a series of groups in one-hour lessons punctuated by break, when he is on duty and mixes with the larger school population in the school grounds. At lunch time he attends a faculty team meeting and the afternoon is spent teaching, more break duty and a free period when he temporarily becomes a member of a more intimate group of colleagues who chat in the corner of the staff room. On then to his classroom, that needs to be made more presentable for the Year 10 parents evening, which with a reasonably good turnout, may generate at least twelve sets of interactions, each one constituting a temporary group. He is released at 8.30pm and heads into town to a gay bar. Over the period of two hours he chats to friends in various small groupings. At 10.00pm the relaxing effects of alcohol and the cruisy presence of other gay men result in a diversion to the car park of a local nature reserve on the way home. He has sex with two other men. Finally he goes home and climbs into bed with his partner.

That could constitute membership of between twenty and thirty different groups and interaction with up to two hundred different people in which he deploys personae

ranging from the consummate professional to the object of sexual fantasy. It is a journey that encompasses diverse social and cultural worlds in which morality is constructed in different ways. A further layer of complexity is added when the fact that not all gay men frequent the scene is factored into the equation. These individuals may spend time either alone or in mainly predominantly heterosexual social environments. To review the total range of social worlds inhabited by gay and bisexual men who are educators is beyond the scope of this research. Instead the consideration of identity deployment strategies will be limited to the environments identified in the research questions, ie. education environments and gay community environments. A key question that I will explore in this chapter is what constitutes the decisions and responses involved in the process of identity deployment in these contrasting environments?

In structuring this exploration, I will adopt a sequential approach by first considering the characteristics of the environments that gay teachers inhabit and the relationship between social space and identity. I then go on to speculate that the responses made by the men can be conceptualised into three models of identity deployment, which are sensitive to and the product of the worlds that they inhabit, and the longer term process of identity formation that the individual may be engaged in.

9.1 Understanding environments

9.1.1 Ethos of schools

It is clear from the data that a considerable range of experience in educational institutions is represented here. The institutions themselves are diverse in terms of setting - participants work in a variety of contexts, ranging from state secondary and primary schools, independent schools, special schools, schooling in hospitals, to schools with particular religious affiliations. Previous studies (Driscoll et al 1996, Button 1996, 2001) suggest that a key question in understanding how LGBT persons deploy their identity in the work place must relate to the nature of the participant's perceptions and responses to each of these environments. Gonsiorek (1993) suggests that this is a sequential process, experiences in these environments informing a moment by moment risk assessment exercise which, in turn, dictates the behaviours and identities that are deployed.

Writers about school environments frequently make reference to the atmosphere or ethos that exists in institutions. Donnelly (2000:135) notes the frequency of these references but argues that the task of producing a generalisable definition remains very elusive. He provides a rationale for a focus on ethos as follows:

> The importance of conceptualising and understanding what ethos
> is lies in what it can reveal about social process, activity and
> structure. Furthermore, such discussion can encourage an
> appreciation of how the observed practices and behaviour of
> school members support and foster the official ethos which is
> promoted in school documentary sources.

Implicit in the above quotation is the notion that school ethos is complex, being informed by both official and unofficial sources. Donnelly (ibid), drawing on the earlier work of Breen and Donaldson (1995), makes a distinction between positivist and anti-positivist perspectives on ethos, noting that positivist perspectives are based on the fact that ethos is an objective phenomenon that exists independent of personnel and social interaction in the institution and is evidenced by formal expression of the authorities' aims and objectives for that institution. In contrast, an anti-positivist perspective on ethos is that it is something more informal, arising from social interaction and process that is never formally documented or stated. These interactions should not be seen as independent from the institution but are inherently bound up in it, producing and reproducing ethos on a daily basis. Thus, informal and formal expressions made by members of the school community over a period of time come to reflect the cultural norms, assumptions and beliefs of the institution. Both Bensimon (1992) and Epstein (1994) point to the ways in which cultures in organisations are represented by the discourses that are encountered within them. Epstein (1994:11) argues that this involves making conscious choices on the part of the individuals:

> We are positioned in various discourses as well as taking up
> positions ourselves. For example, we identify ourselves as
> heterosexual, lesbian or gay and could not do so if categorising
> discourses of sexuality did not exist. In this limited sense, we can
> be said to be 'produced' by discourses and discursive practices.

Given the size of some secondary schools in the English context, it is not unusual to have in excess of 1500 pupils and 70 staff. Donnelley (2000:137) suggests that the chances of achieving consistency in these environments are relatively low, noting that:

> The ethos described formally in school documentation or defined
> by school authorities often departs considerably from the ethos
> which emerges from the intentions, interactions and behaviour of
> school members.

An important concept here is that ethos-making interactions can take place on a variety of scales, ranging from meetings of the entire school community group to interactions between teachers and pupils, teachers and teachers, etc. The focus on one to one interactions provides an opportunity to scrutinise

processes on the micro scale. The work of Ball and Goodson (1985) and Ball
(1987) in the late twentieth century initiated a on-going interest in the role of
micro-political interactions in school life (Blase 1991, 1997; Hoyle 1999 and
West 1999). Ball's (1987) main contention is that it is precisely through these
micro-political interactions that values and attitudes become transparent.
One site that is referred to by several participants as being revealing in this respect, is
in relationships with colleagues frequently conducted in the staff room. The narratives
presented in the data provide evidence of both supportive and excluding dynamics in
these contexts. Examples of this are Russ, who describes a high level of support from
colleagues, and Ian and Dominic, who refer to the oppressive hetero-normative
discourses that take place in staff rooms. Sullivan (1993) summarises three ways in
which the heterosexism features in schools life: silence/absence, climate and power.
There is abundant evidence of silence and absence in some of the narratives. It is
interesting to note the very low levels of awareness that exist in some staff groups.
Dominic has to explain the definition of homophobia to a deputy head colleague, Gary,
a student on teaching practice, has to offer a way forward to his practice school senior
management team, who are shocked by his experience of homophobic abuse from
pupils.

Capper (1999:7), in a rare exploration of sexuality issues from a school principal
perspective, reviews the work Hearn et al (1990) who discuss the relationship
between sexuality and organisations. By the end of the book, Hearn et al (1990:170)
are forced to conclude:

> Different degrees of hierarchy in organisations are likely to be
> associated with different forms of sexuality, and moreover
> heterosexuality, in those organisations. This is because of the
> general eroticisation of dominance ...and the more specific
> association of hierarchy and heterosexuality ....This theme is so
> pervasive that we should perhaps have named this text *The
> Heterosexuality of the Organisation'*.

Squires and Sparkes (1996) provide evidence about ways in which the heterosexuality
of the organisation might manifest itself in the staffroom, arguing that it may have a
very different symbolic meaning for men and women. For men, perhaps it is a haven
or retreat from what Squires and Sparkes identify as the 'front' space of the job,
where formal interactions take place with pupils, parents, governors, etc. Collinson
and Hearn (1996) argue that for men, the staffroom is a site of homo-sociability as
well as heterosexuality. Mac An Ghaill (1994) also points to the shifting and
contradictory nature of discourse in relation to masculinity in the staffroom. Whatever
the complexities of this dynamic are, Shilling (1991: 38-39) argues strongly that
geographical space becomes a 'gendered locale':

> Consequently, while the staffroom may be a place for men to
> relax, unwind, and escape from the pressures of classroom
> teaching, it may not offer the same benefits to many women.
> Furthermore, men not only draw on patriarchal cultural roles (i.e.
> sexist humour) to exert control over women in the specific locale
> of the staffroom; they may also organise resources within the
> staffroom itself to symbolically reflect their position of dominance.

An example of Shilling's gendered locale is 'Rambo corner', the area of Jim's staffroom in which male heterosexuality is performed (Butler 1993). A key question that it is important to pose is, where do gay men feature in all of this? Mills (2004:31-32) argues that homophobia constructs homosexuality as 'other' in the dominant models of masculinity evident in these domains. As a result, like women in the above scenario, gay men retreat to the safety of the margins or to enclaves where there are more inclusive discourses.

9.1.2 Bespoke spaces: support and advocacy

Within the education world there are some spaces in the form of gay teachers' groups in which individuals can meet to share experiences and receive support. Such spaces are away from both educational institutions and the gay community and in this sense can be described as being truly bespoke in meeting gay teachers' needs. Both Ed and Seb speak with considerable enthusiasm when describing these spaces, suggesting they are 'inspirational' even. Atkinson (2002), in her review of the activism of the 1990s, also points to the activity of teacher unions and gay teachers' groups. Spraggs (1994) documents the emergence of lesbian and gay politics in the National Union of Teachers (NUT), describing the pioneering work of the City of Leicester local association (1987) who produced *Outlaws in the Classroom* a resource pack on lesbian and gay issues in education. In the 1980s, this, together with research of Trenchard and Warren (1984) and a handful of other sources, constituted the very limited amount of published material on LGBT issues in education in the English context.

Epstein (1994) also notes that mainstream activity in teacher unions came late to this issue compared to the attention given to other social justice issues such as gender and race. Spraggs (1994: 184) reports the mixed reception that lesbian and gay issues were greeted with at the NUT national conference in 1983 when the conference was totally polarized, some delegates resorting to jeering and booing. As a member of the NUT since I embarked on my teaching career in 1976, my observation is that it has taken time for the issue to gain credibility and respectability amongst professionals. I have attended the annual NUT standing conference on LGBT issues in education and when I have listened to the experiences of other gay teachers and pupils who have been present, I have genuinely felt like 'an outlaw in the classroom'. In this situation,

the usual barriers that exist between teachers and pupils have melted and we have been united by our experiences. In 1991 the NUT published the leaflet *An Issue for Every Teacher* which was followed in 1998 by the NAS/UWT publication *Sexuality, Education and Employment – Support and Advice for Members.*

The place of the bespoke space appears to be transitory, teacher support groups growing and shrinking in favour of activism conducted on a more national stage. In the early years of the twenty-first century LGBT activism has become much more joined up via strategic alliances forged between researchers and campaign groups such as Stonewall. The implications of this appear to be mixed. Whilst subtle changes may be taking place on the macro scale, the individual gay teacher is as vulnerable as ever he or she was, the dynamic combination of micro-politics, ethos and space producing both hostility and support.

9.1.3 Gay community environments

In contrast to the professional environments that teachers inhabit, are the social spaces in the gay community that the same individuals frequent at other times. Defining the term 'gay community' appears to be fraught with difficulty, as evidenced by the way in which it is problematized in the literature. Ridge et al (1997, 1999) argue that there may be many communities and spaces frequented by people who have same-sex desires. The presence of apparently dominant gay cultural forms belies the fact that spaces and individuals are stratified along a multitude of social dimensions including ethnicity, gender, class, sexual preference, age and group membership (Ridge et al 1999:44).

Such dichotomies are also reported by Flowers and Hart (1999:85) in research undertaken to assess the potential of the gay scene for HIV project peer education work. Following initial optimism generated by a quantitative exercise, their optimism was subsequently dashed by qualitative data that revealed a profound 'fragmentation of gay community and gay identity'.

Devlin et al (2003) and Hickson et al (2003) document the extent of this fragmentation from which it is possible to categorise five types of community spaces in which gay men interact:

a. Non-commercial spaces providing help and support, eg. telephone helplines, local gay and bisexual men's health projects and initiatives, typically providing a variety of help, ranging from one to one counselling to support groups.

b. Non-commercial community groups providing spaces for individuals with a shared interest, eg. professional groups, sport, hobbies, etc.

c. Venues that constitute the commercial gay scene, eg. clubs, pubs, bars. Quilley (1997) documents the development of the Manchester gay village as an example of gay spaces that have developed in UK cites in the last twenty years.

d. Public sex environments (PSEs): historically this category included cottages and cruising grounds. Davies et al (2002) have extended this category to also include PSVs (public sex venues) such as back rooms, clubs and saunas.

e. Virtual communities providing contact via commercial web sites such as gaydar.co.uk and outintheuk.com.

Participants in this research mention four out of the five types of venue above, the absent type being virtual communities, possibly because it is a more recent development. The most frequently mentioned venues by participants in their narratives relating 'gay scene' fit into category (c) in the above list. Flowers and Hart (1999) challenge the assertions made by Kelly et al (1992) and Asthana and Oostvogels, (1996), that the gay scene in one city is more or less interchangeable with the gay scene in any other city being patronised by a relatively stable, homogeneous population of gay men. The Flowers and Hart study conducted on the Glasgow scene suggests that such unitary understandings of gay scene belie much more complex dynamics of groups and sub-groups that exist in such social spaces. The researchers point to a mismatch between the descriptor of the scene repeatedly used by participants as being 'shallow' and 'superficial', and the complexity of what was actually observed in those environments.

The salience of a shared gay identity on the Glasgow scene was undermined by a host of other identities and social dynamics that emerged as crucial in understanding how the scene works. As one of the participants in the study observes:

> You know the only thing that brings all these people under the one roof is the fact that they are all gay and probably 85% of them are trying to get laid.

> (Flowers and Hart 1999:89)

Given the lack of homogeneity in scene environments, there are particular issues relating to levels of trust and self-disclosure which, in turn, have significance for the

identities that are deployed. I explore these further in the review of processes in section 9.2.4.

9.1.4 Public sex environments (PSEs)

Another aspect of gay space that is described by the participants in this research are public sex environments in the form of cottages and cruising areas. Since the start of the 1990s, there has been plethora of literature produced on gay men and PSEs, much of it driven by the need to understand the phenomenon of public sex and its implications for HIV prevention strategies (Church et al 1993, Coxon, 1996, Keogh and Holland 1999, Flowers et al 2000, Keogh and Weatherburn 2000, Jeyasingham, 2002, Byrne 2003, Reece, 2004). The focus of these studies has ranged from research into the physical setting and motivational factors to effective policing and partnership initiatives with the gay community. For the purposes of understanding the characteristics of these environments in this section, I will focus on research that explores the physical and social setting. I begin this exploration by focussing on public toilets as a PSE.

Depending on the location in the world, gay men know public toilets by different names: in the UK they are known as 'cottages', in Australia as 'beats' and in North America as 'tea rooms'. For the greater part of the late twentieth century, much of what was known about the public toilet as a PSE, was based on what it frequently described in the literature as a 'classic ethnography', namely the sociological study made by Laud Humphreys of the University of Southern Illinois. *Tea Room Trade: A Study of Homosexual Encounters in Public Places* was first published in the USA in 1970 and reprinted in the UK in 1974. Despite subsequent critiques of its ethical procedures, (Warwick 1982, Herrera, 1999, Johnson 2001), some of the more recent UK-based literature, such as the research of Keogh and Holland (1998) and Flowers et al (2000) has endeavoured to extend Humphreys' study, by relating the physical characteristics of PSE setting to observed behaviours.

Keogh and Holland (1999:124-125) argue that the defining feature of a public sex environment is the potential of the site for subverting the legitimate behaviour in that space with sexual behaviour. Their micro-analysis of the physical characteristics of location and the social variables of behaviours foregrounds the significance of spatial and social predetermination. Spatial predetermination refers to the extent to which the space is determined by topography, boundaries, walls, pathways, etc. Social pre-determination is the extent to which the space is used for a variety of legitimate and

other uses, the transition between the two often being dictated by the time of day, the level of light, etc. In terms of spatial determination both Humphreys (1974) and Jeyasingham (2002) document the changing eras of public toilet design and note the high levels of spatial determination in these contexts, zones of sexual negotiation at the urinal leading to sexual contact in the cubicles. Flowers et al (2000) argue that the cottage setting generates a particular set of behavioural norms (which I discuss further in section 9.2.5) and meanings (which I discuss further in section 9.3). Key to understanding its function is the tight demarcation of the space, what Goffman (1967) identifies as the 'membrane of interaction'. Within this zone the primacy of silence and non-verbal communication is essential for the maintenance of sexual tension and anonymity. In his role as 'sociologist as voyeur', Humphreys (1974:12) notes that:

> One may spend many hours in these buildings and witness dozens of sexual acts without hearing a word. Of fifty encounters on which I made extensive notes only fifteen included vocal utterances... Two were encounters where I sought to ease the strain of legitimizing myself as lookout by saying "You go ahead – I'll watch".

In his study, Humphreys (ibid) noted that on only one occasion were the rules of engagement relaxed, when the cottage was under attack from a gang of local young men. The high level of social determination in such environments, relates to the dual purpose of the facility, part of the elaborate 'dance of communication' between men at the urinal being to distinguish between who in the eyes of the law is a bone fide user, and who is signalling sexual availability.

Keogh and Holland (1999), note that in contrast to cottages there is a great variety of spaces that are defined as cruising areas. These include streets, railway arches, parks, woodland, motorway services, picnic sites, railway sidings and cemeteries and in most cases such sites have much lower levels of social and spatial predetermination. In their study of the railway sidings, Keogh and Holland (1999:128) note that the relative remoteness of the site and limited access means that only in exceptional circumstances will unsuspecting members of the public stray into the territory. Temporal variables may also have an influence in these environments, the fall of darkness for example, signalling a change in use of that particular space. Jarman (1991) and Bell (1997) illustrate the versatility of cruising areas not found in cottages, for providing social and sexual interaction. The extent and topography of woodland or heathland sites plus the opportunities provided by dense areas of coppice, twists in the path and more open areas facilitate a great range of interaction possibilities. The processes that may be observed in terms of men's responsive behaviours are discussed further in section 9.2.2.

9.1.5 Dyadic spaces

The narratives in this research also make reference to dyadic relationships that the participants have with others either in the form of friendships or sexual relationships/partnerships. Nardi (1999) notes some strong distinguishing features in the relationship/friendship patterns of gay and bisexual men arguing that boundaries between friendship and sexual relationships are sometimes blurred in their relations with others. Nardi (1992a, 1992b, 1999), Nardi and Sherrod (1994), Weinstock (1998) and Weeks et al (2001) also suggest that relationships, and friendships in particular, are a central organising aspect of friendship in their lives. Eisenstadt and Gatter (1999:112) suggest that gay men interact in a variety of friendship patterns which like other environments may require the splitting and separating of identity. Friendships may vary from hearty friendships with heterosexual men at work (Fee 2000), through to heterosexual women friends with whom they discuss affairs of the heart (Werking 1997, Grigoriou 2004) and gay male friends with whom they discuss sexual activity (Nardi 1999, Weeks et al 2001). In the literature there while there is agreement that gay and bisexual men tend to seek out heterosexual women and other gay men rather than heterosexual men for friendship, there is disagreement on which they are closest to. For Weston (1991), Nardi (1992a, 1999) and Weeks et al (2001) the choice of friendships is influenced by the need to access a family or 'community of choice' for social and emotional support. Such families may replace actual birth families in providing this function, particularly in cases where individuals are estranged because of their sexuality. Grigoriou (2004) calls for a re-evaluation of this theory based on the fact that the gay men in her research clearly rated their relationships with heterosexual women highly in terms of intimacy. This was done over and above the relationships that they had with other members of the gay community which was characterised as 'back-stabbing' and 'bitchy' (Grigoriou 2004:31)

Given this backdrop, Fehr (1996) and Pahl (2000) argue that the issue of trust in friendships and sexual relationships is central to levels of intimacy and disclosure. Noller et al (2001) note that this is not developed immediately and takes time to emerge, sometimes over the lifespan. For gay and bisexual men who are educators, the crossing of higher trust thresholds in friendships and relationships may be the key to facilitating greater levels of disclosure about the various aspects of their identity. An example of this is the kind of conversation reported by Lee in an intimate moment with his partner Jamie, in which gay and teacher identity are discussed in parallel. Oswald (2002) argues that these conversations conducted in 'safe harbours' are significant in that they provide an opportunity to articulate the experience of what are two separate domains. This sense-making function helps to develop clarity in the form

of linguistic and symbolic structures that affirm experience. Oswald (ibid) suggests that the experience of this process in friendships and relationships can lead to greater resilience in the outside world.

9.2 Understanding processes

In this section I continue the sequential track towards a synthesis of the data by considering the processes revealed in the behaviours and responses made by participants to the environments described in the previous section. I want to argue that two sets of processes are at work here in the lives of the participants. These operate simultaneously and in parallel. Firstly in this section I will consider the short-term processes that involve the day to day deployment of identity in the environment. In Section 9.3 I will consider the second layer of processes experienced in the longer term, related to identity formation along the sexuality and teacher axes.

9.2.1 Short term processes: education environments

In section 9.1 it is argued that the significance of school ethos is important in shaping the classroom and staffroom environments in which the participants work. In environments that demonstrate relatively high levels of heteronormativity and homophobia, the day to day management of gay identity becomes a central preoccupation for gay teachers. A useful framework for understanding the motivations that influence these short-term processes is the conceptualization of homosexuality as a stigma (Chrobot-Mason et al 2002). In the literature, there are frequent references to the seminal work of Erving Goffman (1963), who provides a set of terms and a frame of reference for understanding the management of a stigmatized identity. The full title of Goffman's work is *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* implying that such an enterprise may involve hiding, shame and damage limitation in the day to day interactions with others in the environment. I will now consider this notion, firstly in the way that the participants relate to their institutions.

9.2.2 The individual and the institution

To arrive at an understanding of the processes at work in the individual in relation to the institution, it is helpful to re-examine the categories generated by NUD.IST in the analysis of the data. These could potentially be grouped in a number of ways and I will now offer an interpretation based on one formation of these categories illustrated in figure 9.1 below:

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Figure 9.1: A model of gay teacher processes in institutional environments

MONITORING OF ENVIRONMENT
Observation, 'data collection' in interactions
with others, reports from others

↓

REFLECTION
Dialogue with selves (micro)
Dialogue with education and societal discourses (macro)

↓

ACTIONS
Decision-making

Splitting and separating   Hiding   Managing Disclosing

RELATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AND PUPILS

MAINTENANCE
Maintaining boundaries
Maintaining defences
Policing masculinity
Preparing defences
Negotiating
On-going monitoring

The model reveals a series of processes that gay teachers engage with many times a day. The main concept here is one of a risk assessment phase followed by a phase that involves taking action (even if this is 'inaction'). Irrespective of the kind of action that is chosen, the whole model is sustained by an ongoing process of maintenance tasks that ensure continued vigilance in the environment.

A more detailed breakdown of the model is as follows:

The first stage, monitoring of the environment is conducted in relation to both the informal and formal aspects of school ethos. Data is collected from a variety of sources: interactions, overheard conversations, reported-back conversations, statements in policy documents, professional discussions, personal discussions during

staff social events and so on. This is usually followed by a period of reflection prior to decisions being made about the precise form of identity deployment with colleagues and pupils. Cain (1991) concurs with this view, arguing that that decisions regarding revelation and concealment are made both on deliberations about how to manage personal information and the social context. A good example of this is Ed's internalisation of information gathered from surveillance that takes place via an inner dialogue with himself at the micro level. A similar internal dialogue is conducted with educational and societal discourses on the macro scale. The synthesis of the two results in action to push forward his campaign to be out in his school.

The results of the risk assessment exercise then lead to decisions about what to deploy and reveal by way of identity. In Figure 9.1 there is a suggestion that this may be a choice between disclosing and not disclosing. Evidence from the literature suggests that this may indeed be quite a stark choice (Hall 1989, Griffin 1991, Sparkes 1996). The result is the frequently described phenomenon in this research of the splitting and separating of identity.

Griffin (1991) provides a very useful theoretical framework against which to consider this splitting activity. In her continuum of the identity management strategies, (see Appendix 9), Griffin identifies four positions that can be adopted in interaction with others in the school context. These are:

1.   Passing
2.   Covering
3.   Being implicitly "out"
4.   Being explicitly "out"

As the terminology implies, the positions represent degrees of exposure and visibility to others. Chrobot-Mason et al (2002: 323) document the mechanism of passing and covering in their description of avoidance strategy: .

> Avoidance strategy involves a continuous self-editing and half truths. Individuals who use this strategy reveal nothing about their identity and therefore appear asexual. One of the most common approaches is to elude personal questions, talk in generalities, or change the focus of the conversation.

Griffin (ibid) hints at the social/emotional cost for lesbian and gay educators of being closeted when she also mirrors a parallel continuum in the model, which moves from 'fear' to 'self-integrity'. There is the suggestion here that the longer term process of gay teacher identity formation may have an impact on the level of confidence that individuals have in revealing their gay identity. This is discussed further in section 9.3.2.

9.2.3 The Institution and the individual

It is interesting to question the role of institutions as opposed to individuals as processing agents. A consideration of the detailed narratives of Lee and Julian raises some interesting questions in this respect. Arguably, they have reached a similar point in their personal and professional evolution, Julian having begun from a very out position and then been forced to rein himself into a more acceptable position, Lee having moved from a very closeted position to one of tentative confidence. In charting Lee's struggle, I am left wondering if, from Lee's perspective, the role of family norms is in some way transferred into the school context. The clue is that teaching constitutes a respectable, approved of job - one from the 'approved of list'. Epstein and Johnson (1998:130-131) argue that the societal struggle vis à vis: sexuality *is* extended to school. So is the shame surrounding homosexuality in Lee's family also replicated and internalised from school? Kaufman (1993:36) argues that individuals encounter shaming episodes in all phases of the life cycle. This is the result of the overlapping nature of the interpersonal settings in which we find ourselves, shaming scripts being experienced and re-experienced in each.

So have these gay men been processed in some way by 'the system', education, institutions? Have they been shaped into more manageable, acceptable forms? One interpretation of Julian's narrative is that he in some way represented a loose cannon that needed to be controlled, the mechanism for this being the signing of a gagging order provided by his initial teacher training institution. Spraggs (1994: 182-3) documents a similar case recorded in the archives of the Gay Teachers Group (1978) of a London school teacher, John Warburton, who in the 1970s was outed and subsequently challenged by one of his pupils who saw him on a gay rights demonstration. Warburton calmly explained his position as a gay teacher to his pupils, who came to accept it. ILEA his employers, however, did not accept it and asked him to sign an agreement saying that he would never discuss his homosexuality with pupils again. Warburton refused and was subsequently prohibited from working with the authority for eight years until the decision was overturned after intensive lobbying from the London Gay Teachers Group. A key issue here is the position of 'the public' and 'the private' as evidenced in the following extract from 1970s correspondence (Gay Teachers Group, 1978: 41) to John Warburton from Doug Mc Avoy, then deputy general secretary of the NUT:

> Most teachers endeavour to avoid a discussion of their own
> personal views and experiences, because to do otherwise would be
> to bring the teacher's personality into the discussion. The
> affirmation of a teacher's standpoint on religion, politics or sex or
> any other aspect of his [sic] personal life could alienate a class, or
> it could disturb a child whose inclinations were different from those
> of an admired or respected teacher.

Spraggs (ibid) argues that this scenario reveals the potential role of the educational establishment in the form of LEAs and teacher unions to control the sexuality agenda in schools. The notion of schools as processing or controlling agents began with Althusser's (1971) Ideological State Apparatus – his 'pupil mincer'. Ball and Goodson (1985:8) note that:

> The school must now be viewed as a teaching-processing
> institution. Researchers have begun to focus on the careers
> (subjective and objective) of teachers (Lortie, 1975; Woods,
> 1981; Lyons 1981) and to examine more closely their motivations,
> experiences and strategies as workers in the education system

In the 1990s writers such as Mac An Ghaill (1994) and Epstein and Johnson (1998) further refined this notion by identifying the school as a state institution and purveyor of a 'new moralism'. In this context, it is tempting to deploy a Marxist analysis of this situation, Ball and Goodson (1985:7) noting that:

> Marxist analysts tended to stress the societal and economic determinants of
> education and portray teachers as puppets of the capitalist state, helpless
> agents in the reproduction of the relations of production

In Julian's case the puppeteers representing the capitalist state would be the 'bad' managers and university tutors. It may not be this simple, however. The erroneous assumption in this analysis is that all people occupying senior management positions in institutions are homophobic and not supportive of LGBT issues. Clearly such individuals are potentially highly influential, Fullan (2003) and Hogan (1984: 695) noting that those at the helm see themselves as the custodians of a set of standards to be preserved, defended and transmitted through the agency of schools. The way that this influence is constructed and enacted is crucial to the outcome for gay teachers. 'Processing' does not necessarily have to be oppressive. Processing could take the form of supportive attitudes in the school community as evidenced by the female headteacher who takes a very positive stance in Russ's story. In this respect, the sensitive way in which issues relating to HIV and sexuality were processed had a very beneficial outcome for Russ and the school.

9.2.4 Processes in Commercial Gay Scene environments

The use of the CCTV image on the mural suggests that monitoring and surveillance is also a process in the gay domain of experience. Flowers et al (2000) highlight the role of surveillance as a key process that impacts on a range of variables such as levels of trust, deployment of identity and the social and emotional distance that exists between men. In the range of community spaces that exist, the importance of locale in producing specific sexual cultures, eg. in commercial gay scene venues and in PSEs, is very significant. In each of these environments, pronounced differences exist in terms of codes of behaviour and the ways in which relationships are negotiated. The narratives told by the participants of this research would appear to indicate that as in education environments, they find themselves engaged in the process of monitoring gay community spaces, before disclosing personal details such as their profession. In the light of what is presented in Chapter 6, the use of the term disclosure is probably quite optimistic given the sometimes extreme splitting and separating of identities that appears to happen in these contexts. Unsurprisingly, the issue of trust emerges as a key factor relating to self-disclosure. What is not immediately clear is the way in which each of these different locales triggers a different response by those who inhabit them. In the next section, I explore this question in relation to the three different types of gay community space identified by the participants, namely, pub/bar/club environments, cottages and cruising areas.

Flowers et al (2000) note that the public and interactional social dynamics present in pubs and clubs contrast markedly with the much more asocial and impersonal dynamics of PSEs where gay men meet for sex. In previous research, Flowers and Hart (1998) report that men out on the Glasgow scene, perceive themselves as being under surveillance from their peers in pubs, bars and clubs, which necessitates in careful self presentation and image management. In these environments, three variables emerge as significant:

a. The scene as parochial

b. The way in which gossip is used as a mechanism for individual control

c. The dynamics of sub-groups and their resultant social control

In contrast to the anonymity of the large metropolitan districts in which many gay men socialise in the UK, Flowers and Hart (1998:91) point to the fact that men out on the scene frequently constitute a relatively close group, in which individuals soon become known to each other. As a result, in this parochial environment, the presence of newcomers is quickly identified, these individuals being labelled as 'fresh meat'. The

upshot of this enclosed atmosphere is that it leads to a pervasive sense of surveillance, intelligence gathered being frequently shared through the mechanism of gossip channels. Participants in the Glasgow study remarked on the two-facedness of the scene, the public presentation of friendliness masking the vicious comments made in private. Such gossip is represented in the form of 'bitchiness' or 'attitude' and extends to a wide variety of topics such as reputation, clothing, HIV status, penis size, and sexual behaviour. The latter is sometimes fuelled by a locale norm that ironically and perhaps hypocritically, appears to communicate disapproval of the overt, public pursuit of sex. The outcome appears to be that such gossip acts, tacitly, as a means of social control.

 In gay scene environments, self-presentation is also related to affiliation, clothing and designer labels sometimes signalling membership of certain social groupings. The influence of group membership extends beyond this to behaviour and the choice of sexual partners, who also need to conform to the norms of the group. These normative behaviours, needless to say, can have a major constraining effect on gay men and appear to confirm Tom's observations about the difficulty of penetrating social cliques out on the scene. In line with Tom, the number of advertisements placed by men in the contact pages of the gay press, that specify potential partners to be 'non-scene' is possibly an indication that opting out altogether is one strategy for dealing with this scenario.

Jourard (1971), notes that in groups, levels of openness are positively correlated with perceived levels of trust, which in turn has implications for individual self-disclosure. Given the level of peer surveillance in gay scene environments felt by most participants in the Flowers and Hart research (1998) irrespective of profession, the willingness on the part of gay men who are teachers to disclose their professional identity may be further inhibited by concerns about judgements that may be made by the individuals that they encounter. Biddulph and Gibbons (2001), in their research into perceptions of gay teachers out on the scene, report on the role of contradictory perceptions and stereotypes. Initial enthusiastic or neutral responses to the question 'Would you date a teacher?', were often followed by contradictory verbal and non-verbal messages in the reply. Two features stand out here:

- Stereotypes of teachers – these are both positive and negative

- Participant's perception of teacher responsibility and role

A certain amount of sexual objectification emerges in this data, when individuals recalled teachers who were camp and good looking, who wore shorts and had hairy legs, etc.

Table 9.1. below, lists the adjectives used by participants in the construction of stereotypes:

Positive Attributes	Negative Attributes
Knowledgeable (2)	Scary (4)
Intelligent (2)	Closeted (4)
Trustworthy	Untrustworthy (3)
Role model	Overpowering
Professional	Strict (2)
Well educated	Intimidating
Down to earth	Potentially boring
Able to converse	Authoritarian
Safe	Unavailable and overworked (2)
Impressive (2)	

(Biddulph and Gibbons, 2001:7)

The positive stereotype embedded in the above data is one of an intelligent professional – the negative one is of a powerful, untrustworthy but closeted individual. These perceptions are implicit in the contradictory nature of some other responses:

> Bisexual man, 20. A bit scary, but I'd shag 'em anyway. It might put me off at first, but I'd have to get to know them. I'd trust them.
>
> Bisexual woman, 21. I'd shag 'em anyway. I wouldn't trust them, but worse if it was a copper. I'd be cautious on their behalf, and generally if I was with them. They might want to hide it. It's not the done thing. They might not get the respect that they deserve. People assume that they will turn their pupils gay. Society is stupid. (Gay) Teachers don't half get a hard time.

(Biddulph and Gibbons, 2001: 7)

The observations of Epstein and Johnson (1998:131-135) that the process of being educated can be akin to a seduction makes the comments above particularly interesting. Miller (1990) argues that the power dimension in teacher-pupil relations has the potential for generating a sexual dimension that spills messily into the

equation by combining knowledge, authority and status as sexually attractive traits in the teacher.

In a mirroring of some of the data presented in Chapter 6 of this research, participants in the Biddulph and Gibbons (ibid) study also attached meanings such as commitment, boundaries and responsibility to the role of being a teacher:

> Gay man, 19. I'd be worried if a relationship was possible. They have no time and too much work. There'd be an age difference. I'd be concerned about age and if they fancied the students. They might get authoritarian. If they do that at school they might do it to me. It may put me off slightly, them being a teacher.

> Gay man, 20. Primarily a relationship that is open would be awkward; not for me, but I'd be worried about how it would be for him. It wouldn't bother me. If they said they liked someone at school, I'd be worried they'd be taking advantage. But they're a professional, they wouldn't do that.

<div align="center">(Biddulph and Gibbons, 2001:8)</div>

Perhaps the combination of intense surveillance with the potential for being judged and seen as unavailable and unapproachable keeps some teachers away from the gay scene on a Saturday night. For others it may simply require the extension of the strategies used at work during the rest of the week. The words of one of the scene-goers quoted by Biddulph and Gibbons (2001:8) have a very familiar ring in this research: 'Don't give people any ammunition, strictly separate worlds...' In the end, the simplest reply to the question about profession may be to say, 'I work in an office.'

9.2.5 Processes in PSEs

Flowers et al (2000) note that the tasks of monitoring and surveillance evident in commercial gay scene venues are less evident in cottages and cruising areas. Here the individual characteristics of these particular locales call for the acquisition of a specialist set of skills of the kind referred to by Tom in text four of 'Walking After Midnight'. Keogh and Holland (1999:131) note that risk assessment is a factor that influences men's behaviours in these environments. This may vary from visit to visit, depending on the spatial predetermination of the location, previous experience and level of sexual arousal. In cottages, the emphasis on non-verbal signals is combined with the strategic deployment of identities. In one moment it may be necessary to signal legitimate user, in the next sexual availability. Humphreys (1974) and Delph (1978) note that signaling is highly sequential process, the use of silent cues and reciprocal actions expressing mutual intentions and sexual interest.

In contrast to the highly 'scripted behaviours' present in cottages, Keogh and Holland (1999) note that the lower levels of social and spatial determination in cruising areas result in more individualistic behaviours such as nodding, winking, greeting, etc. The barrier produced by social distance is more fragile in these spaces. Given the range of locales within a cruising area, the possibility for an interaction that has more conversational and less sexual contact increases. Thus the type contact described between Andy and Sean in text two of 'Walking After Midnight' is a distinct possibility. Jarman (1991:84) provides evidence of this, recalling his experience of night time activity on Hampstead Heath:

> Under the great beeches some boys with gypsy faces have lit a fire, which they stoke sending sparks flying, smiling faces flushed with the heat. In the dark for a brief moment age, class, wealth, all the barriers are down. An illusion you say, I know but what a sweet one. Many of the men here lead straight daylight lives. There's a soldier from Aldershot in sneakers, training trousers and T-shirt; motor cyclist's studs sparkling in the firelight lounging against a tree. Others sit at a distance, someone has a ghetto-blaster, there's music.

Such meetings can lead to friendships, even relationships. Keogh et al (1999) reported that 30% of the gay men they interviewed had met a partner is a cruising area and 20% had met a partner in a cottage during the previous year.

Men of all ages and social classes frequent PSEs. Nagel (2003:9-10) points out that this increases the possibility of crossing ethno-sexual boundaries which include boundaries related to social class. Andy's encounter with working class Sean is complex. One interpretation is that in its early stages, middle class (?) Andy has the power and could be said to fetishise the younger working, class Adonis, clad in scally garb. Arguably, this continues into the moment of sexual encounter and after when Sean discloses his preference for sexual role. In identity terms there are complex deployments here particularly in the case of Sean where outward appearances reveal inner contradictions of role and gender preference. Ultimately, it is Sean, however, who seems to call the shots when he fails to show up for their subsequent meeting.

9.3 Understanding responses: models of deployment

Having considered the environments in which they function and the processes that they engage in, this section now focuses on the ways in which gay male teachers deploy their identities in different social contexts.

On the following pages I will outline a model Gay Male Teacher Identity Deployment that describes three types of identity deployment are offered which depict a progressive level of self-disclosure and revelation through the sequence. A number of

important ideas have emerged from the narrative thus far, which have been influential in shaping the thinking behind the model. The imagery used in mural making, episodes described in the narratives and theoretical perspectives embedded in the literature combine to provide a framework that uses the metaphor of permeability, ie. contact (or lack of) which I have conceptualised to consider behaviours in both the education and the gay domains.

9.3.1 A Model Gay Male Teacher Identity Deployment

Figure 9.2   The fractured-impermeable type

GAY IDENTITY

TEACHER IDENTITY

Characteristics:

Main orientation: Fractured pattern of selves, domains with high definition, separated by strict demarcation, closed orientation

Key processes: splitting and separating, segregation, damage limitation

Deployment strategies: passing, avoiding, deflecting, covering – limited range of strategies

Pre-occupations: high on boundary maintenance, monitoring and surveillance, policing. Defensive position in social situations.

Figure 9.3   The fluid-permeable type

GAY IDENTITY

TEACHER IDENTITY

Characteristics:

Main orientation: fractured pattern of selves, domains with changing levels of definition according to level of demarcation

Key processes: splitting and separating, risk assessment, changing position in response to social environment, dynamic, potential for movement

Deployment strategies: range of strategies – passing, avoiding, deflecting, covering, strategic self-disclosure

Pre-occupations: moderate levels of boundary maintenance, monitoring and surveillance, policing, internal reflexivity, experimentation

Figure 9.4   The integrated-strategic type
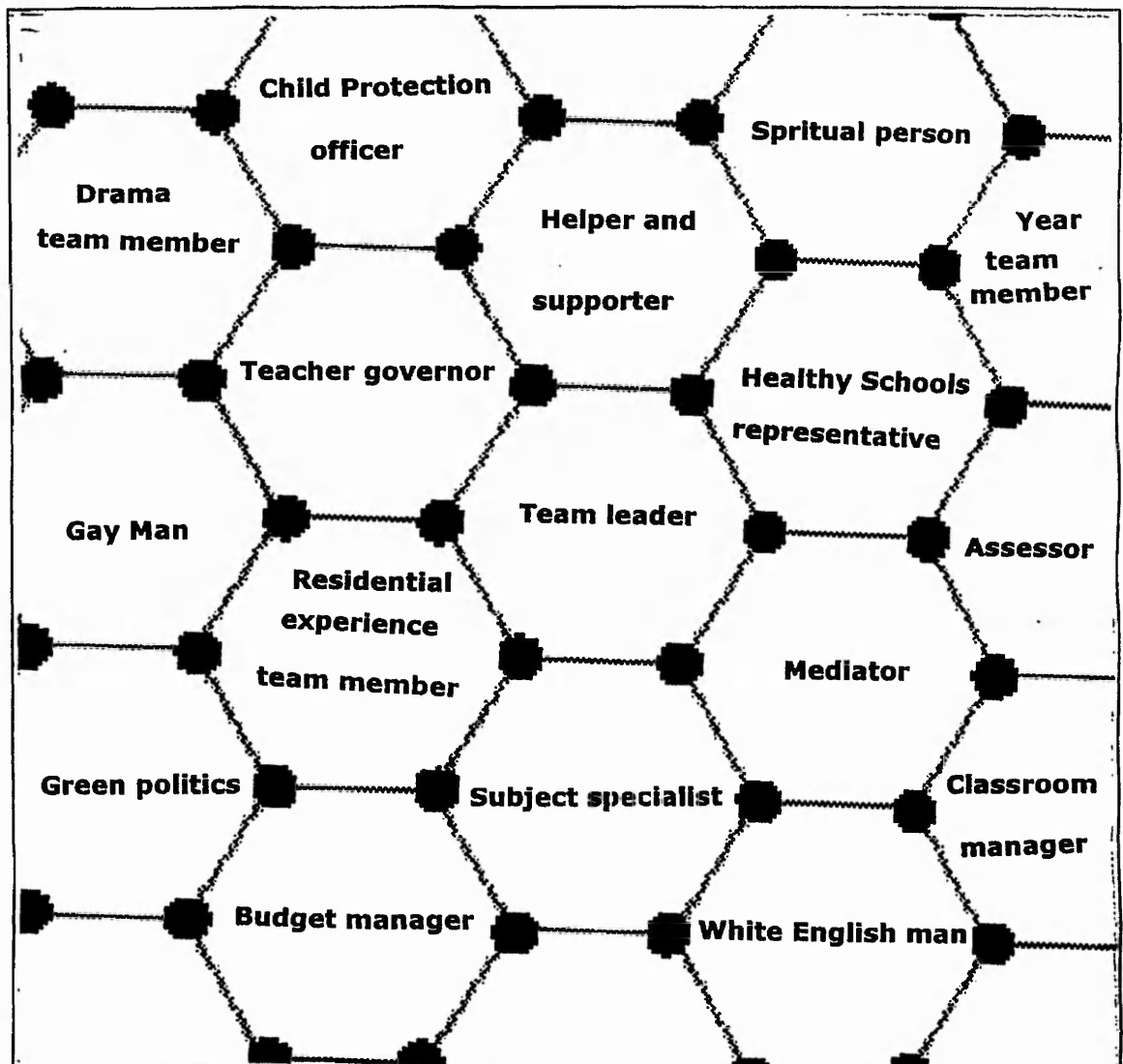
Characteristics:

Main orientation: integration, equality of deployment

Key processes: some risk assessment, changing position in response to social environment, stability

Deployment strategies: range of strategies, 'matter of factness', general openness, frequent self-disclosure, lack of censure

Pre-occupations: low levels of boundary maintenance and policing, medium levels of monitoring and surveillance, internal reflexivity, occasional experimentation, development of 'centred-ness'

Chrobot-Mason et al (2001: 324) are in agreement with a model of deployment that contains three elements. This assertion is based on the earlier work of Woods (1993) who identifies counterfeiting, avoiding and integrating as key strategies used by lesbian and gay employees in the work place. Before considering the applications of the typology on the previous pages it is important to consider some of the long term identity formation processes that gay male teachers are engaged in. These are significant in forming an understanding of how the strategies are used in different social contexts.

9.3.2 Sexuality: long term processes

In the participant narratives there are recurrent references to coming out, being out, not being out, etc., that highlight the significance of acknowledging sexual orientation both to self and to others. A frequently reported aspect of this process is that it is an enterprise conducted over a period of time, usually in the long term (Mosher 2001). In the case of Ian for example, in this research, it was a process that unfolded over more than thirty years. Spraggs (1994: 179) offers the following perspective on what it means to come out:

> To 'come out', to identify oneself openly as lesbian or gay, is an odd experience. For people who have never questioned their heterosexuality, it is probably quite difficult to imagine. It is about taking loaded words, dangerous words, words that are widely pronounced with embarrassment and fear and distaste, and claiming them, with passion and defiance as names for oneself: first alone, and then with people whose response one trusts, and eventually in front of friends and family, colleagues and strangers. At each stage it is terrifying; it is also exhilarating. It is a moment of vulnerability, but it is also an assertion of freedom, a bringing into the open a part of the self and its experience that would otherwise be left submerged; a part that one has been taught by extreme sanctions to despise and conceal, but that is nevertheless felt to be intensely precious, a source of meaning and power.

Implicit in the above quotation is the notion of a progression or passage through a number of stages. This is also reflected in the literature that theorises the process of homosexual identity formation (HIF) often articulated in what are referred to as 'stage models' (Cass 1979, Coleman 1982, Minton and MacDonald 1984, Troiden 1989, Carrion and Lock 1997). Horowitz and Newcomb (2001) note that a shared characteristic of these models is that they document a progression through a sequence of four general stages that can be described as:

a. awareness or sensitisation
b. internalization or acceptance

     c. disclosing

     d. synthesis or integration.

Cass (1983) argues that any form of self identity formation involves a process of interrogating self perceptions and feelings about the self in relation to some specific social category. In terms of HIF, there are frequent references to individuals in the early stages of the process being aware of an abstract sense of being different but being unable to pinpoint the precise nature of this. Coleman (1982) notes that the acknowledgement of homosexual identity is often undertaken in a societal context that is negative and hostile to homosexuality. As a result, individuals engaged in early stages of HIF may be vulnerable to stigma, which becomes internalised as a series of introjects. Williamson (2000) and Rowen and Malcolm (2002) identify this as internalised homophobia, noting that this is strongly correlated with lower levels of self-esteem and high levels of sex guilt. Cimini (1993) notes that overcoming these introjects is fundamental to many of the stage models, the progression through the stages being from feelings of stigma to embracing gay pride.

Dube and Savin-Williams (1999) note that stage models tend to be based on the experiences of white middle class gay men and that the experience of gay men of other races may be different, identity formation taking place before first same-sex sexual activity. Nagel (2003:10) argues that the issue of race also impacts on the perceptions on non-white men in predominantly white cultures:

> Race-based and class-based standards tend to define African
> American and Latino men as excessively masculine and oversexed
> or hypersexual and Asian men as insufficiently masculine and
> undersexed or hyposexual.

For individuals such as Lee in this research, coming out may mean addressing issues of both race and sexuality in negotiating a position in the social milieu of mainstream society, a process that he recounts in his fights as a pupil at the school gate when he responded to racist taunts with his fists. Another feature of Lee's coming out narrative which is replicated in more extreme terms in Jim's experience is a dependence on alcohol. Recent studies in the United States have produced a mixed set of findings in relation to MSM (men who have sex with men) and alcohol/ substance use. Stall and Purcell (2000) note the declining rates of alcohol use in MSM over the last twenty-five years and do not detect any differences in levels as compared to their heterosexual counterparts. Stall et al (2001) report, however, that in populations of urban gay men, alcohol and substance use is relatively prevalent and this may be connected to cyclical use or use connected with specific episodes such as coming out or dealing with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the wake of HIV diagnoses or homophobic attacks.

A final observation about stage models is that they imply that on reaching the point of disclosure, synthesis and integration, the individual displays greater confidence in social situations. Kaufman (1996: 66) attributes this to a purging away of the shame that accompanied the splitting of the self from the stigmatized identity. As a result over a period of time 'the interpersonal bridge' with others in the environment is re-established.

In progressing this synthesis I will now consider the typology of identity management strategies in relation to education and gay community environments. I do this initially in general terms before introducing more complexity into the discussion in section 9.4

9.3.3 Identity deployment in school contexts

An initial examination of the narratives suggests that, in general terms, all three deployment strategies in school contexts are visible in the data. At the extremes, Ian can be said adopt the fractured-impermeable type most commonly, and Ed and Michael are probably the individuals who have pushed their boundaries to adopt the integrated strategic approach. It is interesting that both these individuals have on-going contact with the bespoke spaces in which gay male teachers meet, possibly suggesting that support in both the professional and personal aspects of their life is important. In terms of the fluid-permeable strategy some interesting movements can be traced. For Julian this is significant as he has been forced to make a considerable adjustment from the integrated–strategic approach to the fractured-impermeable approach. For Jim the adjustment was in the opposite direction, the first phase of his teaching career being dominated by the fractured-impermeable approach, strategies in the latest phase being characterised by the fluid-permeable approach. Robin on occasions adopts the fluid-permeable model in that he is prepared to take risks and conduct experiments, the sporting of tokens such as freedom watches and red ribbons in new environments being good examples of this. What is clear in the theorising of the deployment strategies in the model is that a number of variables combine in the risk assessment of any social situation to inform decisions about deployment. Perceptions of school ethos, confidence and comfort with sexuality, levels of trust in the relationship(s) with others involved and mutuality of disclosure are influences at work in school environments.

Based on what participants have said in their narratives, I am suggesting that monitoring and surveillance activity is inherent in all three strategies described.

9.3.4 Identity deployment in gay community environments

In the gay community environments described by participants, it is noticeable that the degree of splitting and separating of identity is very pronounced. As a result I want to argue that the predominant strategy utilised is the fractured impermeable type in which gay identity and teacher identity are strictly segregated, this being a response to the characteristics of different locales.

It is evident from sections 9.1 and 9.2 that the high levels of surveillance in commercial gay scene environments may deter disclosure of professional status. The possibility of being judged, gossiped about or even supported all exist, hence the observation by Valentine and Skelton (2003) that the gay scene is a paradoxical space.

In contrast, the primacy of non-verbal communication in PSE environments may preclude any verbal communication whatsoever. The exceptions to this are the social spaces of cruising areas where individuals may converse away from zones of negotiation and sexual activity. A fascinating question, answers to which are not evident in the narratives, is what precise manoeuvres are involved in getting to the point of disclosure of professional identity in these situations. It is evident that by the time that individuals have formed a strong dyadic relationship, as in the case of Lee and James, deployments of the integrated-strategic type may be easier to make.

9.4   Phenomena that disturb

9.4.1 Queering the pitch

In this section I will now consider ways in which greater complexity can be introduced into the model by firstly considering the social constructionist critique of HIF and its implications for deployment strategies. In the discussion so far there is an assumption that gay male teachers constitute a relatively homogeneous group. This could be an erroneous assumption based on an essentialist view of gay identity. Mosher (2001) notes that essentialist perspectives see homosexuality as being biologically determined. As a result individuals must confront this, come out and be their 'true selves', a process undertaken by progression through the stage models eg. Cass, Troiden etc. Horowitz and Newcomb (2002:5) argue that whilst this may reflect the experiences of some LGBT people, the notion of a linear progression through stages implicit in HIF models may be simplistic.

> Stage models may capture a general sequential experience, yet their linear nature is overly simplistic and denies the range and variety of homosexual experience...all of the models recognize that individuals may not progress through all of the stages in the suggested sequence, and that they may regress or attend simultaneously to more than one stage...however there is an underlying negative implication that an individual who adopts a lifestyle or identity that would be described as fitting with the earlier stages of development (ie. remain heterosexually oriented but recognise homosexual fantasy or behaviour) is in some way deficient or denying an 'essential' homosexual identity.

An important concept implicit in the above quotation is the conceptualisation of sexual orientation as a singular continuum in which homosexual-heterosexual are positioned as a binary similar Kinsey's seven point scale (Kinsey et al (1948) - see section 2.1.3. In contrast to this, Storms (1980) proposes that homosexuality and heterosexuality may be separate orthogonal erotic dimensions existing in parallel, rather than opposite bipolar dimensions as proposed by Kinsey et al. A further layer of complexity is added when the homosexual and heterosexual dimensions are broken down into components. Horowitz and Newcomb (2002:15) argue that sexuality needs to be conceptualised in multi-dimensional terms with three constituent parts, ie. desires, behaviours and identity. Hence for individuals there are an infinite number of combinations that could be taken from Storm's parallel scales. Some examples might be:

Individual A: high heterosexual desire, low homosexual behaviour, medium heterosexual identity

Individual B: Medium homosexual desire, high homosexual behaviour, high heterosexual identity

The significance of this critique for this research is that it introduces a much more complex set of possibilities. It is a further queering of the data. In contrast to the essentialist view of 'gay man', individual B in the example above may not experience the hetero-normative climate of an educational institution in a negative way, given his high rating on the heterosexual identity dimension. In this situation the individual may feel comfortable in adopting the integrated-strategic approach to identity management. However, in one to one interactions in which the conversation turns to sexual behaviour, a much more pronounced splitting and separating process may be enacted in which a fractured-impermeable strategy is adopted to conceal high levels of homosexual behaviour. The above example underlines the importance of monitoring and surveillance as strategies and how identity deployment is almost a moment by moment process, dependent on the individual, perceptions of risk and social context.

Griffin (1991) reports that the lesbian and gay teachers in her research, like the employees described by Chrobot-Mason et al (2001), use multi-positioned strategies to manage their identity in their school contexts. There appear to be a number of advantages to this. Firstly, for the gay male teacher who consistently adopts the fragmented-permeable strategy, a multi-strategic approach can provide some sense of self-integrity. Whilst not being totally open, it does provide an opportunity to share some aspects of his life and provides the option of retreating should the going get tough for individuals. A 'down side' is that heterosexual colleagues might still be left with an element of speculation and the feeling of needing to tread carefully in terms of what they might ask or inquire.

Further reflection on Jim's narrative reveals how this operates in micro-political terms. Jim adopts two main techniques within the fluid-permeable type, i.e. covering and being implicitly out. His interactions with pupils, for example, are carefully managed, straddling the boundary between being hidden and implicitly out. This is operationalized via:

- Humour, wit and repartee

- Image management (being very professional).

In interactions with colleagues, the dynamic that seems to emerge is one of collusiveness where there is an unstated agreement between all parties that Jim is gay but that it is not okay to state this specifically. This is operationalized via :

- Monitoring and intelligence (he invites another colleague, 'the statutory poofter' described by a member of Rambo corner, to supper to check him out)

- Collusion with ambiguity (not naming gay venues where he socialises)

- Speed of response (with challenging members of Rambo Corner)

- Humour, wit and repartee

- Networking and support (with colleagues that he feels safe with)

- Image management (being very professional).

It can be argued that this is sophisticated set of strategies, its range providing versatility to cope with a variety of relationships and social contexts. Perhaps the asset Jim has that enables him to access this range from an implicitly out position is confidence derived from a considerable amount of personal development acquired from the life events that preceded his reincarnation as a teacher in his current post.

9.4.2 Passing is good

Implicit in the stage models is that passing is understandable and hopefully temporary way of dealing with gay identity in social situations. The models suggest that as confidence and comfort levels with gay identity increase within the individual, the ability and motivation to present an authentic self in relation to others will also increase, relationships becoming more meaningful and effective as a result. Button (1996, 1999) concludes that in workplace contexts attitudes associated with particular stages of gay identity development are related to each of the identity management strategies identified by Woods (1993), more positive attitudes towards one's sexuality being positively correlated to more openness at work. The notion of openness in lesbian and gay employees and what this might mean in relation to team effectiveness is the focus of the research of Chrobot-Mason et al (2001). An important question that they explore is whether the adoption of the integrating strategy will lead to more open effective relationships in teams, evidence from the work of Seers (1989) suggesting that team performance is related to the levels of reciprocity apparent in the relationships between team players. The way in which this is measured in their research is via open group process – the extent to which members express their views and include all members in decision-making.

In summary Chrobot-Mason et al (ibid) report that:

- Low levels of sexual identity development are related to high levels of counterfeiting

- Low levels of sexual identity development are related to high levels of avoiding

- Low levels of [negative] perceived climate are related to high levels avoiding

- There is no relationship between counterfeiting and climate, surprisingly

- For gay men a significant relationship between counterfeiting and open group process exists, but it is a positive one. Integrating is found to have a non-significant relationship with open group process.

From this Chrobot-Mason et al conclude that counterfeiting or passing may actually produce improved intragroup communication and social support. For some employees therefore creating a false heterosexual identity is beneficial for developing high quality relationships and related open group process.

In seeking explanations for the findings, the researchers look to the previous work of Button (1996) who suggests that although lesbians and gay men may define identity

management strategies in the same way, they actually differ in the way that they deploy them. In team environments women are more disclosing and value relationship above task in team environments. The opposite appears to be true for gay men.

A key question in this scenario is why is it so detrimental for gay men to integrate and reveal their true identity in the workplace? Perhaps there are other powerful influences at work here, such as what pass for viable models of masculinity in the organisational psyche, viability being an important influence in career progression and promotion. Kanuha (1999:38) suggests that the act of counterfeiting or passing could be seen as a political act of resistance, a refusal to assimilate. The more obvious perspective might be that, given the high levels of heteronormativity in some work place contexts, it may be simpler to pass than to deal with the consequences of coming out.

As a result, certain individuals value counterfeiting and avoidance over integrating, despite the psychological cost they have to pay. DiPlacido (1998) and Waldo (1999) note that both closeted and out individuals experience minority stress, both parties suffering the cumulative adverse effects of heterosexism that acts as a chronic stressor. In the final analysis coming out may simply not be worth the effort. An interesting question to ask is whether education environments are qualitatively different from organisation/business contexts. In some ways given the discourses surrounding adults, children and sexuality that permeate life in schools there may be more at stake from a 'moral' point of view. The influence of this possibly explains why in research conducted into discrimination in the work place described in the introduction of this thesis (Palmer 1996), teaching came out as the most closeted profession. The implications of this are discussed further in the next and final chapter of the thesis.

CHAPTER TEN

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

'I argue in my writings and in professional forums that our academic work is – and must be – political and that our work should provide an understanding that allows us to make the necessary changes in the social and economic order. What a good society might look like, beyond the liberal notions of equality, civility and humane social relations, is yet to emerge.'

(Quinney 1991)

In this chapter I will draw this thesis to a conclusion by undertaking three tasks. Firstly I return to the research questions and answer them using data, observations, and conclusions drawn from the synthesis of the research. I then reconsider the question of trustworthiness raised in chapter three. Some further observations are made about this which provide a springboard into a consideration of the implications of this research for practitioners and policy makers in Education. I conclude the work by returning to 'the personal' and offer some further reflections in my role of educator and researcher.

10.1 The research questions: responses

- **How do gay/bisexual men who are educators 'interface' with their environments in terms of the process of constructing and negotiating a gay-teacher identity?**

In terms of constructing a gay-teacher identity, initially during the phase of undergoing initial teacher training a period of adjustment takes place. This is frequently (but not always) an adjustment from a relatively out position to the more closeted world of education. In this situation, even relatively confident individuals exercise caution by splitting and separating gay and teacher identities into the private and public domains respectively. Monitoring and surveillance of the education environment in both the classroom and the staffroom are key activities that constitute an ongoing process of risk assessment. Data is collected to form a perception of the school ethos, via both formal and informal sources. The disclosing and revealing of a gay teacher identity is undertaken over a period of time, a prerequisite being the presence of trust in relationships. The build up to disclosure is often done as a series of stages or experiments, the individual adjusting his boundaries and defences in response to the outcomes of these scenarios. Sometimes in very heteonormative environments, progression beyond a very defended stance is not felt to be possible. In

these situations there is sometimes a collusion between the institution and the individual in not naming homosexuality as the individual's issue. In these circumstances. individuals experience minority stress being vulnerable to homophobia from colleagues and pupils. Some individuals in this situation will look for a way out.

In school environments that are more gay-friendly, individuals are enabled to progressively push the boundaries in levels of disclosure. Typically such environments have a visible presence of other LGBT individuals on the staff and an outwardly supportive stance from colleagues in leadership roles. Gay male teachers may consciously or unconsciously be involved in a process of negotiation with the institution. In these instances openness, support, honesty and professional competence are traded for permission to be more visible. The advantages for such individuals appear to be an enhanced sense of personal integrity which leads to greater sense of personal authority and agency.

In gay community environments there appears to be a much more consistent splitting and separating of gay and teacher identity. Given the prominence of surveillance and non-verbal communication in these locales, disclosure of teacher identity seems to be restricted to friends, partners and gay teacher support groups.

- **What is the role of past personal/professional experiences in constructing these complex identities?**

The past personal and professional experiences of gay male teachers are very varied. There is a great range of knowledge of, comfort with and confidence associated with their sexual orientation. Identity is a very fluid category and its constituent elements that relate to sexuality have the potential to produce an extensive range of personae which may have some element of homosexual association. The label 'gay' therefore may have little or no meaning for some individuals; for others it may be embraced as a core social and political constituent. The role of the past can have both positive and negative connotations. There is a range of experience of coming out to family, some families providing immediate acceptance and support others being hostile. In situations where sexual orientation has not been disclosed, families remain unaware. The experience of schooling as a pupil may also be both an asset and a liability for the individual who re-enters school environments as a professional. Previous experience of homophobic bullying may make new experiences of homophobic abuse from pupils a traumatic experience, in extreme cases triggering post traumatic stress disorder. Previous experiences can also toughen the individual to 'face out' the perpetrators. Homophobia may also manifest itself in terms of internalised homophobia within individuals. This could present a problem in team contexts in that relationships are

difficult to forge and maintain. The coming out process may run in parallel with the establishment of a teacher identity which can be potentially problematic, resulting in reduced effectiveness or break down.

The degree of affirmation from the gay community is variable. Dyadic relationships, some sexual spaces and bespoke spaces for gay teachers are potentially important sources of support. Their role combines visibility, social contact and activism, which can lead to a stronger, more assertive response in the individual. The personal and professional experiences of schooling by others frequenting the commercial gay scene may lead to the construction of positive and negative teacher stereotypes which may be powerful inhibitors for gay male teachers in terms of self-disclosure of professional identity.

- **What are the mechanisms used to present these gay-teacher identities in education contexts and in gay community contexts?**

A range of mechanisms exist in the form of deployment strategies used by gay male teachers in both environments. There is some agreement both from the narratives in this research and from the literature that, conceptualising this in terms of three broad categories, comes close to capturing experience. The model of deployment suggested here is one of progressive disclosure, the sequence going from the fractured-impermeable strategy to the fluid-permeable to the integrated-strategic. Whilst each of these may represent a general stance adopted by the individual, the switching from one to strategy to another and the use of sub-strategies may be a moment by moment decision made in response to situations in the environment. In some school environments there is more likely to be a positive relationship between level of outness and the use of the integrated-strategic approach. In other school environments the effects of heteronormativity are such that even for a relatively out individual, disclosure could impact on career progression, promotion and teacher retention.

In gay community spaces there is not necessarily a connection between level of outness and disclosure of teacher identity, the norms of locale in these contexts being a much stronger influence on identity deployment strategies.

10.2 Returning to trustworthiness

In section 10.2.1 I will return to the question of trustworthiness for two reasons. In some ways it can be argued that the narrative presented in the account constitute a collection of 'little stories' (Griffiths 2003). Two important questions are:

a. can little stories be trusted?

b. does a collection of little stories have any significance?

Given that the issues raised in this research have implications for educational practice it is important to establish a rationale for why individual, localized accounts can pose important questions for workplace practice on the macro scale. I discuss the broader issue of significance in section 10.3.

10.2.1 The myth of insiderness

In section 3.2.1 I discussed the positivist critique of the qualitative genre and I have provided evidence via the process of mural construction described in section 4.3 and section 5.2 that this account is likely to be saturated with my researcher subjectivity. I argued that by making by researcher positioning more transparent, I have added a layer of complexity that brings more rigour. In section 4.3.2 I made a case of my own insiderness in this research. This was based on the premise of my self-knowledge and the context in which most of the participants were recruited. This was done via workshop sessions within two LGBT teacher conferences where I provided a personal introduction as well as a professional/theoretical introduction.   From my perspective I presented as another 'insider' and shared some of my own experiences in the process of the workshop. An invitation was then offered for more in-depth exploration in the form of a semi-structured, taped interview which forms the basis for this research for each participant. Hammersely and Atkinson (1995:80) argue that the issue of researcher self-presentation is significant for participants in that:

> Like gatekeepers and sponsors, people in the field will seek to
> place or locate the ethnographer within their own experience. This
> is necessary of course, for them to know how to deal with him or
> her.

Mishler (1986) goes on to argue that this has implications for the stories that are told, data of this kind never being 'raw' and always being 'situated', the insider to insider relationship producing a text of a particular discourses. It is interesting to speculate on how the stories told by the same participants to a female researcher or to a heterosexual researcher might be different.

As the research progressed it became clear that my assumption of being received by participants as an insider was inaccurate. In my correspondence with participants I invited them to supply some feedback relating to the ways in which they perceived me as a researcher. Table 10.1 below contains extracts from their replies:

Table 10.1 Insider/Outsider perceptions of Max as a researcher

Your own background made it an interesting choice – coming from a marriage with children – it could give the impression of someone whose sexuality they had difficulty coming to terms with. Anon

I have slight reservations over people with an ambiguous sexual background being involved but everyone is entitled to come at a subject from their own perspective – no-one should be judgemental. Anon

Some underlying insecurities over identifying with homosexuality (linked to being both a husband/father). Gary

My perceptions are shaped by my own experience as a masters student…my dissertation 'A Gay Perspective on Sexuality and School' was an important rite of passage for me as a gay man. It was about coming out more and explaining my world from an academic standpoint. It may be projection on my part, but I guessed it might be part of the same process for you ie. the research having a profoundly personal function as well as being academic work. I remember reading your M.Ed work on the 'Changing role of the male educator' and speculating whether the author was gay. Russ

Agenda – are you as a gay educator included in this project?
Are you comparing your own experiences to ours?
Is the outcome re-assuring/reinforcing your own /prejudices? insecurities?
Lee

Seemed to be comfortable with his sexuality. I was surprised to hear that he was a father – didn't strike me as the type to want children. An attractive personality! Seb

I appreciated you finishing the meeting by telling a little of your own history. You were absolutely right to leave this till the last though. Anon

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The comments contained in Table 10.1 are revealing in that I seem to have had both insider and outsider status for the participants. It is impossible to say exactly how the narratives would have been different had I been perceived differently. In a way it is not particularly relevant, the more important issue here being the fact that I was perceived as I was. There is a suggestion of journeying in the observations above, this applies to both participants and researcher. The image that comes to mind is one of a brief encounter made on a long train journey, the players having embarked at different stations, briefly interacting before disembarking along the way. Perhaps the narratives could be conceived as travellers' tales.

10.2.2 Travellers' tales: the importance of interrogation

A key part of the process of assessing trustworthiness of little stories lies in two aspects, namely the ways in which they are presented and the ways in which they are interrogated by the audience of the research.

Atkinson (1997) and Atkinson and Silverman (1997) are particularly scathing about postmodern and poststructuralist narrative accounts which they critique as being subjective, inauthentic, romanticized and privileging certain voices over others. In their view, there has been an abandonment of scientific rigour in the collection, presentation and discussion of the data. Bochner (2001:133), in his polemical response to their critique, summarizes their argument as expressing:

> a manifestly scientific viewpoint in the worn vocabulary of disengaged reason replete with its presumption of an omniscient observer. By their account, personal narratives cannot be trusted and must be subjected to methodological skepticism. Conversely the social analyst, armed with the weapons of the proper sociological gaze, can be counted on to produce an unmitigated, objective account, devoid of sentiment and able to penetrate cultural conventions at work in the production of personal narratives.

The logical outcome of the postpositivist tradition is the identification of some social facts, which assume that there are some 'truths' to be discovered. This is a crucial point on which the different perspectives are divided. Richardson (2000) speaks for the postmodern sensibility, when she argues that any pursuit of 'truth' is fruitless and misguided. In her view there are only interpretations. The contribution of the postmodern paradigm is that understanding comes from the exposure of the reader to multiple perspectives, including the view of the 'culturally located' researcher. Clough (1992:2) supports this view when she argues that 'all factual representations of reality, even statistical representations, are narratively constructed.'

In responding to the criticism that postmodern narrative accounts may be inauthentic, Goodson and Sikes (2001: 3) argue that their participants are not engaged in a simple process of recall. Thus the relationship between what they say and reality, actuality, truth is not straightforward. To understand the process, Coles (1989:183) suggests that 'memories are not merely objective records of our lives but rather, events endowed with the subjectivity of our imaginative life'. Bruner (1990:93) develops this view, arguing that narrative is about making sense of experience in the past, present and future. 'Through narratives we construct, reconstruct, in some way reinvent yesterday and tomorrow. Memory and imagination fuse in the process.' Thus, the

composition of any interview transcript is the product of all these processes and will be saturated with subjectivity.

Bochner's research into the narratives of terminally ill participants also comes in for criticism from post-positivist researchers on the basis that it privileges and romanticizes certain voices. Both Bochner (2001) and Denzin and Lincoln (2003) agree that without some postmodern narrative accounts, some voices and some stories would continue to remain unheard, as the data does not count as valid within the postpositivist paradigm. The use of narrative fiction, one of the methods used in this research, is a case in point. Fiction, by its very nature, is overtly subjective and multi-voiced, Clough (2002) argues that rigour is introduced via the process of schematization, the value and credibility of the fictionalized account lying in the extent to which it connects with the mind and experience of the reader. This connection is forged via the hermeneutic process experienced by a reader as an interpreter of text. In explaining this Clough (2002:95), draws on the work of Murray (1978), who in turn develops the idea of Heidegger's hermeneutic cycle. In this, a reader's journey to an interpretation or observation is a process of interactive questioning between text and reader. Hence 'the truth of what is interpreted is a dialogue with self.' (Clough 2002:95). Thus, the apparent trustworthiness of the data is assessed via a process of verisimilitude.

10.2.3 Travellers' tales: their refractory contribution

In addition to verisimilitude, Denzin and Lincoln (2003:10) report that postmodern researchers seek alternative methods for evaluating their work, including emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multi-voiced texts and dialogues with subjects. Richardson (2000:934) takes issue with the model of triangulation advocated by Denzin and Lincoln (2003), arguing that the use of the three points of reference constituting a triangle are too limiting. Instead, she proposes a model with many facets in which the use of multi-methods, rigour of methods and reader resonance with data combine to produce a crystallization response:

> [A crystal] combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of response...
>
> Crystallisation, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of 'validity' (we feel there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves), and crystallisation provides us

> with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of
> the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know.
> Ingeniously we know there is always more to know.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000:5) concur with this view in that they argue that good qualitative data can provide a basis from which it is possible to open the possibility for new knowledge and ways of seeing rather than claiming fixed truths. Thus, the unique contribution of narrative data to knowledge and understanding is twofold. Firstly, it can reveal through a small, localised account, the complexity and detail in lived experience. Secondly, it can act as a springboard for more questioning, theorising and investigation. In summary, what makes such accounts credible and trustworthy to the outside world is the thickness of the description, the transparency of the role of the researcher, the openness of the interpretation and the believability in the mind of the reader. Bochner (2001: 154), drawing on the ideas Freeman (1998b), clarifies the role of the researcher working with narrative data:

> We are not scientists seeking laws that govern our behaviour; we
> are storytellers seeking meanings that help us cope with our
> circumstances. Personal narratives are not so much academic as
> they are existential, reflecting our desire to grasp or seize the
> possibilities of meaning, which is what gives life its imaginative
> and poetic qualities.

10.3　Narratives of gay and bisexual male educators and their implications for education

> Martin Boyce, an eighteen year old scare drag queen, saw a leg in
> nylons and sporting a high heel shoot out of the back of the paddy
> wagon into the chest of a cop throwing him backward. Another
> queen then opened the door on the side of the wagon and jumped
> out. The cops chased and caught her, but blond Frankie quickly
> managed to engineer another escape from the van; several
> queens successfully made their way out with him and were
> swallowed up into the crowd.

> (Duberman 1994:197)

Duberman's (ibid) account of the first raid on the Stonewall Inn in the early hours of Saturday 28 June, 1969 is a salutary reminder that more than thirty years have passed since the event that is often attributed as being the defining moment of gay liberation. The narratives recounted in this work span an even longer period of almost forty years, from a time when homosexual acts were illegal in the UK and the USA. In many respects the label 'little stories' belies the magnitude of the social changes that have taken place over that period of time, a fact that is recounted by Ian in his reflection on his interview for this research:

> I came away from the interview feeling refreshed and
> strengthened. From time to time you greatly pushed me on or
> elicited some clarification without restricting my flow. You were
> patient about these aspects of my development which seemed, by
> the time of our interview, to be almost ancient history, either
> difficult to remember accurately or so different from the common
> experience of young gay men of today as to seem incredible, So
> much has society changed from the 60s and 70s. I recall that I
> was nervous about this aspect of the interview before I joined you,
> that it might sound as if I was talking in riddles, as it were.

So how might little stories provide a connection with the issue of educational practice? Griffiths (2003:82) sounds a cautionary note when she suggests that the voice contained in 'little stories' has to be treated with the same criticality as other autobiographical expressions. In the literature of social justice, voices expressed on the micro scale are frequently linked to issues relating to the macro scale (Beverley 2000, Tierney 2000). Griffiths argues that there are good reasons to risk this connection, little stories revealing the inaccuracies and limitations of the broader picture. In the spirit of adopting Griffiths' (1998:306) optimism about practice, it can be argued that the first decade of the twenty first century is providing a new opportunities for a consideration of LGBT issues in education. A clear agenda emerges from this research in terms of practical steps that could be adopted to improve the quality of life in professional contexts for gay and bisexual men who are educators:

a. The transition for all LGBT persons into the culture of initial teacher training needs to be acknowledged and support needs to be provided from the outset. Tutors, mentors and school co-ordinators need to be aware that LGBT students may encounter particular issues when on teaching practice, eg. homophobia from pupils and school staff.

b. A dialogue needs to be initiated to develop greater awareness in the whole school community of LGBT issues – this needs to address key issues such as changes in legislation, the costs to individuals and institutions of homophobia and the excluding effects of heterosexism and heteronormativity. Consideration of the latter would benefit other staff and pupils beyond those who identify as LGBT who may also feel excluded from traditional definitions of relationships and family.

c. Those charged with leadership roles need to reflect critically on their leadership style, their awareness of LGBT issues and ways in which it may be possible to support the personal and professional development of LGBT staff. Cotton et al (2003) note the centrality of respectful relationships in laying the foundation for the development of a socially just climate in school environments. Leaders have an opportunity to model this for the rest of the school community.

d. The content and process of policy-making also needs to be much more explicit in the inclusion of LGBT issues. This needs to include a range of stake holders in the school community including governors, teachers, parents and support staff.

e. Clear procedures for dealing with instances of homophobic abuse directed at staff need to be initiated. Such scenarios should be taken seriously and practical, logistical support needs to be forthcoming as a matter of urgency in these situations.

f. Where appropriate, examples of the positive contribution of LGBT people to society need to be acknowledged both in the curriculum and in other public spaces and meetings in the school, such as school assemblies, drama and dance, etc.

10.3.1 Changes in the English context

Following a period of slow progress, a series of legislative changes are likely to make an impact on the perceptions of education professionals in relation to LGBT issues in education. The removal of Section 28 of the local Government Act 1988 on 17 November 2003 from the statute books in England and Wales is very significant in that the ambiguity and confusion of the past may also dissipate. Potentially this enables teachers to challenge some of the silence that has previously surrounded the discussion of LGBT issues in schools.

New legislation within the European union has also strengthened the employment rights Of LGBT teachers. In 1997, the heads of all EU member states agreed article 13 a new Treaty of Amsterdam, which specifically required EU institutions to combat sexual orientation discrimination. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 are a result of the UK's implementation of the 2000 EU Employment Framework Directive requiring member states of the European Union to ban sexual orientation discrimination in employment by the end of 2003. This legislation has been further strengthened by the unsuccessful challenge in the High Court by Christian Action Research Education, the Evangelical Alliance and the Christian Schools Alliance which was dismissed on 26 April 2004. The ruling has confirmed that the scope for discrimination by religious organisations is very narrow. Teachers working in faith schools, for example, cannot be dismissed for being lesbian or gay.

Griffiths (2003:86), in her exploration of the elements that influence the impact of little stories in moving forward social justice issues, points to the significance of finding a fit listener and of being heard. Up until 2001, it is my observation in the English context that there was little or no official acknowledgement in the education

establishment to support LGBT issues. The research of Rivers (1996, 2000, 2001) and Rivers and Duncan (2002) and the strategic alliance forged between Stonewall and researchers at the Institute of Education (Warwick and Douglas 2000, Warwick et al 2001), persuaded OFSTED to acknowledge the significance of homophobic bullying in schools. To their credit, OFSTED have not only highlighted it but integrated into a much wider infrastructure such as the National Healthy Schools initiative and in resources for personal advisers in the Connexions service. The discussion of homophobic bullying in the school context is now providing a springboard for a much wider consideration of homophobia that goes beyond the experiences of young people. The publication of DfES research report RR594 *Homophobia, sexual orientation and schools: a review and implications for action* by Warwick et al (2004) extends the debate for the first time in a government publication, to the whole school community, including teachers. The report notes that 'there are no studies to date that report in any systematic way the extent of homophobic incidents and their impact on recruitment, retention and promotion among the school work force' (Warwick et al 2004: 20).

Coincidentally, in the month previous to the publication of the report by Warwick et al the DfES also published guidance DfES/0083/2004 in the form of National Standards for Headteachers. This document states that one of the core purposes of the headteacher is to:

> provide vision, leadership and direction...to build a school culture and curriculum which takes account of the richness and diversity of the school's communities and creates and promotes positive strategies for challenging racial and other prejudice and dealing with racial harassment.

> (DfES 2004:3-11)

Warwick et al (2004:24) also note the centrality of the role of the headteacher in developing an inclusive climate for the work force:

> Providing a context in which staff can be open about being lesbian, bisexual or gay encourages pupils and staff to become more fully aware of diversity, helps the development of policies to address homophobia and, among pupils especially, ameliorates feelings of isolation where attracted to another of the same sex.

> Factors that enrich a lesbian or gay teacher's professional life are similar to those for any teacher: a positive school ethos (that addresses diversity and inclusion), the opportunity to work with empathic colleagues and the support of headteachers. Where staff feel protected from homophobic incidents, they are more able to protect pupils from such discrimination compared to staff who feel unprotected.

Two issues in the above quotations resonate with the narratives presented in this research. The first relates to the availability of support. A striking feature of the narratives is the absence of supportive spaces for gay male teachers. Their experiences seem to suggest that they are highly defended in gay community contexts but that, with the exception of a handful of local and teacher union groups, there are no specific gay teacher spaces in the education world. The second issue relates to career progression and professional development. Warwick et al (ibid) note that staff feel they have few if any opportunities to voice their concerns with school governors, headteachers and other managers. Where LGBT teachers found a 'safe school' in which to work they tended to stay there indefinitely, rather than thinking about moving on. This was said to be 'good for schools but not good for teachers' careers'.

Whilst the above publications and initiatives are welcome and a clear step forward that will quite possibly impact on the formal ethos of schools, the question of the informal ethos remains. Possibly one of the most frequently used phrases in documentation relating to education initiatives published in the last twenty years is the need 'to adopt a whole school approach'. Predictably, it appears in Warwick et al (2004) as well. Whilst I am wholeheartedly behind the sentiment, the narratives recounted in this research lead me to question whether on this issue this will ever be achievable.

I want to offer two quotations to illustrate my point. The first is from Colin Hart, director of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne-based Christian Institute, speaking in 2001, voicing his opposition to the General Teaching Council's proposed code of professional conduct. It was proposed to include the following statement: 'Teachers recognize diversity and work to ensure the rights of individuals to develop. They fully respect differences of gender, marital status, religion, colour, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability. Teacher professionalism involves challenging prejudice and stereotypes to ensure equality of opportunity.' Colin Hart's reservations were based on the possibility that teachers who are opposed to homosexuality would be forced to respect and promote gay equality:

> The GTC is well intentioned. They may not want to side-step Section 28 but that is precisely what will happen...They seem to be unaware how their code will be used in practice. If this code is enforced, any teacher who believes that homosexuality is wrong will fear for their job. How will Christian teachers be able to work in state schools?"
>
> (Fight erupts in Britain over anti-gay Section 28, http://gay.com/news/article.html?2001/07/16/4)

The second quotation is from American gay activist and educator, Eric Rofes, who articulates some of the compromises he feels that gay educators have made in negotiating an place in school environments in the US:

> For too long gay men have understandably fought a narrow battle,
> seeking admittance into the classroom as openly gay educators.
> Likewise queer students of all genders and sexualities have worked to
> achieve a relative degree of safety in public schools throughout the USA.
> All too often, as we've made these efforts, we've made compromises
> and sacrifices that have gone unspoken and unacknowledged. We've
> gained limited entry into the classroom by denying authentic differences
> between many gay men's relationships to gender roles, sexual cultures
> and kinship arrangements compared those of the heteronormative
> hegemony

(Rofes 2000:459)

At an initial glance it is hard to see how there can be any compromise in the two perspectives. Although both voices speak from polarised positions on the issue of homosexuality, the aspect that cuts across both quotations is a discourse about oppression. The distinguishing feature, however, is the system of values that informs both perspectives. This raises two important issues that relate to the mobilisation of debates about social justice in education, ie. the role of personal values and the role of dialogue. Donnelly (2004) offers some insights from his research into the role of teachers working in integrated schools in Northern Ireland. A process that he observes is that teachers frequently avoided contentious issues such as sectarianism both between themselves and in interactions with young people. Significantly, the need to initiate a dialogue with personal values was also not seen as important as a tool for discussing issues of social justice in this context. Ironically, it seems to me that dialogue is the only hope for finding a way forward in situations where groups have polarised values. The missing dimension that is the key for Donnelly is a programme of professional development that gives teachers the skills to engage in dialogue both with themselves and with others on issues of social justice. The risk is that unless professional development opportunities are provided, LGBT issues will suffer the same fate, areas of progress in policy being counterbalanced by a maintenance of the status quo in practice.

10.3.2 Conclusion

I began this thesis by stating that, for me, this research is as much a personal as an academic piece of work, a perception that is shared by the some of the participants. I have attempted to describe and analyse my own experience of being a gay man, educator and researcher via narratives contained in text and imagery. There have been points along the way when I have read the participants narratives and been powerfully reconnected with my own experiences. I have sensed moments of isolation, hostility, injustice and painful feelings. I have also detected humour, optimism and a feeling of participants being really supported by colleagues and loved ones. The nub of my activist agenda really relates to the issue of choice. When I questioned whether or

not Lee and Julian had been processed by education in some way in section 9.1, I was simultaneously questioning my own experience. The critical incident I described in section 1.3.1 on one level was trivial, merely a hair...but in my case it did break the camel's back. Its significance lies in relation to the backdrop and the critical period I experienced at the time. In retrospect I *do* feel 'processed' by the episode in that I was found wanting by the senior colleague when it came to the 'acceptable' norms of masculinity and sexuality in his terms. I felt that the choice to be myself was removed. Although I remained on a part time basis in the institution for the following ten years, what was lacking was real collective institutional support on the issue of sexuality, which was something I had to deal with single-handed in my classroom on a regular basis. The support that I did receive came through the closeness of relationship with individual colleagues who are friends.

Another aspect of the narratives that I want to return to is the distance that gay and bisexual men who are educators travel between their social-sexual worlds. For some individuals, they become not only outlaws in terms of how they are perceived in some education environments, but they may literally be outlaws in terms of their sexual practices. Under Section 71 of the recently introduced Sexual Offences Act 2003, cottaging remains illegal, punishable by 6 months in jail; cruising is punishable via common law offences (eg. Outraging Public Decency). The Police can also use legislation such as Section 5 Public Order Act in the absence of any other legislation governing public sex.

Jeyasingham (2002:73) notes that no matter how much academics and queer theorists might like to attach meanings of transgression to PSE activity, in reality homophobia, feelings of alienation on the gay scene, personal circumstances and income may rule out encounters with men in more private locations. To simply say that to cottage or to cruise is an error of judgement on the part of an individual, does not really acknowledge the complexity of their motivations. In possibly one of the most paradoxical moments in the data, Ian is at a loss to explain his cottaging. Jeyasingham argues that for gay men PSEs may be hyper-masculinised and sexualised spaces in which shame becomes eroticised. For Tom it provides a space for older gay men, for Sean and Seb it is a place of discovery, experimentation and validation. Perhaps the cottage/cruising area-school divide is an environmental manifestation of the Hart-Rofes binary and one in which I want to argue that, ethically, it is crucially important to examine. At first glance, at the heart of this scenario lies the issue of 'the public' and 'the private', familiar discourses in the domain of sexuality. Weeks (1992:2) sums up the dilemma of managing this ever shifting divide as follows:

> For a long time finding the right balance between the public and the private has been a major issue. The trouble is that the boundaries between the political, social and personal spheres of contemporary life are constantly shifting, or being shifted. The borderlines are extremely difficult to detect, let alone police, and where we should stake out the fences between public passion and private conscience, or between private needs and public indifference, are far from certain. In the increasingly complex and moral universe characteristic of our age of uncertainty, boundary definition is difficult, and boundary conflict is pretty well inevitable.

Griffiths (2003: 129) agrees that in reality the public and the private are continually blurred and that the potential for moving forward social justice issues in education lies in the creating political-public spaces. Drawing on the work of Arendt (1958, 1973), she argues that it may be more helpful to distinguish between the intimate and the public. Hence, the expressions of gay sexuality, whether in a romantic dyad or windswept PSE, come to form one refractory aspect of Richardson's crystal. The key in successfully negotiating a place for gay educators in the political-public space lies in constructing a permeable membrane; in imagery terms, the fluid-permeable divide of the park railings. The fluidity and permeability of the divide have the potential for ensuring that the transferable assets of the personal, of the intimate and the political have currency on the other side of the divide. Rofes (2000:441) explains how for him as a gay man who is an educator, this complex process becomes translated into reality:

> While life may split down the middle to me, intellectually I know that my work in education and gay liberation emerges from the same source: a commitment to creating sites that resist, undermine and throw off institutionalised forms of oppression that have become endemic... ultimately I believe my work as a teacher is about supporting students as they become agents of transgression and activists for social and political change.

Perhaps such an approach would be liberating for young people too, taking them beyond the experience of mundane schooling into true education and a wider perspective on the world.

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1

Extract from Jivani, (1997): The Union Bar, Manchester

Most of the conurbations outside London did have a gay bar of sorts though, the most notorious of which was the Union bar in Manchester. The Union was situated in the heart of Manchester's red-light district and it took courage for a newly emergent gay person to enter it as Luchia Fitzgerald discovered. Luchia has emigrated from Ireland to work in the Lancashire cotton mills and was so naïve when she heard the other women in the mill talking about pansies that she thought it was a conversation about horticulture. She was soon put right when one of her colleagues told her exactly what a lesbian was. 'I must have gone red from the tip of my toes right up to my forehead' she says. 'I didn't know where to put myself. I couldn't look at her...On the other hand after I'd gone upstairs I felt a tingling feeling sensation because I'd suddenly been told that there was a whole nation of people out there like me.'

Not only did Luchia learn that there were other people like her, but she also found that there was a pub in Manchester where she could meet them. She caught the bus into the city and wandered around asking people till she was directed by a slightly suspicious policeman who demanded to know why she wanted to go there. Luchia made up an excuse about meeting a friend outside a bus stop outside it. When she got there Luchia was too scared to go in so she stood outside for a little while and was astonished by what she saw. 'These women would come along – really big women, they looked like Desperate Dan – and they would go into the pub with really young boys. Then I started to realise that what I thought was young boys was women dressed up as men.' And of course, the giant 'women' were really men in drag. Luchia who was still under eighteen and therefore underage as far as drinking was concerned finally screwed up her courage to go in. 'Honest to God, I will never forget till the day I die, the smell of lipstick and Angel face powder and as soon as I got close to these blokes [I noticed] they were caked with make up and were built like brick shit-houses, these blokes,' Luchia recalls.

Jose Pickering also found out about the Union through word of mouth. Although she was still married, by this time she had started having an affair with another woman and the two of them decided to pay a visit. ' There was a really good atmosphere in the Union. There were servicemen, there were barrow boys, there were prostitutes, there were drag queens who would get up on stage and do a turn...and we thought that this is like Wonderland.'

Source: Jivani, A. (1997:131-133) *It's Not Unusual. A History of Lesbian and Gay Britain in the Twentieth Century*, London: Michael O'Mara Books pp131-133

Appendix 2

Poster campaign in Scotland 2000 by Brian Souter in support of his *People's Referendum* in support of retaining Section 28.
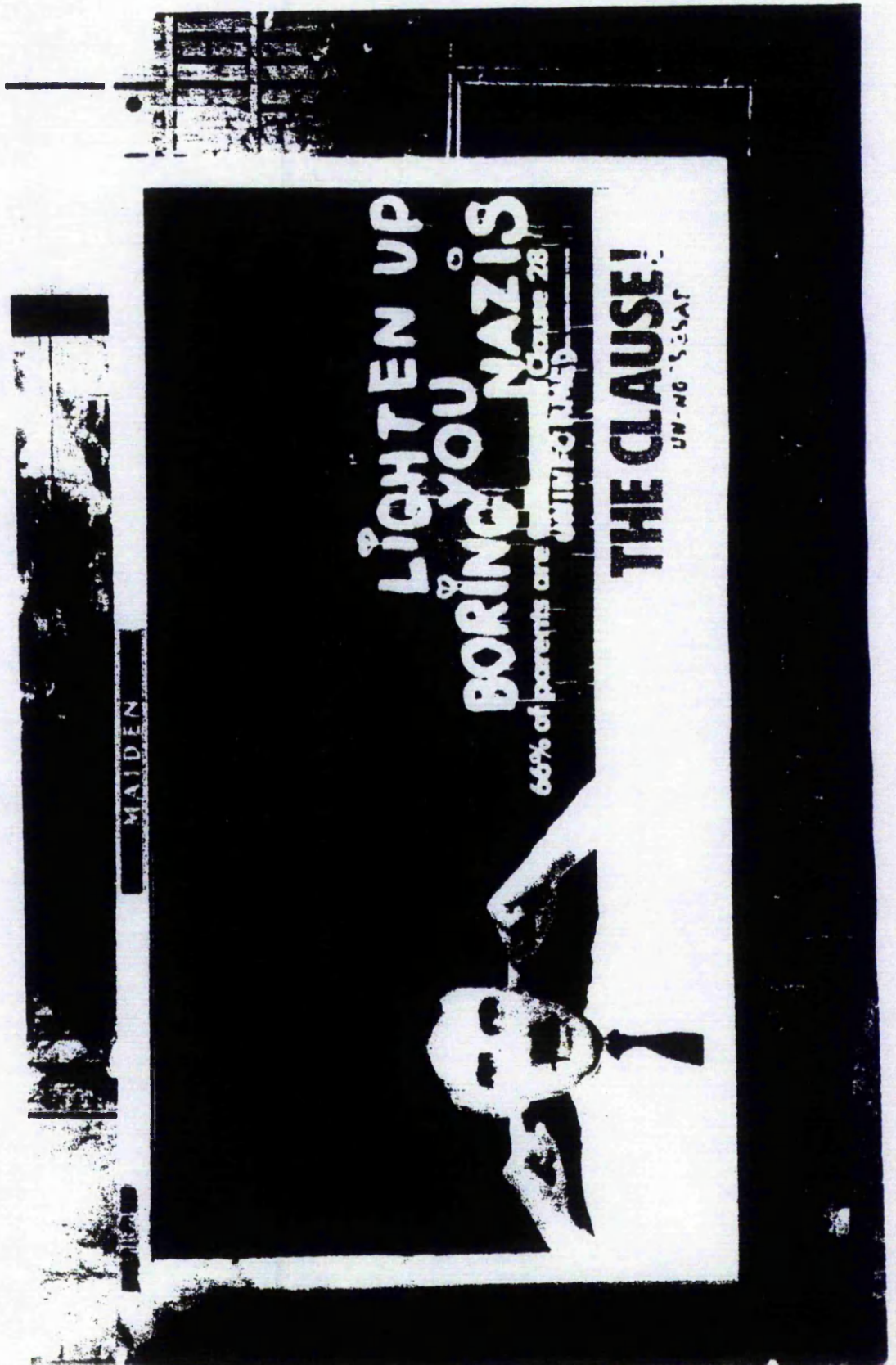
Appendix 3

YOU ARE MY GOOD TEACHERS...

I am black
Our class is clever - we speak fifteen languages between us
Our form teacher is Irish
Sometimes my teacher reads African stories
Melanie called me a dirty nigger and the headteacher sent her home

You are my good teachers

I am a girl
More than half the class are girls
I like Ms Waldron. Sometimes when we do pastoral curriculum she takes all of us girls just with her and we can talk
I'm in the end of term play about the Suffragettes
I called Vanessa a fat slag. Don't be so sizeist and sexist, she said

You are my good teachers

I think I'm gay
I know I'm the only one like that in our school
Homosexuality, lesbian, gay, queer - I looked. None of them's in the subject index in the library

There's this teacher, Mr. Dillon, every time a boy gives him trouble, this teacher, Mr. Dillon, says, Sit down and shut up you silly poof. What are you? A silly poof, sir.
I hate school

Are you my good teachers?

Peter Bradley

Source: Harris, S, (1990:73-74) *Lesbian and Gay Issues in the English Classroom*, *Buckingham*: Open University Press

Appendix 4

SCOPING THE TERRITORY

PART ONE: RESEARCH INTEREST - QUESTIONS FOR AN INITIAL EXPLORATION

A: What questions are pressing to me? Are they meaningful?
(Specify issues, questions, phenomena that bother, intrigue or make me curious.)

B: What do I know about these topics, issues etc.
personally and professionally?

C: What other questions have been asked that relates to mine?

D: What topics relate to my topic?

E: Do I know of any existing research that relates to my question/topic?

F: If I was to ask myself the question "what is the essence of my interest" what would I reply?

An agenda for an initial exploration, adapted from Evertson and Green, (1995)

PART TWO: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES DISTILLED FROM INITIAL SCOPING EXERCISE ABOVE

Main Aim: To acquire a greater understanding of the lives and experiences of Gay/Bisexual Men who are educators

Group A Objectives : Gay identity

To use theoretical perspectives and the voices of research participants to gain a sense of:

- what gay identity means to individuals.
- how this evolves over time.
- how it is related to other aspects of self-identity.

Group B Objectives: Self-esteem

To gain an understanding of what self-esteem means for gay/bisexual men who are educators in terms of:

- their "journey" to the point that they are at now, reviewing critical incidents, difficult times and sources of support.
- to consider how self-esteem is related to teacher identity.

Group C Objectives: Professional contexts and environments

To acquire an understanding of the professional context and environment
in which gay/bisexual men who are educators work considering specifically:

- the discourses of educational institutions.
- the historical relationship between homosexuality and education.
- the system of power relations that exists between identity,
  homophobia and heterosexism in educational institutions.

Group D Objectives: Interface with environment

To gain an understanding of how gay/bisexual men who are educators
'interface' with their environments in terms of:

- the process of constructing and negotiating a gay-teacher identity.
- the mechanisms and ways in which these are presented in education contexts
  and gay contexts.
- to review the role of past personal/professional experience in
  constructing these complex identities.

Appendix 5

Workshop:
In the Steps of Turing...?
Exploring what it means to be Male,
Gay or Bisexual and an Educator

Rationale
In recent years a considerable amount of literature and research has addressed the experiences of lesbian/gay/bisexual young people. Significantly less has addressed the experiences of their educators. This workshop relates to the focus of "The Turing Project" which derives it's name from Alan Turing who was an eminent gay man and an educator. The project is a current piece of research that is investigating the experiences of gay/bisexual men who are educators.

Aim
To provide a safe and supportive environment for gay/bisexual men who are educators in which the interface between sexual identity and professional identity can be explored.

Outcomes
- To raise awareness of participants' sexual identity and professional identity.

- To explore connections between these aspects of identity.

- To identify key pieces of experience in the professional context.

- To provide an optional opportunity for further exploration by participation in the research being undertaken by the Turing Project.

Provider
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University of Nottingham,
Nottingham

Appendix 6

NUD.IST data: Level 2 Categories

Relations with Self (52)

- RELATIONS WITH SELF 52
  - Union
  - REFLECTIONS ON SELF 528
  - Masculinity
  - POLITICAL IDENTITY 526
  - GAY IDENTITY 521
  - RACE IDENTITY 521
  - CLASS IDENTITY 524
  - TEACHER IDENTITY
  - LIFE IN A NUTSHELL
  - SPIRITUALITY 525
  - Self-esteem
  - Addictions

LINKS TO LEVEL THREE CATEGORY NODES

Relations with Others (51)

- RELATIONS WITH OTHERS 51
  - FRIENDS 513
  - GAY WITH PARTNERS 511 [see Figure x]
  - WITH WOMEN 514
  - BISEXUAL RELATIONS 517
  - WITH OTHERS eg FAMILY
  - PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS 512

LINKS TO LEVEL THREE CATEGORY NODES

Diagram to show level two category nodes

Appendix 7

Schematization of texts and themes for 'Walking After Midnight' Patchwork Text

Element	Theme
Text 1: End of Term	**The teaching year:** Form, celebration and ritual Physical demands of **Masculinity:** Student/football cultures of Teacher construction of masculinity Homophobia as a defining-policing mechanism **Social class:** Working class students Middle class teachers **Sexuality:** Outward homophobia Hidden sexuality Isolation Classroom homo-eroticism
Text 2: Sleeping Bream	**Public and the private:** Public face and private reflection Outward 'story' and internal desire Outward naivety and inner experience Physical use of space **Masculinity:** Outward dressing – inner experience Brotherhood and fatherhood in families Alcohol and masculinity **Sexuality:** Sexuality versus intimacy Legal versus illegal sexual activity Sexual role **Role:** Controller and controlled Supporters and those being supported **Policing:** Self policing Policing of desire Literal policing ie. local constabulary

Text 3: Missed Meeting

Public and the private:
Public face and private reflection
Naivety versus knowledge
Public statements and private actions
Physical use of space

Masculinity:
Outward dressing – inner experience
Contradiction and questioning
Loss of assumptions
Enhanced understanding
Changed perceptions

Sexuality:
Blurring
Confidence
Unsaid Sexual knowledge

Role:
Role reversal: Controller and controlled
Supporters and those being supported

Policing:
Self policing
Policing of desire

Appendix 8

QUEERING TEMPLATE

Disjuncture: state of being disconnected

Ruptures : the act of making a sudden noisy break; a personal or social separation (as between opposing factions); state of being torn or burst open separate or cause to separate abruptly;

Break ups: separate into constituent elements or parts, as of chemical substances; terminate; cause to go into a solution; make a break in; set or keep apart; "sever a relationship" ; break violently or noisily; smash; destroy the completeness of a set of related items; come apart; discontinue an association or relation; go different ways

Fractures: the act of cracking something; a crack in the earth's crust resulting from the displacement of one side with respect to the other; "they built it right over a geological fault"; violate or abuse; "This writer really fractures the language"; break into pieces; interrupt, break, or destroy; "fracture the balance of power"

Selves: plural of self: your consciousness of your own identity; multiple identities; consciousness on multiple levels

Appendix 9

Continuum of identity management strategies used by lesbian and gay educators (Griffin 1991)

Figure 1. Continuum of identity management strategies used by lesbian and gay educators

Totally Closeted	Passing	Covering	Implicity Out	Explicitly Out	Publicly Out
O U T T O N O O N E A T S C H O O L	Lying	Censoring	Telling Truth w/o Gay/Lesbian Labels	Affirming Lesbian/Gay Identity	O U T T O S C H O O L C O M M U N I T Y
	I assume you don't know	I assume you don't know	I assume you know, but I'm not sure.	I know you know. You know I know you know.	
	See me as Heterosexual	Don't see me Lesbian/Gay	You can see me as Lesbian/Gay if you want to	See me as Lesbian/Gay	

←——— Fear ——— Self-integrity ———→

Separation   Personal/Professional Self   Integration

Griffin, P, (1991) identity management strategies among lesbian and gay educators, *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 4 (3) 189-202